



THE FILE -1

Peter Adamis 11 August 2014

THE FILE archives replaces the now defunct and almost forgotten BaillieuGate series. THE FILE will provide readers articles, opinions and anecdotal information relevant to the grass roots members of our society. The website is under restructure to enable readers to contribute online.

Abalinx takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the reports. Readers contributions will be admitted as long as they are in accordance with Abalinx website policies and procedures.

Changes, innovations and surprises.

The BaillieuGate leaked tape affair has almost come to a halt with no clear result. The Opposition leader, Daniel Andrews may have had some egg on his face recently over the destruction, leaking and misuse of the journalist tape, but in the end the Victorian people are not to be taken for granted or underestimated. Victorians on the whole have been traditionally happy to follow their representatives in what they do on their behalf. This traditional point of view is no longer the view amongst the younger voters who are tech savvy and up to date with the news within their own environment and that of global events.

Tony Abbott.

The Prime Minister has risen to the diverse challenges faced by his government, demonstrating leadership attributes that were seriously lacking in the previous Labor government. He has displayed those leadership ideals that we in Australia expect of our political leaders. He has been an avid listener to the concerns of the Australian people over suggested changes to 18C (Racial Discrimination Act), the handling of the MH17 disaster, the diplomatic discussions over the Pacific and defence cooperation between the USA, and China. He has consistently supported his ministers and assisted in developing them to meet their portfolios.

This has not gone unnoticed and his messages to the Australia people to join the Australian people has gone down well. He was at his best when he demonstrated compassion and a good understanding of Islamic communities who were beginning to feel alienated living within Australian society. Tony Abbott was able to show that a clear demarcation existed between those Muslims in Australia and those who left our shores to become involved in the Middle East.

To date, Tony Abbott has met all of the challenges faced by his government and in doing so has shed the negative profile that Labor attempted to paint him with at the last Federal election. The only negative reaction to Tony Abbott came from the Veteran community who did not appreciate his unfortunate comments regarding the Japanese presence during WW2 and the alleged "honourable" acts during that same period. (Read more as per attached articles)

Julie Bishop. The Foreign Minister has also emulated her leader Ton Abbott in rising above all of the diplomatic challenges and barriers since coming to government. Her charge in the United Nations against the powers responsible for bring down the MH17 airplane was commendable, her handling of the sensitive spying allegations in Indonesia are coming to a close in air of reconciliation with her Indonesian counterpart. The hardline stance on suspending, cancelling and monitoring of radical Australians attempting to leave Australia to fight for an ideal that is not compatible with Australian way of life and beliefs. Her discussions with world leaders, especially those of China and the USA in resolving sensitive issues, her support to her colleagues over the unfortunate budget fiasco are an indication of the wealth and depth of experience that she has accumulated in the past and has prepared her well for her role. (Read more as per attached articles)

Joe Hockey. The Treasurer Joe Hockey has fallen upon his sword on at least three occasions, in both cases the Prime Minister has been supportive of his ministers and yet has managed to distance himself from their ill timed, ill conceived and poorly received comments. Still Joe Hockey means well and his heart is in the right place but he will need some support to tone down his arrogance if he is to remain relevant in today's changing society. His attitude and over exuberant management of a budget considered by many to be draconian and harsh may have been over the tip but if one stood still for one moment and took into consideration the ramifications of diluting the budget, they would reconsider their opposition, The short term pain for long term gain is commensurate with Australia current financial situation and his budget would have resolved many of the issues facing all Australians. (Read more as per attached articles)

George Brandis. George Brandis for all his faults is still a believable and competent Attorney General. At a recent tribute to the former Senator Helen Roger, George Brandis demonstrated that he was able to laugh at himself regarding a misunderstanding what metadata was all about, Methinks that George Brandis was put on the spot and could not and was unable to reveal exactly what was to be checked and monitored by security agencies as it would have provided terrorists and other nefarious groups the information need to counter any such monitoring. This has been overlooked by many and George Brandis has taken it on the chin very well. George Brandis advisers in future should also ensure that others involved in making changes to legislation are involved. In this case one means involving the Communication Minster and the Privacy Commissioner so that they too can add their weight and points of view to any suggested changes. (Read more as per attached articles)

Scott Morrison. After a flying start and a rise in popularism for six months into the Tony Abbott Liberal Government, Scott Morrison showed to the Australian people that he meant business in returning illegal refugee boats back to their place of origin. However once the honeymoon was over cracks appeared that challenged all of the best advisers associate with Immigration.

However it is of interest to note a softening of the Federal governments softening on the illegal boats even though illegal refugee boats are still turned away, the children of those in detention are soon to be released into the Australian community. This was only done under a Liberal Government and the previous Labor government have much to answer for their inadequate handling of the illegal refugee boats.

Kevin Andrews - Senior Victorian Federal Minister. The Minister for Social Services has possibly the largest budget to manage and is the best minister to oversee and manage a department that is in serious need of a restructure. His approach to dealing with welfare recipients appear to be harsh but what he is attempting to achieve is to change the attitudes of all Australians, especially those of the younger generation that the age of welfare payments are over and that the youth will require to give back to the community what they receive in funds from Centre-link. One must admit that despite all the positive rhetoric emanating from Kevin Andrews, the position have misconstrued his policies and for some time appeared to be succeeding in diluting the programs in place to reduce the welfare bill on Australians.

Kevin Andrews is Victoria's senior Federal Minister who has a enormous wealth of political experience and having served under a previous Howard government is the best minister to tackle the Social Services portfolio. In addition to his Social Services responsibilities, he is also the Federal Multicultural Minister, a role which keeps him busy in attending the many diverse community events throughout Australia. It's a pity more Victorian Federal members were not as proactive.

On a local level, Kevin Andrews was born and raised in raised in country Victoria, he studied law and arts at Melbourne University before completing a Master of Laws at Monash University. He has a love of cycling and is current involved in the Pollie cycling raising funds for a needy cause. He is a devout Christian whose ideals on life are found in the traditional values of Australia and one can judge by his achievements that he will be around for some time to ensure that the programs being implemented are embedded well into the future.

Kevin Andrews is supported by a team of advisers well versed in their responsibilities and also by a team of dedicated and committed team within his own seat of Menzies headed by Sandra Mercer Moore. It is of interest to point out that Sandra Mercer Moore was the former Metropolitan Female President, a role that she excelled in and ensured that the values of the Liberal party were being maintained in line with traditional Liberal conservatist ideologies. As chairperson for the seat of Menzies, Sandra Mercer Moore has been instrumental in ensuring that the seat of Menzies remains a strong part of the Liberal coalition heartland

Eric Abetz. Eric Abetz as the employment Minister has a difficult portfolio in changing employment practices and creating an environment where Australians can contribute to the long term economic stability of Australia. Work for the Dole is high up on his agenda and one must add that it has caused some angst amongst the non profit organisations and these long term unemployed. There is some concern over the raising of the age of retirement to 70 by many have failed to see that it will not come into effect for some years yet. It also provides Australians with the opportunities to continue working shod they want to do so.

The Work for the Dole is a good concept but the name and some of the mechanisms require further tweaking to make it presentable and acceptable to the wider community. Tenders for organisations considering taking on Work for the Dole were recently closed, but it would appear that the concepts being considered appear somewhat different and varied from the previous successful Work for the Dole programs under the Howard Liberal government. Although it's still far too early to tell what the ramifications are, one believes that much work and research needs to be conducted in order to emulate some of the successes and achievements of its predecessor.

BaillieuGate Leaked tape. The matter of the leaked Liberal party email addresses has not been resolved and one wonders whether the independent investigation employed by the Liberal party found huge gaps in the Secretariats methodologies that left it open to hackers, misuse of power, misappropriation of responsibilities and poor management practices. Some have been trying to link the Liberal Party's parting of ways with the staff member responsible for membership with the leaked email addresses. This however cuts no ice with many senior Liberals as the matter of separation and the leaking of the BaillieuGate were weeks if not months apart. Their parliamentary colleagues of the Opposition leader, Andrew Daniels now affectionately calling him "Dictaphone Dan" or "'DD" for short. I am of the opinion that they are trying to emulate Richard Nixon where he was called "Dirty Dick" (another DD acronym)

Abbot Lies website. Whoever thought of purchasing the domain name of abbot lies is a fool to think that they would be so clever as to attract members by redirecting them to a website of their own choosing. In the first place denigrating the Prime Ministers is not a good start. Secondly only those interesting in smut and making stupid comments would be attracted to such a site. It appears to me that those who are supposed to be the online social media gurus could well do with some retraining on what is the best strategy to winning elections. I can say with some experience that rubbishing ones leader in that manner is not the way to go. Should Victorian Liberals believe that it's the best way forward, think again, as they should not be blaming their poor political performance on the Federal Government. Any poor showings in the Victorian polls is symptomatic with their own poor performance by mediocre parliamentarians who should have stood down and allowed a new generation to be bloodied in the arena of politics. (Read more as per attached articles)

ANECDOTAL GOSSIP SHEET

Cause for concern amongst senior Liberals. Presently there is so consternation amongst Liberal at the recent polling in Victoria. Senior Liberals were hoping that the Royal commission, the Labor debacle over the BaillieuGate leak tape, the Shaw exile from Parliament, the good management of Victorian assets, the low unemployment, the projected building projects to select but a few, would close the gap between Labor and the Liberal Government.

Ill-conceived witch hunt. This closing of the gap scenario was almost realized when it was found that labor had mishandled the BaillieuGate leaked tape affair and but in doing so the political arm of the Liberal party embarked on an ill conceived witch hunt which created an environment of disunity, break away groups alienated its members and in doing so failed to focus on what was important, that of the looming state election.

Polls. The recent polls indicate that they have returned back to their positions sometime in early April of this year and this is becoming somewhat of a worry as it will mean that some marginal seats may be beyond the grasp of those contesting those seats to close the voter gap. I am of the belief that it will be one of the closest and hard fought political battles where every vote will count and where surprises will emerge from seats that were considered unwinnable and others will be lost due to the incompetence of those who are in the belief that it has been won. (Read more as per attached articles)

Innuendoes. There are also some members spreading malicious gossip and innuendoes of other members in order to remain relevant in the hierarchy of the management team. This form of behaviour has no place in conservative circles and these members are being isolated and their views no longer considered to be of any value.

Ambulance and paramedics. Labor's political influence with the unions in not resolving the Ambulance and paramedics anomalies will back fire as Victorian voters are beginning to wake up to the reluctance of Labor to bring about closure to a long standing thorny issue. Labor want the matter to become a major issue against the Liberal government and do what it takes to ensure that the matter is still a contentious issue at the State election.

Reneged promises. There are rumours that promises made to a certain upper house member will not be kept and that the person will be left high and dry. This same member had conceded their seat in order that another more valued member was given a safe seat in order to remain in parliament.

Holidays for the boys. A couple of parliamentarians were overseas at the expense of the tax payer having a holiday prior to stepping down from their parliamentary duties. Maybe they were on a research mission in order to find methodologies and concept that would benefit the Australian tax payer. On the other hand who knows it could be a genuine holiday with their family. Who they are nobody knows and I guess nobody cares, Such is the way of politics.

Chinese bashing by Clive Palmer. Whatever one may think of Clive Palmer, I can guarantee readers that he is only saying what is on many Australians lips but is not mentioned openly. It is true that other nations are looking towards Australia and 'owning it' by proxy means via business dealing and projects, agricultural holdings. and large tracts of land that hold vast resources.

It is true that overseas Chinese investors are pricing young Australians out of a home buyers market and that is despite what the economists tell us that the figures indicate otherwise. Whatever the case may be with Clive Palmer, one wonders whether its a strategic political ploy on his part because his private business are in a legal tangle with Chinese investors and therefore his public comments are designed to intimidate or deflect opponents from further action. Only time will tell. (Read more as per attached articles)

Travel rorts and false claims. I have stated this in the past that some Victorian parliamentarians should be ashamed of their disgraceful behaviour in thinking that they can get away with making false claims as indicated in a recent article. Geoff Shaw backs those claims of false documents being submitted to avoid Fringe Benefit Tax. Parliamentarians should be setting an example once they reach the dizzy heights of parliamentary gladiators. It is no wonder we the Victorian voter has lost faith in our politicians and that there are few who rise above the nefarious activities of their colleagues.

A lurch to the left. There is concern within the Victorian Liberal party that there has been a lurch to the left and that the values that attracted many to the Liberal party are no longer as relevant as they once were. There is a clear lack of positive leadership, lack of a long term vision, no political objectives that one can say that they are worth pursuing and it has created an environment where its every man for himself.

The Victorian Liberal party once the Jewel for Liberalism has degenerated into a cesspool of sycophants, hangers on and recalcitrant's clinging onto to staffer roles and others doing medial roles according to the bidding of their parliamentary masters with no second glance that some of the activities are only fit for the gutter. Many staffers are responsible for such activities and for the spread of vile comments that only brings a disrespect upon them and those they represent.

Authors note: Apologies to the purists for the decimation of the English language. We hope that the website will be restructured and up and running next month in time for readers online contributions.



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TONY ABBOTT ACKNOWLEDGES DISAPPOINTMENT OF VOTERS AND STARTS TO TIGHTEN UP GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT.

AUGUST 11, 2014. Tony Abbott in Holland. Source: The Australian. THE groaning burden of buyer remorse has been acknowledged by the Abbott government, and the Prime Minister last week began steps to placate his political customers. Opinion polls and stark anecdotal evidence has made clear that while voters are not ready to switch to Labor, they are not happy with the Coalition product they bought at the last election. The Tony Abbott era has not been the clean, efficient transition they hoped. It hasn't been simply a matter of switching off the turmoil of six years of Labor, and the absence of an untroubled changeover has troubled many voters. Here are seven issues contributing to that buyer remorse.



1. THERE GOES THE KNIGHTHOOD. Tony Abbott's surprise decision to revive Australian knighthoods and dame hoods immediately became the subject of national mockery which the Prime Minister seemed to take personally. More important, Mr Abbott's move to deliver something he hadn't promised at the election highlighted things he did promise but which hadn't arrived. The whole country seemed to enjoy mocking Abbott. Source: *Courier Mail*



The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce was the first anointed under the resurrected system. Source: *News Corp Australia*. Labor called them broken promises and the Government's credibility was knocked about. The Prime Minister appeared more interested in creating a modern versions of medieval British aristocracy than dealing with current problems of ordinary families. And to many, that was confirmed in May.



2. THE BUDGET LEAD BALLOON. Treasurer Joe Hockey and Finance Minister Mathias Cormann on Budget Day, May 13. Source: *Supplied*. The May Budget arrived as a shock for families who had been told their household expenses would be eased but who instead faced extra costs on health care, motoring and tertiary education, lower tax concessions, and the prospect of having to work for 50 years before qualifying for the aged pension.

There were immediate questions about the fairness of the Budget, the lack of pre-Budget consultation with premiers and industry peak bodies, and the attempts to bring voters along with the Government's fiscal thinking. It remains a big problem for Tony Abbott. History shows Budgets eventually get passed, but some with greater political pain — and unnecessary pain — than others.

3. AND BABY MAKES THREE.

Mr Abbott has stuck by his paid parental leave policy in the face of the bulk of opinion the money should be used to help defray high child care costs, the greater barrier to women returning to the workforce in a child's early years. The pressure forced Mr Abbott to lower the income threshold from \$15,000 to \$100,000 but not to dim his determination to get the measure passed. He claimed that those rejecting his prized plan were motivated by anti-Liberal politics. In that case they included almost every The Prime Minister has stuck with his paid parental leave scheme against the bulk of advice employer group, the head of a bank, the audit commission he created, and some of his own backbenchers.



4. THE VIGILANTE GANG WHO COULDN'T SHOOT STRAIGHT.

Clive Palmer during Question Time. Source: *News Corp Australia*. The Government initially failed to deal with the July arrival of a 10-strong Senate cross bench and in particular the three Palmer United Party senators who were guided by mischief making party founder Clive Palmer. The confusion over the Palmer troops was highlighted by the aftermath of Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull dining with Mr Palmer and a few others in Canberra at the Wild Duck restaurant.

Mr Turnbull then had to duck some wild swings from right-wing Liberal activists in the media — led by 2GB broadcaster Alan Jones and News Corp columnist Andrew Bolt — who saw the meal as a sign of a Turnbull putsch. However, all they did was bring to the forefront the suggestions Tony Abbott's leadership — rating poorly in polls at the time — was at risk; that Mr Turnbull was working for a change; the Budget was hugely unpopular. Only the latter was true. Labor was delighted, but Prime Minister Abbott was reminded even some of his strongest supporters were rattled by the Government's performance.

5. 18C OF HEARTBREAK. Mr Abbott had promised to modify the Racial Discrimination Act and in particular section 18C which deals with offensive material. It was a promise to a small number of close advisers including Bolt who had been found guilty of breaching it by a court. The Prime Minister and a small group of backers said it was a free-speech issue. However, community groups, and his own Aboriginal affairs adviser, saw it as a bid to take free shots at minorities. Attorney General George Brandis supported the removal of 18C but did more than most to keep it in place by claiming we all had a right to be bigots. The Prime Minister last week bowed to the numbers and took the proposed changes off the table.



6. WHICH ONE'S THE 'ANY' KEY?

Attorney General George Brandis. Source: News Corp Australia.

The Government's overall competence was portrayed badly after mistaken statements on the important matter of security agencies having access to our digital messages.

In a Sky News interview Attorney-General George Brandis tripped over definitions and appeared to not understand the very measures he would have to oversee. It wasn't a 'Gotcha' interview, just intelligent, valid questioning, and the senator mucked it up. Interestingly, Communications Minister Turnbull was rushed into calm the waters chopped up by his cabinet colleague, coming to the rescue of Mr Abbott. There have been other issues on which ministers have not seemed to be masters and mistresses of their duties, but the Brandis example was the most spectacular, reminding some of John Hewson attempting to explain how his proposed GST would affect the price of a birthday cake.

7. IT'S NOT MY FAULT I'M TREASURER. Joe Hockey has told audiences and fellow members of Parliament he is the most disliked politician in Australia. The man who is Treasurer and a high profile hater of wind turbines has also indicated it's everyone else's fault. A friendly biography released recently showed Mr Hockey has leadership ambitions which he feels were betrayed by others including Malcolm Turnbull. There is not wholehearted agreement with this within the electorate, or within the Liberal Party where Mr Hockey is being seen as something of a sook. Worse, he is being seen as being unable to do his job, which includes optimising the politics of tough economic decisions.

<http://www.news.com.au/national/tony-abbott-acknowledges-disappointment-of-voters-and-starts-to-tighten-up-government-management/story-fncynjr2-1227020322463>



LIBERAL PARTY REGISTERS ABBOTTLIES.COM.AU TO BEAT LABOR TO DIGITAL PUNCH

SAMANTHA MAIDEN THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH
AUGUST 10, 2014.

Australia could help US with Iraq airdrops. THE LIBERAL Party has embraced the unusual political strategy of registering the domain name "Abbott Lies" as a website address and redirecting all traffic to Liberal website promoting the May budget.

Stung by accusations that Tony Abbott has broken promises as Prime Minister, the Liberal Party decided to beat Labor to the punch and register the address www.abbottlies.com.au. But the attempt by digital natives within the Coalition to get ahead of the game has backfired with Labor openly mocking the bizarre strategy. Anyone who types in the address "Abbott lies" is now redirected to an image of Joe Hockey beaming behind a banner that urges readers to "lean more' about the 2014 budget.

The abbottlies.com.au web traffic is immediately diverted to www.liberal.org.au. According to domain registry documents the website was registered by the Liberal Party of Australia on May 13, the same day that Joe Hockey delivered his first budget. Labor leader Bill Shorten said the decision of the Liberal Party to register the domain name abbottlies.com.au was a spectacular own goal.

ABBOTT TO VISIT NETHERLANDS ABOUT MH17

Daily Telegraph SAMANTHA MAIDEN THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH AUGUST 10, 2014

"Tony Abbott's lies are up in lights for everyone to see at abbottlies.com.au," Mr Shorten said. "He can try all the tricks and excuses he likes, it won't change the fact that he has broken his promises. "Tony Abbott knew exactly what he was doing, he knew Australians would be angry about his lies — that's why he bought these websites." Mr Shorten said the fact it was registered on the same day as the budget was a inadvertently fitting. "On the very night when Tony Abbott was breaking all his promises, the Liberal Party was buying these websites," he said. :

I think there is an incredibly irony when people type in abbottlies.com and they get redirected to the Liberal Party's main website." The website strategy comes just days after the Prime Minister Tony Abbott and the Attorney General George Brandis were mocked over their attempts to explain plans to ask telcos to store metadata for longer to protect Australia against crime and terrorism attacks.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/liberal-party-registers-abbottliescomau-to-beat-labor-to-digital-punch/story-fni0cx12-1227019121938>

NEWSPOLL SPIKE IN SUPPORT FOR LIBERALS AND TONY ABBOTT

THE AUSTRALIAN AUGUST 12, 2014 Phillip Hudson Bureau Chief Canberra

THE Coalition's primary vote has jumped back to 40 per cent for the first time since April, regaining lost ground from its unpopular budget in the biggest single rise in support for the Abbott government in its 11 months in power. And Tony Abbott's focus on international affairs has boosted his own stocks in the head-to-head comparison with Bill Shorten for the third consecutive poll, helping him take back the lead as the nation's preferred prime minister for the first time in four months.

http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/spike-in-support-for-liberals-and-tony-abbott-newspoll/story-fn59niix-1227021111147?from=public_rss&utm_source=The+Australian&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=editorial&net_sub_uid=32535672#

DOW CHIEF ANDREW LIVERIS: AUSTRALIAN POLITICS AN 'EMBARRASSMENT ON WORLD STAGE'

DAMON KITNEY The Australian August 15, 2014

AUSTRALIAN politics is in a "scary" and unprecedented new paradigm that has seen it become an "embarrassment on the world stage" over the past six years, says the man considered to be one of the most successful Australian businessmen in the world. Dow Chemical Company chairman and chief executive Andrew Liveris yesterday also echoed the recent call by NAB and Woodside chairman Michael Chaney for the Coalition and Labor to adopt a bipartisan approach to stop minor parties in the Senate derailing the government's legislative agenda. "I have never seen (the like of) the last six years of Australian politics before," Mr Liveris said during a lunch in Brisbane yesterday hosted by the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

"We are in a complete new paradigm. The past five years before this last one were an absolute embarrassment on the world stage. The 'yelling at each other' routine I know well in Washington. And you actually copy the Americans very well. "Instead of working together you just throw things at each other and yell at each other. That is really scary. I have never seen an Australia like that. "Now to see it move into this other paradigm where there is more yelling but of a different kind — we should have got beyond that in terms of both sides of the aisle being for Australia instead of for being re-elected." Last month Mr Chaney urged both major parties to work together to achieve necessary micro-economic reform across the economy.

"The Labor opposition has a lot more votes than Palmer," Mr Chaney told *The Australian* and Deutsche Bank Business Leaders Forum in Perth. Darwin-born Mr Liveris has worked with Dow for 38 years and is widely viewed as one of corporate America's most powerful chief executives. He also sits on the board of computer giant IBM and is co-chair of Barack Obama's Advanced Manufacturing Partnership steering committee. His comments reflect the frustration in big business about the minor parties in the Senate — led by Clive Palmer's party — opposing the government's legislative agenda. Nufarm chief executive Doug Rathbone this week warned about the dangers of a dysfunctional Senate, backing recent comments by the likes of Rio Tinto chief financial officer Chris Lynch and BlueScope Steel chairman Graham Kraehe.

Telstra chief executive David Thodey, BHP Billiton chief executive Andrew Mackenzie, ANZ chief executive Mike Smith and GE Mining chief executive Steve Sargeant have also called on the business community to back Tony Abbott to ensure Australia remains globally competitive. Mr Liveris added a caveat that the first 12 months of the Abbott government could be viewed like those of the Howard government in 1996. While it struggled for the first year, that government went on to make sweeping reforms to the tax system and industrial relations. "I am hoping this is just growing pains, learning on the job," he said. When it was suggested that Mr Palmer was not around in the Howard government era, Mr Liveris replied: "I did try not to say the name. I did try to say you are in a new paradigm."

Mr Liveris accused the Abbott government of backing away from investing in research and development, which he said would have devastating consequences. "I think that is tragic," he said. "If you go down the scale of R&D investments from a public-sector leverage point of view to the universities and CSIRO, you will keep tumbling down that scale. I believe Australia punches above its weight but in this area it is falling behind in the intersection of innovation and production." The government cut CSIRO's funding by \$111 million over four years in this year's federal budget, which will result in 500 job losses. Mr Liveris noted that 90 per cent of patent applications in Australia were filed by companies from outside Australia, while the latest OECD data placed Australia among the nations with the least innovation collaboration between public research institutions and industry. Asked about turmoil in the Middle East and other regions, he said youth unemployment was the world's greatest crisis.

<https://plus.google.com/118107316791307666801>

A FIRM GAZE AND STRAIGHT TALK FROM AN UNFLAPPABLE FOREIGN MINISTER JULIE BISHOP

August 16, 2014 Peter Hartcher *_Sydney Morning Herald political and international editor*

When Tony Abbott met Barack Obama in the Oval Office, his opening proposition was one that American presidents very rarely hear: "What can Australia do to help?" The offer at their June meeting, confirmed by US and Australian officials, made an impression. Presidents and potentates from around the world line up to make requests and demands of US presidents. Abbott did not want to be yet another supplicant. A month later, MH17 was targeted and destroyed by Russian separatists in Ukraine as they wage undeclared war. Vladimir Putin said Russia was blameless: "Undoubtedly, the state on whose territory this happened is responsible for this awful tragedy," was his response. Ukraine, in other words.

But, while other leaders politely reserved judgment over culpability, Abbott didn't hesitate: "This is only happening because Russia wants to stir up trouble," was his immediate reaction. "Russian proxies using Russian-supplied equipment [are] doing terrible things." *The Wall Street Journal* wondered whether Abbott were playing a "bad cop" to Europe's polite "good cop." Watching Abbott's forthright performance, Obama remarked to aides: "We need a few more Tony Abbotts in the world," according to US officials. It wasn't long before Washington took Abbott up on the offer of help.

The US asked for Australian assistance in the humanitarian mission of saving the Yazidi refugees trapped on Iraq's Sinjar Mountain this week. Australia unhesitatingly put two C-130 Hercules transport planes into the effort. The planes were stationed at an Australian airbase in Dubai. The base itself, and the 500 or so Australian personnel stationed there, is concrete evidence of Australia's readiness to join US missions in the Middle East. In the same week, Julie Bishop defied Russian pressure and Russian trade sanctions. She plainly named Vladimir Putin's covert invasion force as it approached Ukraine.

"Any intervention by Russia into Ukraine under the guise of a humanitarian crisis will be seen as the transparent artifice that it is," said the Foreign Affairs Minister as Moscow dispatched a 280-vehicle convoy to resupply its separatist forces waging war inside Ukraine. "Australia would condemn in the strongest possible terms any effort by Russia to enter Ukraine under the guise of some kind of humanitarian mission," she said.

Bishop was not the only voice raised in warning, but Moscow singled her out for special rebuke. Even though the EU president, Jose Barroso, "warned against any unilateral military actions in Ukraine, under any pretext, including humanitarian", it was Bishop that the Russian ministry for foreign affairs targeted the next day: "Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has gone farther than others in making irresponsible innuendoes against our country even though one would think that her position presupposes building bridges between countries, not destroying them."

Was Bishop intimidated? Not at all. She turns the onus back on to Russia: "I think Russia should follow its own advice and build better relations with Ukraine," she shoots back. "That would mean withdrawing their support from the Russian separatists in Ukraine, and that includes Russian military support," she tells me. Russia has sought to punish Australia, together with a raft of other countries, by imposing trade sanctions. It has banned the import of Australian agriculture imports, which, last year, were worth some \$400 million. Australia's global farm exports in 2012-13 were \$38.2 billion. The federal government is helping farmers to find alternative markets; it is not relenting in any way. It is now weighing trade sanctions against Russia.

Bishop has not only "stared down" Russia, as a headline in this newspaper claimed this week. The woman whose stare can explode a concrete garden gnome, as demonstrated by the ABC's Chaser team, has also been put to the test by China. And won. In doing so, Bishop has freed Australia from a long-standing, self imposed subservience to the Middle Kingdom. At issue was China's sudden, unilateral claim on the airspace over the East China Sea last November. It was a direct challenge to the airspace of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

It was especially aggressive because China said that any non-civilian aircraft flying into its air defence identification zone needed to submit prior notification or face "defensive emergency measures" at the hands of China's air force. In other words, risk being shot down. In reality, it was escalation of China's territorial struggle with Japan for the Senkaku or Diaoyu islands, which sit under the flight zone. The US branded China's move as "destabilising". Within days it defied Beijing by flying two B-52 bombers through the claimed air zone, without prior notice and without consequences. Others also criticised China's abrupt declaration. Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister reacted strongly. She called in China's ambassador to rebuke him, and issued a public statement:

"The timing and the manner of China's announcement are unhelpful in light of current regional tensions, and will not contribute to regional stability. Australia has made clear its opposition to any coercive or unilateral actions to change the status quo in the East China Sea." China waited until Bishop visited Beijing the following month, and gave her the treatment. The Foreign Affairs Minister, Wang Yi, met Bishop then called in the TV cameras for a so-called "pic fac," where pictures are taken but nothing substantive said. But it was a set-up. With the cameras rolling, Wang scolded Bishop.

She had "jeopardised bilateral mutual trust and affected the sound growth of bilateral relations". The moment he finished, and before Bishop could respond, the cameras were ushered out. It was, said a senior Australian diplomat, Peter Rowe, who had been present, the rudest thing he'd seen in 30 years. In Australia some China watchers and some in the media adopted the pre-emptive kowtow that has been a persistent feature of Australian life for decades.

This is the automatic assumption that Australia is in the wrong, that China is in the right, and that Australia should expect to be righteously punished for its impudence. This is the position assumed by prominent business figures Kerry Stokes, for instance, and James Packer, after Australia and the US announced the rotating deployment of US Marines through Darwin. Stokes said he was "physically repulsed" by the decision because it showed Australia had chosen sides. He seemed not to have noticed that Australia has been in a military alliance with the US since 1951.

Packer said that "we, as a country, have to try harder to let China know how grateful we are for their business." Bishop, of course, was unapologetic. And what has happened? Absolutely nothing. Well, nothing negative. Trade and investment continues. China's President, Xi Jinping, has asked to accelerate negotiations over a free trade agreement with Australia. "If ever there was a moment when the Chinese were going to complain about the alliance, the occasion for it would have been when General Fan visited in July," says the director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Peter Jennings.

Fan Changlong is one of the two vice-chairmen of China's Central Military Commission, making him one of the two most senior military leaders. "But the most substantive thing that happened was that China agreed to join trilateral military exercises with Australia and the US," reports Jennings. "In fact they're pretty happy with the state of the relationship." Even when Abbott embraced China's arch-rival, Japan, in a new military embrace, the relationship has continued to thrive, untroubled by anything other than token protests from Beijing.

And when Bishop held a meeting last weekend with Wang, the man who had scolded her so rudely over the air defence identification zone, what happened? The meeting was cordial, ran well over time, and mainly concerned the two countries' shared problems. The air zone did not come up. Not only is there a complete absence of negatives and a continued flow of positives; Beijing seems to have eased up on its gratuitous lectures to Australia through the mouthpieces of its state-owned media.

Bishop, in short, has freed Australia from the self-imposed subservience of the pre-emptive kowtow. "We are not afraid to stand up for Australia's interests," she says. And the Chinese know it too. She stood up to the bluster of Chinese diplomatic theatre and found it was bluff. Bishop rejects the standard self-description of Australia as a middle power. "Middle of what? There are something like 186 countries, so that makes us the 90-something country." She prefers to call Australia "a top 20 country".

Of course, the foreign policy of the Abbott government has not been perfect. Australia has yet to fully recover from the early bungling of the relationship with Indonesia, for instance. And while Abbott does not lack enthusiasm for the US alliance, he may yet need to learn restraint. A conservative who correctly warned against the folly of the 2003 invasion of Iraq from the outset, Tom Switzer, of the US Studies Centre at Sydney University, has a wise word for Abbott in case the US makes a few more requests over Iraq:

"It is one thing to help provide humanitarian relief for those poor defenceless people in the Kurdish north. It is another thing altogether for an Australian government to even think about committing military forces to this mess-in-potamia. The national interest does not justify intervention, the political support does not exist and can't be mobilised." Still, on the evidence to date, Australia under Abbott and Bishop has struck a foreign policy pose as the plucky country.

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/julie-bishop-a-firm-gaze-and-straight-talk-from-an-unflappable-foreign-minister-20140815-104nca.html#ixzz3AbSKRUFW>



VOTER DISILLUSIONMENT AT RECORD LEVELS, ACCORDING TO FIGURES FROM ANU AND LOWY INSTITUTE

AUGUST 16, 2014. Hockey stands by 'poor people' comments. LEFT or right? Labor or Liberal? Shorten or Abbott? It turns out that we couldn't give a stuff which way the political pendulum swings. Surprising new figures from the Australian National University reveal the staggering depths of disillusionment Australians have in our political system.

Only 56 per cent of people believe that their vote makes a difference, down from 70 per cent in 1996, and as for our views on the two major parties, it's a case of a plague on both your houses. Drawing on figures that stretch back to the 1960s, an all-time low of 43 per cent of today's voters believe it makes a difference which party is in power. One of the most sobering statistics is that only 6 per cent of voters have confidence in the federal parliament, down from 10 per cent in 2008. There has been a strong decline in satisfaction in democracy since the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd soap opera, but a change of government has been unable to restore our faith in the system.



Sorry Tony ... Voter faith in democracy is in the doldrums. *Source:* News Corp Australia Professor Ian McAllister of the ANU said Australian voters were usually more optimistic about democracy when a new government was ushered in, but the Abbott Government had not enjoyed the typical honeymoon period. "We would have expected (satisfaction in democracy) to increase but it hasn't," Prof McAllister said. "Basically, it was a case of one unpopular government being replaced by another unpopular government."

Prof McAllister said voters wanted to see the Coalition bring back the good governance that Labor had lacked, but this had not eventuated. "I think there is a view that the government hasn't really performed very well," he said. Included in the polling was an open-ended question about what they believed was most important and one in 10 respondents mentioned the Budget. "That has never happened before, Prof McAllister said.

Recent polling by the Lowy Institute backs up the ANU's findings, revealing that only 60 per cent of people believed democracy was preferable to other kinds of government. This figure dips to 42 per cent among 18-29-year-olds. To explore this ambivalence, the institute asked voters why they felt the system wasn't working. The strongest response was that "there is no real difference between the policies of the major parties", at 45 per cent. The second-strongest explanation, at 42 per cent, was that "democracy only serves the interests of a few and not of the majority of society".



Bill Shorten or Tony Abbott? For voters, it's all the same. Source: News Corp Australia. More than a third of those the Lowy Institute polled agreed with the proposition that "I have become disillusioned with Australian politics and think another system might work better".

Today, people are more likely to be "politically homeless". In the 1960s, 75 per cent of people never changed their vote from one election to the next. That figure is now closer to 50 per cent, according to the ANU research.

The findings contain powerful lessons for politicians of all stripes. Prof McAllister said voters had become cynical, especially regarding the trustworthiness and accountability of their representatives. Keeping promises matters. "I think the message is governments have got to perform much more effectively than they necessarily are," Prof McAllister said. He attributed part of the disillusionment to the frequency with which Aussies go to the polls, which was higher than nearly any other country. With federal elections every three years and state elections every four, and local government polls on top of that, Aussies tend to vote every 18 months.



The Julia Gillard-Kevin Rudd dramas didn't help. *Source: Getty Images.* He also said Australia's powerful Senate had the power to undermine governments' authority. And the problem of political disengagement could get worse for parties that didn't embrace reform, Prof McAllister said. The Lowy Institute findings confirm that 18-29-year-olds were more dismissive of democracy than their elders.

Older people saw politics through the prism of civic responsibility, while young people were more likely to engage in politics through social media campaigns or online petitions, such as change.org, rather than join a political party, Prof McAllister said. "There is a fundamental transition going on about how people view politics," he said. "Younger people are no less interested in general, they're just not interested in the formal, traditional model of politics. "The political parties haven't caught up with it yet." So what could turn this voter apathy around? Prof McAllister said a major part of the problem was that our last election in 2013 was a contest between too deeply unpopular leaders, Tony Abbott and the tarnished Kevin Rudd. "If one of the political parties could gain a charismatic leader — such as a Bob Hawke — that could reinvigorate it," he said.

<http://www.news.com.au/national/voter-disillusionment-at-record-levels-according-to-figures-from-anu-and-lowy-institute/story-fncynjr2-1227026564693>



AUSTRALIA WON'T BE FORCED INTO US WAR WITH CHINA: RUSSEL

Staff Reporter 2014-08-16

Daniel Russel. (Photo/CNS). Daniel R Russel, US Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, has refuted the former Australian prime minister Malcolm Fraser and said Australia will not be forced to join an American war against China, reports Huanqiu, the website of China's nationalistic tabloid Global Times.

Russel's words come after the US and Australia held a ministry-level meeting which aims to integrate the two countries' ballistic missile defense system, increase US ships' visits to Perth and opening a bombing range in the Northern Territory to US forces. Fraser in his new book dangerous Allies urges Australia to abandon its alliance with the US to avoid conflict with China. He claimed Australia is stuck in America's system and the alliance denies Australia the choice to remain neutral if war should ever break out.

Russel said he believes there will not be a war between the US and China and it is extremely misleading to say the US strategy in the Asia-Pacific heightens the risk to Australia. He expressed concerns over China's aggressive posturing in the South China Sea and trade attacks against US companies in China. Australia has not been targeted in trade or anti-monopoly probes since China relies on iron imported from the country, said former Australian ambassador to China Geoffrey Raby. Australia is also highly dependent on China for a third of its exports. China is sending political messages through economic measures and he believes China is reminding the US of the cost it will pay if their relations sour, he said.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?cid=1101&MainCatID=11&id=20140816000016>

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER APPROVES CONTROVERSIAL DATA RETENTION LAW

Faisal Arshad August, 16, 2014

Australia has just introduced its own set of data retention laws under the garb of counter-terrorism measures. According to The Daily Telegraph, Australia's National Security Committee (NSC) will force and oversee internet companies and telecoms to keep user data for at least two years. For those who are alien to the Meta data concept, it relates to all background information stored by internet-enabled devices like laptops, tablets and mobile phones. For mobiles, it may include pertinent data like times and durations of calls but not their content.



Emphasizing on the need for stricter surveillance, Prime Minister Tony Abbott said that Australia-based fighters were involved in "exultantly holding up the severed heads of surrendering members of the Iraqi security forces". He said that as many as 150 Australians have been identified to be working with terrorist groups in either Syria or Iraq.

As Abbott approved the surveillance law, the Islamic community warned of the potential for a "witchhunt" against Muslims. In the eyes of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, the law forwarded by Attorney General and accepted by Prime Minister is nothing short of an attempt to race hate laws ahead of national security and Australians' safety. In addition, NSC also already cited terrorist activities of Australia-based extremist groups in countries like Iraq and Syria.



Two Sydney men, Mohamed Elomar and Khaled Sharrouf, have already been prosecuted by Australian Security Intelligence Organization for posting violent images on their social media. According to George Brandis, Attorney-General of Australia, a number of citizens have returned home with terrorist motives.

Not all have been defending surveillance though. Tim Wilson, Australia's human rights commissioner sees data retention scheme as one acting against people's freedom. He went on to say that the new law was a "a very serious threat to privacy". Australia's third biggest political force, The Greens, felt that the government was "trashing long-established legal norms".

As far as the world of internet privacy is concerned, there is an immense uncertainty regarding the new laws. With a great amount of Australian population already hiding their digital communications behind proxies and VPNs, critics view efficacy of new proposals as only half-baked. Users are of view that virtually everyone will have their lives monitored by the government.

<http://www.bestvpnservice.com/blog/australian-prime-minister-approves-controversial-data-retention-law/>



WHO ARE YOUNG LABOR AND YOUNG LIBERAL?

August 18, 2014 Richard Willingham *State Political Correspondent for The Age.* Illustration: Matt Golding.

Learning how to hate, build and debate policy, and campaign are the qualities members of the major parties youth branches are exposed to. The seedy underbelly of some Liberal party groups were laid bare last week, with *The Sunday Age* reporting senior members of the Melbourne University Liberal club had posted racist, crude and misogynist comments on social media, describing women as "sluts", Muslims as "degenerates" and saying all feminists are ugly.

Similar revelations about a member at Swinburne University followed. Many politicians cut their teeth in youth politics, particular on university campuses. Prime Minister Tony Abbott has a well-documented record in student politics, while Opposition Leader Bill Shorten was the head of Victorian Young Labor. But who are the Young Liberals? And their opponents in Young Labor? What role do these clubs and branches play in the wider political game? "It's where you learn to really hate," a senior Labor operative says.

The idea is repeated by many figures across the ALP, and to a lesser extend the Liberal Party, who say while the youth branches do great work it can be sometimes hijacked by nasty politics breeding enmities that last decades. In 2011, a rift between the Victorian ALP's Right factions spread into Young Labor with a bitter row over the election of its next president, with allegations of forged ballots and illegal access of personal files. The stoush involved SDA powerbroker Joe de Bruyn's son Michael and Shannon Threlfall-Clarke, who was backed by the so-called "Short-Cons" (the power blocs associated with Shorten and Labor senator Stephen Conroy) as well as the Socialist Left.

Powerbrokers and warlords in both parties have used the youth branches to identify "talent" in junior ranks and recruit them to their own cause, be it for internal or external fights. The most activist members of the youth branches or university clubs quickly find work in either the party apparatus or in the office of a like-minded MP. Both parties agree that there is genuine value in the youth arms, be it the formally aligned Young Labor and Young Liberal groups, or non-affiliated university party clubs. Current and former members of the groups say they are particularly good places for learning political skills including how to debate and articulate an argument on policy. It is also where brutal, nasty – and often juvenile – tactics are practised.

Senior MPs and officials say the groups are critical in allowing young people to get involved and exposed to formal structures of the broader party and is a place to identify talent, especially for work in the non-parliamentary arm of parties. In the Labor Party, being a member of Young Labor means that they can meet and debate with their peers rather than attend branch meetings with old party members. The enthusiastic political members are particularly useful for campaigning with members often ready at the drop of a hat to hit the phones, knock on doors or staff barbecues to help sell the party message.

The Melbourne University Liberal Club has hit the news for the wrong reasons, and many senior party people including MPs admit the group has had a cultural problem in recent years. That club has a solid list of alumni including state treasurer Michael O'Brien, and federal colleagues including Scott Ryan and Tony Smith. Recently elected (but not formally endorsed) Victorian Young Labor president Emily Abrahams views Young Labor, which any party member aged between 14-26 is automatically a member of, as a unique opportunity for youth issues to be pushed into party policies. She also believes that Young Labor is a forum for issues and policies not tackled by the broader party.

"Young people can look at things in more abstract ways, with less detail while also looking at bolder ideas," she says. Like many across the party, and indeed also in Liberal ranks, she views the youth arm as an important tool in campaigning as they are "energised and available". Due to their age, many young members, be it in the formal party group of Young Labor or Liberal, or in the non-official university clubs, are not in full-time work, so are readily available for campaigning. This year the Young Labor conference threw its doors open to any member who wanted to register in a bid to foster wider involvement in the party.

Senior figures believe it was a big success and have pointed to the youth movement in the past as being the pioneers of important social issues, including pushes for greater equality. In a statement Victorian Young Liberals president Simon Breheny, who also works at the Institute of Public Affairs, said the Young Liberals played a positive role within the party. "Young Liberals provide vital support to Liberal candidates during election campaigns, and we seek to influence policy through a number of forums within the party," Mr Breheny said. As Young Liberal president, Mr Breheny sits on the party's administrative committee.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/who-are-young-labor-and-young-liberal-20140816-104msd.html>

ABBOTT MEETS ISLAMIC COMMUNITY DON'T MIGRATE UNLESS YOU WANT TO JOIN OUR TEAM

THE AUSTRALIAN AUGUST 18, 2014 Jared Owens Additional reporting: *Pia Akerman, David Crowe, Gina Rushton*

TONY Abbott has called on the Islamic community to speak out against extremism and embrace "Team Australia", and said the national flag should always be flown alongside any other flag. The Prime Minister today met with Islamic community leaders in Sydney to discuss his government's national security strategy to combat the phenomenon of young Muslims joining extremist factions in the Middle East. The meetings are aimed at rebuilding bridges with community groups that campaigned against the government plan to scale back racial vilification laws, dumped on the day Mr Abbott announced the new laws to target terrorists.

LAWS: PM reaches out to Islamic leaders. "We've got a serious problem of radicalised people going to the Middle East to fight with terrorist groups. Some of them are going to want to come back to Australia and they do pose a risk if they do because they've been radicalised, militarised and brutalised by the experience," Mr Abbott told Sydney radio 2GB.

"We do have to be vigilant against it and my position is everyone has got to be on 'Team Australia' — everyone has got to put this country, its interests, its values and its people first. "You don't migrate to this country unless you want to join our team and that's the point I'll be stressing." Mr Abbott, abandoning the free speech reforms on August 5, said the proposal had become "a complication" in his effort "to work with the communities of our country as 'Team Australia'". Asked today about Australians flying the flags of radical Islamic groups, Mr Abbott said:

"The only flag that should be flying is the Australian national flag. "If people want to be flying other flags — a corporate flag for instance — fine, but the Australian national flag should always be part of it." Mr Abbott said it was important to "encourage the moderate mainstream to speak out". "Overwhelmingly our country is comprised of good, decent people who want to put Australia and its people first," he said. "It's important that individual communities can't be caricatured on the basis of a militant few rather than ... the sensible majority."

Later, Mr Abbott told a "multicultural media conference" in Sydney that the proposed terror laws were not about protecting "one group of Australians from another group of Australians", in an apparent reference to concerns from the Muslim community. He said it was in the "absolute interests" of every community to "expose and to counter any potential for home-grown terrorism". "Because if there is one thing that could damage the rich and strong social fabric of our country, it would be a mass casualty event," he told the forum. Mr Abbott is concerned that the 150 Australians involved in conflicts in Syria and Iraq may bring their radicalised view of Islam back to Australia. "The last thing we should be is complacent about this," Mr Abbott said.

"We've been successful up until now in identifying and preventing potential terrorism. "I pray to God that we continue to be successful in this very important (area)." Included in the government's \$630 million counterterrorism package is a funding boost for the Australian Federal Police for its "community outreach" programs. But the Islamic community is more concerned about parts of the package that make it a criminal offence to visit a "designated area" without a valid reason, such as seeing family or doing humanitarian work. Islamic leaders told The Australian yesterday the Prime Minister should not finalise the new laws without detailed input from the community.

President of the Sydney-based Lebanese Muslim Association, Samier Dandan, who said he would not be attending the meeting, called for community engagement and national debate about the laws. "We need to be careful we're not going back to John Howard days with the first terror bills," he said. "There needs to be clear community consultation that this isn't targeting one group of the community, or as Abbott says 'Team Australia'. "All team members need to be told what the strategy is." Groups including the Arab Council of Australia and Lebanese Muslim Association were angered by the government's election commitment to amend Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. Mr Abbott dropped the reforms to 18C when he announced the counterterrorism powers on August 5.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/dont-migrate-unless-you-want-to-join-our-team-abbott-meets-islamic-community/story-fn59niix-1227028006917>



HERALD SUN/GALAXY POLL SHOWS ALP WOULD DEFEAT THE COALITION AT THE NEXT ELECTION, JUST 100 DAYS AWAY

JAMES CAMPBELL STATE POLITICS EDITOR
HERALD SUN AUGUST 18, 2014

Victorian Premier Denis Napthine must come from behind to win the next state election.

PREMIER Denis Napthine faces a massive challenge to overcome a four-point gap in the polls and win a second term in office.

With this week marking 100 days to the state election, a Herald Sun/Galaxy opinion poll has revealed Labor's Daniel Andrews is on track to be Victoria's next premier with the ALP holding a 52-48 per cent lead over the Napthine Government. The poll result, which Liberal and Labor strategists said was in line with their own polling, sets the scene for a bitter political fight in the lead-up to the November 29 election. Today's poll also delivers a major blow to Dr Napthine's hopes of a come-from-behind victory with a finding that 62 per cent of voters rate Labor's signature policy of removing Melbourne's 50 worst level crossings as more important than the Government's East West Link project, which is favoured by only 28 per cent.

A senior Government source said the poll was "about right" and "would have been a lot worse a month ago". If Labor maintains its two-party-preferred vote of 52 per cent across the electorate, the resulting 3.6 per cent swing would hand the party a 12-seat majority in the Legislative Assembly. Such a swing would see Labor picking up the Liberal seats of Forest Hill, Mordialloc, Frankston, Carrum and Bentleigh, and retaining the seats of Bellarine, Ripon, Monbulk, Wendouree and Yan Yean, which have become notionally Liberal under last year's redistribution. Since the last state election in 2010, the Government's primary vote has fallen almost 5 per cent to 40 per cent, while Labor's vote is up almost 2 per cent to 38 per cent.

The Greens vote is on 12 per cent, virtually unchanged since 2010, while Victorians are not flocking to Clive Palmer, with only 3 per cent of people planning to vote for the billionaire's Palmer United Party. In a sign the Federal Government's woes are affecting the State Government's re-election chances, one in three Victorians said they were less likely to vote for Dr Napthine because of the performance of the Abbott Government. The good news for Dr Napthine is that 41 per cent of voters prefer him to Daniel Andrews as premier, compared with the 33 per cent who favour the Opposition Leader.

Another good sign for a Government seeking re-election is there has been a big turnaround in the number of people who think Victoria is heading in the right direction compared to the last Herald Sun/Galaxy poll in February. In February, 46 per cent thought the state was heading in the wrong direction while only 43 per cent thought we were on the right track. But in this poll a majority — 51 per cent — think Victoria is going in the right direction compared with 37 per cent who feel the state is going the wrong way.

Voters were relatively evenly divided on the question of who would better protect Victorians' jobs with 39 per cent saying Dr Napthine and 38 per cent saying Mr Andrews. But on the question of

who would be better at keeping the CFMEU in check, Dr Naphthine was the clear winner with 47 per cent favouring him on the question ahead of 23 per cent who backed Mr Andrews.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria-state-election-2014/herald-sungalaxy-poll-shows-alp-would-defeat-the-coalition-at-the-next-election-just-100-days-away/story-fnocxssc-1227027513602>



VICTORIAN LABOR LEADS COALITION 52% TO 48% AHEAD OF ELECTION, SAYS POLL

Gay Alcorn theguardian.com, Monday 18 August 2014. More worrying for the Coalition is the polling trend, Newspoll showing Labor ahead since mid-2012. Photograph: Julian Smith/AAPImage. Naphthine government battling two handicaps – the Abbott government in Canberra and Victoria’s progressive tendencies.

Barely 100 days from the Victorian election, the contest is Labor’s to lose, with the Coalition government battling two big handicaps – the Abbott government in Canberra and Victoria’s progressive tendencies. A Herald Sun/Galaxy poll published on Monday showed Labor is ahead of the Coalition on a two party preferred basis, 52% to 48%. Analysts said this was a reasonably good result for the Naphthine government with just over three months before the 29 November election, because the deficit was not insurmountable and voters were only now starting to focus on state issues.

More worrying for the Coalition is the polling trend. Newspoll, published in the Australian, has shown Labor ahead since mid-2012, with only a short-lived boost for the conservatives after Denis Naphthine took over the Liberal leadership from Ted Baillieu in March last year. With renegade former Liberal MP Geoff Shaw now an independent, the major parties are locked at 43 MPs each, plus the Speaker. Taking into account a redistribution since the 2010 election, Labor needs a 0.9% swing to win. In the Galaxy poll, the government’s primary vote fell almost five points to 40% since the last state election, with Labor up nearly two points, at 38%. Support for the Greens is unchanged at 12%, while just 3% intend to vote for the Palmer United party.

The poll confirmed previous evidence that the unpopularity of the federal conservative government is hampering Naphthine’s chances, even though conventional wisdom has it that Australians differentiate between state and federal politics. One in three people polled said they were less likely to vote for Naphthine because of the performance of the Abbott federal government. Anti-government rallies such as Bust the Budget have been largest in Victoria. The November election will be the first big test of whether the tide is beginning to turn against the conservative dominance across the country, and the first significant electoral test of the Abbott budget. A key local issue, the \$18bn East West Link project, a cross-city road running from east to west through the inner northern and western suburbs, appears to be a problem for the government.

More than 60% of voters rated Labor's policy of removing Melbourne's 50 worst level crossings as more important than the government's top transport priority, favoured by just 28%. The project has been criticised for its huge cost and perceived lack of transparency, with two legal cases under way to try to have the full business case released publicly. The government says the project is essential to reduce growing congestion in Melbourne and that the full business case is commercial-in-confidence. If Napthine loses, it will be the first time since 1955 that a first-term government was defeated in Victoria.

Monash University's associate professor Paul Strangio said the poll was "not too bad" for the Coalition as it suggested the contest was tightening. He said that since the 1980s, Victoria tended to support Labor federally and at the state level "by default". "That's another part of the equation here – the Coalition is pushing uphill. The natural disposition of Victorians is towards that middle/middle left on the political compass." Napthine dismissed the poll, saying voters had a "real choice between a Coalition government that's building a better, stronger, safer Victoria ... or a Labor party who did nothing during 11 years in government."

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/18/victorian-labor-leads-coalition-52-to-48-ahead-of-election-says-poll>



EX LIBERAL ELDER STATESMAN BACKS NAPHTHINE

ALEX SINNOTT Aug. 18, 2014.

Malcolm Fraser: "I think the state government deserves a second term." FORMER prime minister Malcolm Fraser has urged fellow Victorians to re-elect the Napthine government, claiming it deserves a second term. Mr Fraser offered a strong endorsement for Denis Napthine's leadership and suggested the Premier had an "intelligent and moderate" approach to government compared to the "bottom of the barrel" politics in Canberra.

"I think the state government deserves a second term," Mr Fraser, who was prime minister from 1975 to 1983, said. "I wish Denis Napthine well. I think he's a battler, I think he's sincere and I believe he's a good advocate for the people of Victoria. I don't think the state Labor Party has earned a right to govern. I think the involvement of the Leader of the Opposition (Daniel Andrews) with what appears to be some pretty difficult practices with some building unions casts a shadow — a New South Wales ICAC (Independent Commission Against Corruption) sort of shadow — over the Labor Party in Victoria.

"I believe that ought to be totally cleared up before people decide whether the Labor Party is again fit to govern." Dr Napthine said he welcomed the endorsement of Mr Fraser, adding that his period as prime minister was a pivotal time in Australia's post-war history. "I'm sure Malcolm Fraser is aware of the work of the Coalition government in investing in key infrastructure, our focus on regional Victoria," the Premier said. "I welcome the endorsement from Malcolm Fraser.

He is well-regarded across Australia and indeed throughout the world for his work in government and post-politics." Mr Fraser was awarded life membership of the Liberal Party as prime minister in 1976 but chose to walk away from the organisation five years ago after Tony Abbott became opposition leader. He said he had since felt free to offer endorsements on merit — backing the Baillieu opposition ahead of the 2010 Victorian state election and Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young ahead of the 2013 federal election. The Premier and Mr Fraser first met in the late 1970s when Dr Napthine was a young vet with the Department of Agriculture.

"I got to know him quite well through my early involvement in the Liberal Party and visited Nareen (Fraser's former property) in my days as a vet," Dr Napthine said. Mr Fraser is not alone among former prime ministers to offer their thoughts on Victorian state politics. In January this year, Paul Keating complimented Mr Andrews, writing to a former Labor MP of his admiration for his work ethic. "I see a bit of Daniel Andrews and admire his energy and pluck," Mr Keating wrote. "He is easily the most energetic of the state opposition leaders." Mr Keating's successor John Howard has also spoken in support of Dr Napthine's leadership when they appeared together at a Liberal Party anniversary dinner in March this year.

<http://www.standard.net.au/story/2493377/ex-liberal-elder-statesman-backs-napthine/?cs=72>



TYCOON PALMER: CHINA WANTS TO TAKE OVER AUSTRALIA RESOURCES

Rebecca Keenan and Jason Scott Aug 19, 2014

Titanic replica press conference. Australian billionaire Clive Palmer during a press. Australian mining magnate Clive Palmer, whose political party effectively holds the balance of power in the Senate, accused China of trying to take over the nation's resources -- earning a rebuke from Prime Minister Tony Abbott's government.

"They want to take over our ports and get our resources for free," Palmer said on Australian Broadcasting Corp. television late yesterday. Palmer also labeled a unit of China's state-owned Citic Pacific Ltd., his partner in the world's biggest magnetite iron ore mine in Western Australia, as "mongrels". Abbott's government attacked Palmer's comments as "hugely damaging", and stressed the importance of Australia's relationship with its biggest trading partner.

The Australian Industry Group condemned Palmer's comments as "ill-considered and inappropriate." Palmer is embroiled in legal battles with Citic Pacific, which has alleged he used funds from a joint account to help finance his political campaign. His nascent Palmer United Party has three senators in Parliament's upper house, making it an influential force that Abbott's government must win over to pass legislation should it be opposed by Labor and the Greens. On the ABC's Q&A show last night, Palmer denied Citic's allegations, calling them "Chinese mongrels."

"I'm saying that because they are communists, they shoot their own people, they haven't got a justice system and they want to take over this country," Palmer said. Citic Pacific declined to comment when contacted today. 'Hugely Damaging' "It's hugely damaging for Mr. Palmer to make those sort of comments because ultimately, he is the big beneficiary of a Chinese investment partner; someone that has paid to help him to develop his resources," Treasurer Joe Hockey said today. "I would say to Mr. Palmer, please do not bring down the rest of Australia because of your biases." Western Australia state Premier Colin Barnett has previously criticized Palmer's long-running dispute with Citic, saying it risks Australia's relationship with China.

Jacqui Lambie, one of three Palmer United Party senators, defended Palmer's statements today. "If anybody thinks that we should have a national security and defense policy, which ignores the threat of a Chinese Communist invasion -- you're delusional and got rocks in your head," Lambie said in a statement cited by the Australian newspaper today. "The Communist Chinese military capacity and level of threat to the western world democracies is at an unprecedented and historical high."

"The Abbott government wants to make it perfectly clear that it greatly values Australia's strong and growing relationship with China and its people," Trade Minister Andrew Robb said in an e-mailed statement today. "Peripheral issues will not distract the government in its work to broaden and deepen this most important relationship."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-08-19/tycoon-palmer-says-china-wants-to-take-over-australia-resources.html>



VICTORIAN ISLAM GROUP PULLS OUT OF ABBOTT TALKS

AUGUST 19, 2014 Source: AAP

The Islamic Council of Victoria has pulled out of planned talks with Prime Minister Tony Abbott. PRIME Minister Tony Abbott's attempt to discuss planned counter-terrorism laws with Melbourne-based Muslim leaders is off to a rocky start, with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) pulling out and urging others to follow.

THE ICV has issued a statement ahead of planned talks with Mr Abbott on Tuesday. The ICV says it was given "extremely short notice" of the meeting and provided with little information on who would attend or what was on the agenda. It comes after Abbott met Muslim leaders in Sydney on Monday. ICV secretary Ghaith Krayem was also critical of comments made by Mr Abbott on Macquarie Radio on Monday, and said it appeared as though the PM's office was seeking to "tick the box" for consultation with Muslims before pushing through its law changes. Mr Abbot's comments in the radio interview included "everyone has got to be on team Australia" and "you don't migrate to this country unless you want to join our team".

"What we look for from our Prime Minister is true leadership in difficult times but what we find ... is a Prime Minister who wilfully places our community in the crosshairs of every bigot and racist in the country," Mr Krayem said. "When we are trying to build harmony and goodwill across the community we cannot understand the motives behind the Prime Minister's inflammatory remarks. "Accordingly, the ICV has withdrawn its attendance from today's meeting and urges all other community leaders to do likewise." The proposed law changes include cutting welfare payments for Australians found to have fought for extremist organisations overseas. The laws would also require anyone visiting certain destinations in civil conflict to justify their travel.

But Australian terrorism experts say the government's plan to cut welfare payments for extremist action is risky and could push vulnerable people into the hands of terror organisations. Terrorist organisations often use financial support as a lure to attract potential extremists and cutting payments could make those offers more attractive, the experts say. "It's a very, very risky strategy," Victoria University Professor Michele Grossman told Fairfax. Monash University professor Greg Barton said cutting welfare payments could erode the trust of the broader Muslim community in the government.

http://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/welfare-cuts-to-extremists-risky-experts/story-e6frku9-1227028850085?from=public_rss&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

ASYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN HELD IN RESIDENTIAL DETENTION TO BE RELEASED INTO COMMUNITY: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Emma Griffiths political correspondent Tue 19 Aug 2014, 3:44pm

Young children and their families held in asylum seeker detention in Australia will be released on bridging visas, but the policy will not extend to children being held on Nauru and Christmas Island. The Government has announced new bridging visa arrangements to allow children under 10 held in residential facilities to be released into the community. Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says the policy will apply to 150 children in detention out of the "500-odd" currently in those facilities. "This is the dividend of stopping the boats," he said. New arrangements include:

- assistance for families to stay in suitable transitional accommodation
- case worker support
- support for children to go to school
- provision of emergency relief support payments
- access to complex health support
- access to orientation programs
- access to English language courses

Mr Morrison said 1,547 children were in community detention at the end of July, although it is not clear how many of those would be affected. Mr Morrison says the visas will be decided on a "case by case" basis. "We are confident we can move a large number of them off community detention into the bridging visa program," he said. Immigration department statistics state 404 children were in "alternative places of detention" in Australia as at the end of June. Mr Morrison says the children and their families will be released on bridging visas before the end of the year. "We still have some consultations we have to do with service providers," he told ABC's AM program. "Because what this announcement does is ensures there's additional support provided to children under the age of 10 who are released with their families on bridging visas." Previously, many of the children and their families had been held in community detention with no visa, no right to work and with requirements to regularly report to the immigration department.



Official statistics: Immigration Department statistics on detention numbers. Morrison faces calls to release all children from detention Australian Human Rights Commission president Gillian Triggs has urged the Government to change its policy to not give work rights to adult family members. In a statement, Professor Triggs says "children may be moved into difficult financial circumstances" if the policy does not change.

Social Services Minister Kevin Andrews says children should not be held in immigration detention "unless there are no other options". She has also pointed to the hundreds of children in offshore detention - 148 on Christmas Island and 193 children on Nauru - who will not be released. Last month, Professor Triggs visited the Christmas Island facility and reported an unprecedented rate of self-harm among children there. She said the "desperation is palpable". But 148 children on Christmas Island and 193 children on Nauru will not be released.

Mr Morrison says the policy applies to children who were in detention before July 19 last year - the date that the former Rudd Labor government announced new boat arrivals would all be sent offshore. He says releasing children from offshore detention would revive the people smuggling business to Australia. "I'm not going to put in place policies that [are] going to encourage children to get on boats, because when children get on boats, they die on boats, and I don't think that's a very good humanitarian outcome," he said. Greens leader Christine Milne says children should also be released from offshore facilities. "There's just no excuse for locking up children, and to say we're going to lock up children and be cruel to them as a deterrent to others is an unacceptable way to behave," she told ABC News 24.

"We have got to look after children." Opposition Immigration spokesman Richard Marles says the announcement is "spin" and Mr Morrison is claiming credit for Labor's expansion of the community detention program. He says the Government now has to detail its plans to move children and families out of detention. "Where is the new capacity? What are the new resources? And what is the advice which says that this decision should only apply to kids who are under 10?," Mr Marles said. "The truth is that today's announcements raises many more questions."

But Mr Morrison has emphasised the Government's "success" in reducing the number of children in detention since the election. He says the number of children in detention has dropped by 516 to 876, including those being held at Nauru. He says the number of children on Christmas Island has declined from 425 to 148 at the end of last month. Mr Morrison says the measure will save taxpayers more than \$50 million over the forward estimates. Official urged troubled Syrian asylum seekers to go home. Meanwhile it has been revealed that Immigration officials on Manus Island urged Syrian asylum seekers who were being treated for severe mental health issues to return home - telling them they would not be settled in Australia or a third country.

Syria is currently embroiled in a civil conflict that the Department of Foreign Affairs has described as an "extremely dangerous security situation, highlighted by ongoing military conflict, kidnappings and terrorist attacks". The transferees were visibly upset and quite anxious, they were quite adamant that I would be sending them home to their death. Email from Manus Island detention centre official. The discussion is revealed in an email exchange in January between several senior Immigration Department staff, obtained by the Guardian Australia under Freedom of Information laws.

An official on Manus Island told colleagues in Australia about a meeting with three Syrian "transferees" currently on the Psychological Support Program (PSP) for asylum seekers at risk of self-harm. "I did say that if they chose to return home, the department would work to get them home safely, with no guarantee of any time frames," the email states. "The transferees were visibly upset and quite anxious, they were quite adamant that I would be sending them home to their death." It explained a fourth Syrian asylum seeker had been at another similar meeting and that all of them "wanted to know what route they would take because most pathways are not safe". A response from an official in Sydney said the "only option in terms of routing will have them flying into Syria from Jordan".

Earlier in the email chain, a manager from the Offshore Returns and Resettlement Branch had discussed how to handle the discussions with the asylum seekers, asking "are we in 'ultimatum' territory?". Another official responded that: "At risk of being blunt, its [sic] Manus and wait until whenever the RSD process has been finalised or return to Syria". The correspondence ends with a request for a teleconference because, as one official says, "a discussion is in order". It is not known what has happened to the Syrian asylum seekers involved. But in March, an email from the department's NSW Travel Unit to the Returns and Removals Strategy and Support Section asks for advice about a "voluntary Syrian removal" in early April. "Escorts and RLOs [Removals Liaison Officers] will be accompanying detainees to Syria via Abu Dhabi and Amman," the email explains.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-19/detained-children-set-for-release/5679994>