



# BAILLIEUGATE7

Peter Adamis July 2014

We have reached a stage in Victorian politics where it can be truly said that political cyber warfare is here to stay. The recent BaillieuGate leaked tape is but the tip of the iceberg and it is the authors belief that we not yet seen the end of this.

We the public are still waiting for the outcome o the Police report based on their enquiries into the alleged theft of the journalist tape. Additional information has been found via twitter accounts and these have been introduced without identifying the owners. Using them as a guide it is not too difficult to ascertain that a number of individuals knew that the story was about to break and yet no one was able to pin the original source. This is an excellent demonstration of how information is being shared and developed in order to obtain the maximum media attention.

## STATE SCENE



Big story developing about audio mysteriously sent to State MPs and Liberal Party members this morning

Just when you thought it might be a quiet sitting week updates live:

Press pack waiting for Government MPs to leave a Cabinet meeting in Parliament House

Coalition MPs leaving party room, most are silent, XXXXX says he hasn't heard the tape or seen the transcript

Michael Gidley leaves meeting after release of leaked tape in which former Premier Baillieu criticise him

Premier Napthine says he hasn't heard leaked audio in which former Premier Ted Baillieu bags colleagues. Press conference soon

Police minister XXXXX (who Baillieu refers to in audio) says which tape when asked to comment (it's a bit like that)

## VICTORIAN POLITICAL ONLINE CYBERWARFARE

In a recent article by the Wall Street Journal, Mark Zuckerberg Chief Executive of Facebook states that "There have been moments in history where the invention of new technology has completely rewired the way our society lives and works." This statement is so relevant today's society that one cannot escape its tentacles no matter how one may hide from its reaches. There is a lot of research into how to deliver the internet in completely new ways.

Mark Zuckerberg goes onto say that "some of this work involves satellites, planes, lasers and beaming internet from the sky". This author is of the belief that by the year 2020, every Australian home will have some form of digital online communication in their home or in the least on their person.

If this is to be the case, Australian political parties need to prepare and take advantage of these new and emerging technologies. At the last Federal election very few campaigns by either major political parties made any great effort to use the media effectively and relied on non media concepts. Those that were able to use online media had greater exposure and engaged the community effectively and thus the candidate increased his or her profile.



"When asked if Source was run by an MP, political staffer or member of a party, [he] had no comment."

**State politics: Agenda hides in plain sight on social media**

MPs and staffers hiding behind anonymous social media accounts are leaving themselves open to fines.

**Political muckraking has a way of backfiring**

Dish enough dirt and some might stick, but to whom? That's a question police are now investigating.

Ted Baillieu on tape: "You know I'm not a briefer."

Coalition MPs & candidates gone if recent polls are repeated

Coalition Seats	
Margin	District
0.1%	Wendouree (1)
0.1%	Yan Yean (1)
0.3%	Carrum
0.4%	Frankston (2)
0.9%	Bentleigh
1.1%	Monbulk (1)
1.5%	Mordialloc
1.6%	Ripon (1)
2.5%	Bellarine (1)
3.5%	Forest Hill
4.7%	Prahran

**Political warfare.** Political warfare is as old as the hills they say and that the only thing that changes is the technology and that methodologies used to deliver their ideological messages to the masses. Beginning with physical force in the ancient of days to subtle means of bribery, innuendo, manipulation, and intimidation its all the same even by today's standards. Today what we see is intimidation, veiled threats, corruption, remarkable subtle images designed to arouse emotions and the exploitation of online social media.

**Ancient communication methodologies.** This is a timely reminder of the ancient race of Spartans who were trained to be strong, loyal, cunning, deceitful and men of few words, hence the word laconic. These same Spartans despite their valour in battle were also taught how to steal from one another as long as they did not get caught for the penalty was a public lashing which in most cases was almost certain death.

It is the same with the new generation of political hopefuls who are sharpening their skills in the social media arena with other online gladiators. Some use websites, some use programs such as twitter, tumbler, LinkedIn, Dare, Viber, emails, texting, images, Facebook and a host of other online free programmes to send their messages out.

Who are these young men and women who are making an impact on our political psyche. Are they the warriors of the future? Are the guardians we all hoped would save us all from big brother politics or are they just a bunch of young larrikins with nothing better to do and create mischief and strife. Many of these young political staffers hide behind the veil of political respectability in the offices of ministers, government departments, positions of influence and community organisations.

**Old boys school.** Some but not all have their own clubs which were formed during their high schooldays, University and even TAFE colleges and as such share secrets amongst themselves in order to feel that superiority of others. Social media is their form of communication and it is also an outlet for their frustration, boredom as well as the maintenance of their well being by boosting their confidence levels when they get a 'positive hit or a high' on social media. The current top online social gladiator is the one responsible for the BaillieuGate leaked tape. This person or persons responsible are still considered the top gladiator or the fastest gun in the west until someone else comes along and topples them off their perch.

## Political pendulum.

One wonders what is the point of it all. Well, let's put it into layman's language and consider the effect it has on a political psychological basis. Imagine a scoreboard or a political pendulum that is forever changing and only stops when the final vote has been taken after a State election has been finished. You can bet your bottom dollar that right up until the doors are closed at polling booths, there will be an increase in social media outlets and a spike in programs such as mobile texting, twitter, websites, blogs, Facebook, tumblr and yes even emails.



This was the last XXXX tapes crisis that claimed Baillieu.

Fairfax says it believes the dictaphone with an audio recording of its journalist talking to Ted Baillieu was stolen

Age editor Andrew Holden said he will leave it to others to "draw their own conclusions as to who might be behind this campaign"

Press conference at 12.30pm with Premier & Attorney-General regarding new laws to hit drug traffickers and no doubt other issues

Baillieu appears to be in more strife than Fish Island in this weather hit.

Premier Napthine arrives at press conference

**Communication.** Texting will be used extensively during the crucial periods because it is quick and an efficient means of communication and of coordination. The next State election is so crucial to both sides that whoever has a good grasp of communication, mobility and the manpower will prevail.

All other pre state election resources and planning will be for nought political parties have not been able to master the basic fundamentals of political campaigning. That is not to say that pre election phony political warfare is not effective, it is but the matter of fact is that it will all boil down to who is better prepared on the day. Communication, mobility and manpower are the key elements in any political campaign.

**Rallying the troops.** During the last State election Labor were instrumental in using online media effectively to appeal to the masses and yet despite those successes still failed to win over the voters en masse. Where Labor was effective was in the manner of communication with Victorian voters and thus holding the line against the backlash of disgruntled voters.

From a political strategist point of view where deception plays a big part in the overall campaign, Labor online campaigner out fought those of their Liberal opponents. Labor was effective in the rallying of troops, collection of funds from the public, communicated on a daily basis with new and old members and went to extraordinary lengths to keep their members engaged. This is political communication at its best and the results and outcomes speak for themselves. An example of a local campaign site being prepared for the State election may be visited by clicking on: [XXX Candidate for NMR](#) This site will be populated with the candidates details and other information relevant to the campaign. In addition other online components of social media will also be activated to ensure maximum exposure.

**Online copycat campaign strategies.** The Coalition is currently trailing behind Labor in the online social media and it is no secret that Labor was on the campaign trail directly after the results of the Federal election in September 2013. The Coalition needs to be more engaging, proactive and in tune with community aspirations and their needs. Cooperation and in-house communication are also essential to creating harmony and providing local campaigns with the resources and means to conduct effective campaigns. The image below is an indication of how similar the campaign leading up to the state election is being viewed. It is of interest to note that both parties have recognised the need to demonstrate community support for local issues.



Liberal Party Community message



Labor Party Community message

**Unity versus disunity.** It now appears that the Liberal party has learnt from its Labor cousins and has taken action to close the online cyberwafare gap and is using similar tactics to engage their members and supporters. But will it be enough and will it be in time to send their messages out in order to manipulate the political environment to their point of view. As a conservative, one would hopes so but at what cost to the Liberals.



One more tape scandal after this and the Govt could put out an album.

Ice dealers state wide will be wheezing a sigh of relief this Ted thing is getting all the

Premier Denis Napthine says the government won't be distracted by "sideshow" issues (leaked tape)

Denis Napthine: "These are matters for Ted Baillieu"

Denis Napthine refusing to answer questions about Ted tape saying it's a matter for Ted

"I am not going to be dissecting this in one way or another if you want comments about that talk to Mr Baillieu

Premier Napthine says he won't be dissecting the tape. Says this morning's party room meeting was "upbeat"

When asked about possible usage of the Liberal Party database to send out

Will disunity continue, will miscommunication and irrelevant attacks on Liberals domestic campaigners and powerbrokers gather momentum until the Liberal party be but a shell of its former self. Will conservatism prevail or will those who left leaning and socialist ideas and concepts take root and remain a core platform of the Liberal Party.

**Political agitators.** There are some within both major political parties who believe that it's time for a change and are pushing forward their hidden agendas of gay marriage, abortion issues, societal moral paradigms being questioned and a subtle push for a new guard to be brought in to usher a period what we would consider today as un-Australian and an anathema to our way of life.

**A new age of political concepts.** At a recent meeting of young Liberals new concepts and breaking new ground ideas were put forth. Ideas and concepts that have the ingredients to bring about change that may not be welcome or acceptable by some members o society. Had the ideas been proposed some twenty years ago,, they would have been hounded and ostracised. But now it seems on the surface that Australian society has matured and thrown off the shackles of a bygone era and accepted individuals who they are and not on the social fears of the past. Whether these new ideas can be translated at the political and legal level is a matter of conjecture.



Premier Napthine says nothing to see here (everything but Baillieu audio)

If that storm had been any bigger we could have called it Cyclone Ted. If Ted were any bigger he wouldn't fit in the car.

Napthine might as well have answered each Q about Ted tape with a gentle shrug

Baillieu is in the House for QT. Has he heard about this yet?

This question time needs more tape.

These poor guys can't order a drive-through without it ending up in an audio file

The youth of today are no longer concerned about the paradigms of the past and they are not tied to ideas that are irrelevant in today's society. They are more concerned about the environment, a fair go for all concerned, community enhancements, a safe and secure environment, lifestyle choices, jobs and employment opportunities, the means to communicate and to travel and they appear more open minded in accepting new ideas and concepts. Despite all of the above, they still seek the warmth the wisdom, the security and mentorship of the mature age generation as guide posts and anchors on life.

The baby boomer generation which has been the most influential generation throughout mans history is reluctant to stop and give up what they have been dong. This creates somewhat a conundrum amongst the emerging generations and solutions are not easy to come by. Vigilance is therefore the key word and with vigilance comes responsibility, a responsibility that is often a difficult one to shoulder in today's world of uncertainty and of new technologies that are continually outpacing our capacity to keep up to date with. One hopes that with the new generation of political gladiators, wisdom, commonsense and the Aussie fair-go is included amongst their political weapons.

### Victoria's Napthine government hit by Ted Baillieu tape scandal - The Australian

The Age Victoria's Napthine government hit by Ted Baillieu tape scandal  
 The Australian THE Napthine government has been rocked by a leaked recording detailing former premier Ted Baillieu's strident criticism of colleagues, plunging the Coalition into yet another pre-election scandal. The Sunday Age newspaper has blamed a thief for stealing ... Tape allegedly reveals Ted Baillieu criticising colleagues, Premier Napthine ... Herald Sun Baillieu tape reveals deep Lib divisions  
 The Age Stolen recording of Baillieu and reporter Farrah Tomazin sent to Liberal MPs  
 Brisbane Times all 6 news articles. Published By: google AU - Tuesday, 24 June



**The youth of today.** The last thing that we want is for crime to rise at a time when our prisons are being filled with young and those who cannot afford legal fees to defend themselves. The last thing we need is a youth culture that believes its best to take up a life of crime and/or revert to a drug culture to take away their loss of self respect and confidence levels. Changing Australian attitudes is one thing, changing a culture is another and yet changes must be made in order that Australia can afford to retain its high standard of living.

### Leaked tape allegedly of former premier Ted Baillieu criticising ... - Herald Sun

24-06-2014 05:04 via Tapes - Google Noticias

The Age  
 Leaked tape allegedly of former premier Ted Baillieu criticising ...  
 Herald Sun  
 Editor in chief of The Age, Andrew Holden, said it was believed the tape was stolen and then one piece of audio was circulated. "It appears that the dictaphone of one of our reporters has been stolen, and one conversation on that recorder used to ...  
 Baillieu tape reveals Lib division  
 The Age  
 Former Vic premier taped criticising MPs  
 NEWS.com.au

Australian governments have the unenviable responsibly of preparing the generations of today for the world of work of tomorrow. To do this many changes have to occur. Changes that may not be seen as palatable and/or welcome by a public who appear to be losing faith in their political representatives of all parties.

**Youth programmes.** I would like to see a review of the youth allowance, especially for those who have left the safety net of the education system and be provided with opportunities and support that will create an environment of self respect and the confidence to be employed.

If means to have access to some form of finance then so be it, but with a difference. In such cases I would like to see a programme that best describes a youth start programme, such as "Skills for Work" (SFW) or "Ever Ready Opportunities" (ERO) and/or Job on Contribution "JOC". These are but some programme acronyms that may assist the youth in obtaining work and seeking employment opportunities.

**Australian industry partnerships.** These type of programmes would be tied to Australian industries that are short of manpower and are willing to train and mentor the youth. Australian industries would be able to apply for tax breaks, be provided with lucrative government tenders, and also have access to government financial incentives. This will enable them to attract and retain for the long term the youth under their care.

Government support and long term financial security should be provided to those industries willing to take on the responsibility of the youth today and create a work force that is ready to meet the needs of all Australians into the future. Failing to provide support will only increase a crime rate that Australians can no longer afford. The year is still young and there is still much room to manoeuvre to the high ground of conservatist policies.

**Factional wars.** In the past I had written that the factional wars were over and that no factions existed within the Liberal party. Having stated this I overlooked human behaviour and the need for greed and lust for power of those who are supposed to represent our society. From a personal point of view, although I would be happy to see an end to the factions I am cognizant of past history that it is not possible. In any case it is a healthy sign that democracy is at its best when there are alternative points of views and alternative methods of delivering a message to Victorian voters. The article in the Age on the 9 July 2014 is a good description of what has occurred in the past and is well worth treading. (see below)

**Back to basics.** I would like to believe that Tony Snell and his management team are over the witch hunt, that the State Director is now focusing on the State election and that the political power brokers who ever they may be can put aside their differences in order that the political elements of the coalition can cross the line at the next State election. I would also prefer to see that the media report facts and not fairy tales in order to increase their profiles and newspapers in whatever format creates wealth for them. Let Victoria become again the Jewel within the Conservative crown and not lean too far to the left where the loonies and alleged recalcitrant sycophants reside. Victorians are fickle voters and if the messages they receive are not compatible with their needs and long term goals, all the media hype and online cyberwafare is but for nought.



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## AGENDA HIDES IN PLAIN SIGHT ON SOCIAL MEDIA STATE POLITICS

Tim Doutre 08 July 2014. Members of parliament and political staffers hiding behind anonymous social media accounts are leaving themselves open to thousands of dollars in fines. An online "arms race" is heating up ahead of the state election.

A political insider revealing all major political parties have staff members running anonymous Twitter accounts and claiming some MPs may also be in on the action. "Everyone from all parties would have some staff members and possibly even MPs with fake accounts," the political insider said. "MPs from all sides potentially would be involved, not a great deal of them but some of the more savvy for sure." Any MPs or their staff campaigning via anonymous accounts are in breach of the Victorian Electoral Act, which requires all electoral advertisements, including social media posts, to be properly authorised. An electoral advertisement needs to include the name and address of the person who authorised it.

The penalties for breaching the act, according to the Victorian Electoral Commission, include: "For a natural person: 10 penalty units (currently \$1443.60), for a body corporate: 50 penalty units (currently \$7218)." However the political insider said that social media authorisation was "a grey area at the moment". "[New] rules aren't written yet for it [social media] so you are trying to apply the rules for one medium to another," he said.

"It is something that is a bit of an arms race. "You see a couple of fake accounts on there so somebody takes a bit of initiative to start their own to counteract that." Swinburne University politics professor Brian Costar said political staffers were using anonymous social media accounts to "fly under the radar". "How do you put the social media material on the same platform of authorisation as your traditional material?" Professor Costar said. "I think there is a lack of knowledge [from political candidates] and I think that's a worry for central party officers; you've got people out there being enthusiastic about things [on social media] and 'breaking the law' without even knowing they are doing it."

Anonymous Twitter accounts focusing on Victorian politics include Labor Failed (more than 2000 followers) and Mrs Denis Napthine (more than 1000 followers). *TWR* is not implying that these accounts are run by MPs or political staff. Another account called #SpringSt Source (SSS), which has more than 1300 followers, said it was "up to the people on Twitter to self-regulate. As much as people might hate it, if people aren't being abusive, they aren't doing anything wrong," SSS said. When asked if #SpringSt Source was run by an MP, political staffer or member of a political party, SSS had no comment. Last month, the VEC made a submission to the Electoral Matters Committee as part of a review into social media's impact on state elections.

The submission revealed major flaws in the Victorian Electoral Act, including social media fast outpacing current regulations. It suggested limiting social media authorisation requirements to candidates and political parties. The VEC had not received a complaint about social media until the 2010 state election. A spokesman said it had not investigated any anonymous Twitter or Facebook accounts. The VEC confirmed that currently all social media posts published by MPs, their staff or members of a political party are in breach of the act if they are actively campaigning and do not carry the appropriate authorisation.

<http://www.theweeklyreviewmelbournetimes.com.au/story/1805755/state-poll-agenda-hides-in-plain-sight-on-social-media/>



## POLITICAL MUCKRAKING HAS A WAY OF BACKFIRING

The Age 9 July 2014 Josh Gordon Josh Gordon is state political editor.

Some five months before the 2006 state election, a notebook was slipped under the office door of the Liberal opposition's then legal affairs spokesman, Andrew McIntosh. The notebook, which belonged to a senior Bracks government strategist, contained information suggesting that Labor was delving into the financial affairs of Ted Baillieu's wife and children.

It also ran through a list of suggested "attack lines", including that Baillieu was "the most out-of-touch Liberal leader in 50 years", was "the toff for Toorak", and was "lazy [and] inherited his money [and] his seat". The Liberal opposition went nuts, claiming it confirmed the existence of a secret taxpayer-funded dirt unit run from within the premier's office targeting family members. A week later, another secret dossier emerged. This time – somewhat embarrassingly for Baillieu – it had been written by a senior Liberal adviser, albeit years earlier.

It contained attack lines to use against former Labor state secretary Jenny Beacham, including details of how Beacham's sister died and the home addresses of family members. The idea that political operatives closely scrutinise rivals is nothing new. The theory is simple: perceptions about character – whether voters intuitively "like" or "dislike" a leader – can have a significant influence on political outcomes. In many cases, this is a perfectly legitimate form of attack. The Napthine government, for example, has been working hard to highlight opposition leader Daniel Andrews' factional links to the powerful construction union, which has been accused of using thuggish tactics to achieve industrial objectives.

Labor strategists shrug this off by pointing out that union behaviour tends to rate a long way behind issues such as health and education on a list of voters' concerns. But this misses the point. By drawing attention to Andrews' CFMEU links, the Coalition is implicitly trying to raise doubts about Andrews' character. The inference is that Andrews is weak and beholden to union demands. The stakes are high. Get the public talking about an opponent being "lazy", "arrogant", "weak" or "out of touch" and the damage can be immense.

It is a strategy that could be lifted from the political philosophy practised by Frank Underwood, the sociopathic master of political gamesmanship from the series *House of Cards*, that is "ruthless pragmatism". At its worst, the idea is to bend the rules, manipulate, cajole and smear to achieve worthwhile political objectives. Such an approach is perhaps more overt in American politics. George Washington's family coat of arms carries the Latin motto "the ends justify the means", while Barrack Obama has admitted to searching for a "ruthless pragmatism when it comes to economic policy".

In the case of Baillieu, the idea was to paint a picture of a man born into wealth and privilege who was unable to comprehend the concerns and challenges faced by working Victorians. As it happened, the strategy backfired. Rather than tarnishing Baillieu, reports about the existence of a taxpayer-funded dirt unit probably did more to hurt Labor, feeding a perception that the former government had become arrogant, tricky and cavalier with public money. Indeed, it wasn't until Baillieu became premier that Labor's carefully alliterated attacks about a "do-nothing, dithering" premier began to bite, perhaps because they started to ring true.

The point is, although the potential gains from such attacks are high, so are the risks. You'd think the balance between risk and reward would be a carefully considered calculation. Yet the clumsiness and lack of sophistication with which mud is often thrown in Australian politics is breathtaking. Some of the worst examples in recent Victorian political history have come from factional operatives trying to smear rivals from within their own parties.

In 2008 two young Liberals working for the party started an anonymous blog devoted to undermining Baillieu when he was Victorian opposition leader, referring to him as "Red Ted" and accusing him of being too far "left" for a Liberal Party leader. An investigation easily traced the post back to two staffers, Simon Morgan and John Osborn, working at Liberal headquarters in Melbourne. Both were sacked from their jobs and the Liberal Party. Then there was the case of Tristan Weston, police adviser to Nationals Leader Peter Ryan who ran a clandestine campaign to undermine former police minister Simon Overland.

An Office of Police Integrity investigation ensued, Weston was outed and dismissed from his job, while the Coalition government faced weeks of scandal. You would think people would learn that these sorts of tactics rarely end well. Apparently not. Late last month a recorded conversation between Baillieu and *The Sunday Age's* state political editor, Farrah Tomazin, was taken from a stolen dictaphone and emailed to hundreds of Liberal Party members. It was designed to inflict maximum damage. Fingers have been pointed at a small group of hard-right operatives (federal Social Services Minister Kevin Andrews has strongly denied his office was involved). Some Liberals even go so far as to suggest a guerrilla-style campaign is underway to derail the government's re-election changes.

The dictaphone seems to have disappeared from Labor's state conference, held in mid-May, raising the extraordinary prospect that the scandal involved both Labor and Liberal insiders. Police are now examining security footage from the Moonee Valley Racing Club, where the dictaphone was last seen, while the Liberal Party is conducting its own internal investigation to determine who accessed party membership information to leak the material. Depending on what police and the Liberal Party find, the distinct possibility now exists that the scandal will come crashing down spectacularly. If it does, there is a strong chance that both sides will emerge covered in muck.

<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/political-muckraking-has-a-way-of-backfiring-20140709-zt12k.html#ixzz377N1nYo1>



## DID BAILLIEU TAPE LEAK OVER ABORTION? SACKINGS SHOULD FOLLOW

The Red and the Blue 28 June 2014. THE NOTION this week's sensationally leaked conversation between a journalist and a former Premier may have been motivated by abortion as an issue is.

As things stand, as plausible an explanation as any; should it prove to be so, the culprits must immediately be rounded up, dismissed from their jobs and sinecures, and expelled from the Liberal Party. Abortion is an explosive social issue. It is not suitable ammunition for public factional brawling. I acknowledge I have remained silent for a few days this week (*busy, busy*) but readers will know that as ever, I have been keeping an eye on events; I received the now-infamous email on Tuesday morning from a non-existent member of the Liberal Party seeking to distribute the conversation between former Premier Ted Baillieu and *The Age's* reporter Farrah Tomazin.

I do not intend to oxygenate the recording, its transcript or the email within which they were disseminated by republishing them here. In fact, it had been my intention not to comment on the issue at all; whilst I am personally outraged at what appears to have been a stunning act of bastardry committed against the Victorian Liberal Party ahead of a difficult state election, I was initially disinclined to draw any further attention to it by discussing it, and I indicated as much to the party's State Director, Damien Mantach.

When he contacted me earlier in the week as part of an audit to establish which party members had received the offending email and which hadn't. But in light of a conspiracy theory that emerges in the Editorial of today's edition of the *Herald Sun* in Melbourne, I wanted to make some remarks in reply. Broadly, it has been speculated in the mainstream press this week that the potential culprit (or culprits) at the top of the "suspect list" were senior advisers working out of a federal Liberal MP's electorate office in Melbourne; whether that eventually proves to be so or not, the *Herald Sun* has today made the case that the entire episode may have been driven by anti-abortionist elements within the party rather than a more orthodox factional ambush aimed at crippling the obvious target, Premier Denis Napthine.

Whether Ms Tomazin's tape recorder was stolen, as it has been claimed, or that a more sinister explanation lies behind an incendiary background conversation between herself and Baillieu becoming public, there are two facts that seem set in stone: one, that an attempt to derail the Coalition's campaign for re-election in what was already a tough political environment has been made; and two, that the private contact details of grassroots Liberal Party members have been accessed and obtained for the purposes of making that attempt.

It is my view that once the person (or persons) responsible have been identified, the Party can and should humiliate them publicly, dismiss them from any paid employment they hold at the discretion of either the party or an elected representative, expel them from the Liberal Party, and — if it can be established that offences may have been committed — to take any and all available steps to have them prosecuted. I conveyed this view, in similar terms, to Mr Mantach in my email to him on Wednesday night.

The abortion angle raised by the *Herald Sun* simply adds another piece to the puzzle; it, too, may be a correct assessment or it may prove to be a red herring. Either way, with that explosive issue now squarely on the table in the context of the investigation, there are a few points that have to be made. I think readers know that my personal position on abortion is a reasonably conservative one; with the exception of cases of rape or incest, or where carrying a foetus to term would either endanger the life of the mother or result in a severely disabled (or still) birth, I am not in favour of abortion and would never utter a syllable to advocate abortion on demand.

Having said that, my opinion is exactly that: my opinion. Others will make their own judgements according to their values, and their own decisions; and I phrase it thus because those who wish to procure an abortion will do so irrespective of whether it is safe or not, legal or not, and regardless of the proliferation or otherwise of facilities at which to do so. I'm not having a bob each way in making that observation; it is a recognition of the reality that whether you like it or not, the continued occurrence of abortion is a hard, cold fact.

If a situation is to exist in *any* mainstream political party whereby hatchet jobs, factional ambushes and the attempted termination (sorry for using the word) of the political careers of opponents are pursued on the basis of such an inflammatory issue, then as a society we've got a very, very big problem. The *Herald Sun* is right; if advisers to federal MPs (or to cabinet ministers) are pursuing an internal agenda with engineering a savage lurch to the Right over abortion as its objective, they must be dismissed from their positions; if an *actual* federal MP is directly involved, then disciplinary action including disendorsement and expulsion from the Liberal Party must also be pursued.

Aside from anything else, there is a clear delineation of jurisdictional responsibilities in relation to abortion: it is the preserve of the states, and as much as people involved in federal politics might protest that they remain members of a state-based division of the party, the fact is that from the perspective of operational executive government a line would have been crossed if their involvement were to be confirmed.

And it goes without saying that any other members, employees or associates of the Party found to have engaged in this stunt should be thrown overboard without delay or compunction — *irrespective of whoever they are*. Much has been made in recent months of the intention of disgraced renegade MP Geoff Shaw's intentions to introduce a Private Member's Bill into state Parliament, seeking to alter Victoria's abortion laws and tighten them to reflect his deeply held, fundamentalist Christian views — a charade, if and when it eventuates, that the Napthine government will need like the proverbial hole in the head.

Stirring up the passions and hatreds that invariably accompany debate of this issue is irresponsible and counter-productive at the best of times; making it an explicitly targeted political football aimed at sabotaging a government led by moderate Liberals is reprehensible. And the Coalition government in Victoria faces a fight to be re-elected: invigorated by the ascension of Napthine to the Premiership last year, blessed with what barely passes for "an opposition" and a ridiculous, puerile incompetent as opposition leader — and armed with the best budget position of any state — Napthine should be an unbackable favourite to win.

Despite the problem of Geoff Shaw and the political trickle-down effects of the Abbott government's budget, I believed until recently that Napthine was a certainty. Now, I'm not so sure — and if the Coalition loses office, this episode over the leaked conversation with Baillieu will probably be seen as the final nail in its coffin. To be fair, there are a couple of the items on Shaw's list of demands that could be readily agreed and implemented to try to shut the matter down without causing an almighty detonation in the immediate run-up to the state election in November; for example, the requirement that a doctor opposed to abortion be legally compelled to refer a patient requesting it to another doctor who will provide access to one can and should be rescinded.

Doing so would remove a moral and ethical imposition on the doctor opposed to abortion, whilst making no practical difference whatsoever: the reality is that doctors prepared to provide access to abortion services are publicly known, and will continue to be so. But for the most part, abortion is a matter last dealt with extensively in Victoria just a few years ago. Little meaningful purpose is to be served by reopening the can of worms now.

Aside from what I have said in this article I will make no further comment on the Baillieu tapes scandal until the investigations to identify those responsible have been concluded. But if the *Herald Sun* is right — and the whole thing was orchestrated as part of a push for hardline abortion reform by elements inside the Liberal Party with too much of an idea of their own importance — then that's pretty sick, the outrage of the injury the matter seems certain to inflict on the Napthine government notwithstanding.

<http://theredandtheblue.org/2014/06/28/did-baillieu-tape-leak-over-abortion-sackings-should-follow/>



## WHERE'S RUPERT? MURDOCH'S TWITTER ACCOUNT LAYS DORMANT ON POLITICS

July 9, 2014 Henry Belot. Rupert Murdoch's Twitter stream has remained quiet on Australian politics for months. *Photo: Brendon Thorne/Bloomberg.* It's one of Twitter's most scrutinised accounts and its clout has been applied to subjects as diverse as Australia politics and religious disputes in the Middle East.



Yet, like a Mars rover that had lost contact with Earth, there's been eerie silence from Rupert Murdoch's normally combative account in recent months, a silence broken only to express his excitement for *X-Men* or, like on Wednesday morning, to congratulate one of his publications on a special edition.

Rupert Murdoch's Twitter account *Photo: Screenshot from Twitter.* While not an early adopter of Twitter, Murdoch, who joined in late 2011, quickly warmed to it. His more than 1100 tweets frequently feature commentary on politics and policy, as well as the plight of his media empire.

Yet the 83-year-old media mogul didn't even mutter a word after the conviction of Andy Coulson and the acquittal of golden-girl Rebekah Brooks, nor his New York minute with Tony Abbott in June. The US citizen, who drew criticism for using his account to pontificate on Australian politics during the 2013 election, hasn't made a single reference to domestic politics in more than seven months - his longest break by far.

UNSW associate professor David McKnight, who has published a book on Rupert Murdoch's political influence, said the silence might be making amends for his heightened activity during the election. "He may have gone a little overboard in the lead up to the election by saying how much he liked Tony Abbott as a conviction politician," he said. "Perhaps he was told off by an advisor or maybe he worked out that he should just lay off it for a while."

Given the dramas the Coalition has endured trying to sell its budget and its sliding standing in the opinion polls, a 140-character pep talk from Murdoch might have been expected. But Murdoch's last reference to Tony Abbott was on the PM's first day in office on September 19 when he tweeted praise for him "firing top bureaucrats, merging departments, and killing carbon tax". His last comment on Australian politics came more than seven months ago when he urged the Abbott to take "quick and painful actions" in the wake of a "wildly incompetent government".

A month earlier he urged the Abbott Government to "cancel wild spending" after railing against public sector workers, sick days, and "phony welfare scroungers sucking the life out of economy". But Mr McKnight said when the media baron is tweeting he gives the public a fascinating insight into the mind of "a volatile and moody emperor who rewards those he favours and spites those he doesn't".

"It [his account] gives us a fascinating insight into his personality in that he's so powerful he's unrestrained by a public relations minder," he said. Mr McKnight said a scroll down Murdoch's Twitter feed shows he has a number of obsessions from private schools in the US to economic deregulation and an infatuation with the progressive NY Mayor Bill Blasio.

Ogilvy managing director Yianni Konsantopoulos said when Murdoch does tweet his account proves to be influential, although not as powerful as his tabloid mastheads in Australia. "He's got more than 500,000 people following him and he's been using the platform for the better part of three years," he said. "His klout score, which is how most organisations define how influential a user, is 90 which is really high," he said.

"Obama comes out with a score of 99 and most big influencers internationally rank around the 70 mark." Mr Konsantopoulos said the nature of Murdoch's content just reinforces the fact he's the only one who is controlling the account, although he said he's definitely had some help compiling a list of who to follow.

<http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/wheres-rupert-murdochs-twitter-account-lays-dormant-on-politics-20140709-zszwm.html>



## THE TRAGIC STORIES BEHIND THE SLOGANS

July 10, 2014. THERE are few more vexed issues in Australian politics than the question of our nation's handling of asylum seekers. Ever since the Tampa appeared on the horizon just weeks out from the federal election, "boat people", "illegals" and "queue jumpers" have become political buzzwords in our country.

But pejorative terms such as this serve only to dehumanise those people fleeing regimes we can't imagine and taking risks we can't comprehend to take a chance on a future they can't control. Throwing open our borders is not the solution, but nor is making life more treacherous for some of the world's most desperate. So Sister Pat Linnane's call for Bathurst people to bypass the politicians and instead pen letters of support to refugees advocate Julian Burnside has some merit. In 13 years the Coalition has shown little to suggest it is interested in anything more than sloganeering on asylum seekers.

And the Labor Party relinquished any claim to moral high ground on the issue when it fell into line with former leader Kevin Rudd's proposed "PNG solution" shortly after he returned to The Lodge last year. That was a politically expedient move focused more on the coming election than what was best for the asylum seekers. And so we can't be confident that either party is truly looking for a compassionate and workable solution.

And all the while desperate families looking for a new life in Australia continue to be treated as wooden pawns in a game of political chess. They are real people, with real hopes and real fears. They deserve better than what our politicians are currently delivering. For humanity's sake, and for our nation's sake.

<http://www.westernadvocate.com.au/story/2407208/the-tragic-stories-behind-the-slogans/?cs=117>



## **BAILLIEU'S BOMBSHELL RESIGNATION: WHERE TO NOW FOR VICTORIA?**

7 March 2013 Zareh Ghazarian Lecturer, School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University

Denis Napthine may have resigned as Liberal party leader in 2002, but he is now Premier of Victoria. AAP/Julian Smith.

The resignation of Ted Baillieu as Leader of the Liberal Party brought an end to his premiership just two years after guiding the Coalition to a narrow victory in 2010. Baillieu, an architect by trade, had a lengthy history with the Liberal Party before entering parliament in 1999. Most notably, he was the Victorian Liberal Party President during the years of the Kennett Coalition government.

He began his parliamentary career when he was preselected for the safe Liberal seat of Hawthorn in 1999. Baillieu's rise to the premiership began when he replaced Robert Doyle to be leader of the Liberal Party in 2006. While Baillieu led his party to defeat in the election held in November of that year, it appeared that his job was relatively safe as the Party did not appear to have a candidate that would replace him.



**Baillieu's premiership.** Ted Baillieu confronts the media after the resignation of Liberal MP Geoff Shaw, one of his final acts as premier. AAP/Julian Smith. After grinding through another four years in opposition, Baillieu led the Coalition to a shock election victory in 2010 when it ousted the Brumby-led Labor government, winning 45 seats to Labor's 43. The political problems Mr Baillieu grappled with during his two years as premier have their roots in the unexpected victory of 2010.

Holding a majority of just one seat always meant that his government would be one seat away from crisis. The decision of the Frankston MP, Geoff Shaw, to resign from the party over as yet unspecified disagreements with Baillieu's leadership precipitated the premier's downfall. Baillieu was also grappling with secret police phone recordings a story broken by the Herald Sun, which appeared to undermine his authority and power within the government.

Bubbling issues concerning healthcare, law and order and the pay and conditions of the state's teachers were also beginning to take their toll on his government's popularity. As recently as the start of this week, Newspoll showed that the opposition was holding onto a significant lead in two-party preferred terms.

**Victoria's new premier.** The incoming Premier, Dennis Napthine, is also a long-serving MP. First elected to parliament in 1988, Napthine currently represents the seat of South-West Coast and was Minister for Ports, Regional Cities, Racing and Major Projects in the Baillieu Cabinet. He was also a minister in the Kennett government.

Napthine first became leader of the Liberal Party in opposition following the Kennett government's loss in 1999. Opinion polls, however, showed Napthine was failing to gain the support of voters and the party replaced him in 2002 with Robert Doyle. After being unceremoniously dumped by his party over ten years ago, Napthine's rise to the highest public office in Victoria suggests that persistence pays in politics.

While the change of leadership serves as a circuit breaker for the government, it also raises many new challenges for the Liberal Party and the Coalition government. In the first instance, Napthine will have to work to garner the support of the disaffected Geoff Shaw. Getting Shaw's undertaking to support the government's budget and fend off no-confidence motions would be an ideal start for the incoming premier. If he is unable to do so, then the government may yet fall.

**What of generational change?** Another challenge for the Liberal Party concerns its next generation of leadership hopefuls. Matthew Guy, the state's planning minister and former chief-of-staff to Napthine, has been touted as a future leader. Guy, however, is in the upper house. While there is no constitutional rule that would forbid Guy from becoming premier, it is traditional for leaders of the government in Westminster systems to hail from the lower house of parliament. Indeed, in 1968 John Gorton became the only prime minister in Australian history to come from the upper house.

Within a few weeks, he contested a by-election for a lower house seat which he subsequently won. Guy's failure to take over immediately from Baillieu can partly be attributed to the fact that he is currently in the Legislative Council. While other potential leaders exist within the parliamentary wing of the party, the decision to install Napthine suggests the party placed its faith in the "old-guard" rather than take a chance on its new generation. Baillieu was seen as an unconventional politician and his exit from office came swiftly. He leaves the government in the same situation with which it started; holding a slim majority that can be undone by the decision or action of a single MP.

<http://theconversation.com/baillieus-bombshell-resignation-where-to-now-for-victoria-12676>