



Michael Ronaldson,
Senator for Victoria

Ronno's Roundup

Email Newsletter

25 November 2011 Edition 273

A weekly e-Bulletin for members of the business community,
the corporate sector and the Liberal Party.

Brown's Greens call Labor's tune

When Australians went to the polls in 2010, they thought it an election between Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott.

But instead they ended up with Bob Brown at the helm from where he and the Greens ride roughshod over a dysfunctional and paralysed Labor government.

Julia Gillard and Bob Brown have spent the year consumed by disaster and debacle on top of discontent and discomfort. The discomfort comes from the Prime Minister's solemn pledge before that 2010 election that "there will be no carbon tax under the government I lead".

The Prime Minister betrayed all Australians at the insistence of Bob Brown. The working families that Julia Gillard, and Kevin Rudd before that claimed to represent are now to be penalised by this toxic carbon tax.

The carbon tax will send Australian jobs overseas, increase the costs of living for everyone and still Australia's carbon emissions will rise.

And the new taxes keep coming from Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan.

Australians now pay a flood tax, which came as a real kick in the teeth to those who had already donated to help those who suffered great misfortune in the floods in January.

Why a flood tax? Labor is addicted to new taxes after having already spent the money saved by sound eco-

nomical management of the previous Howard Government.

And soon there will be a mining tax too.

This has also been the year when the live animal export industry to Indonesia was abruptly banned only to be reinstated again. It was also the year when the East Timor solution became the Malaysian solution and then became no solution at all.

Under Gillard's stewardship, the Qantas fleet was grounded and thousands of passengers left stranded across the world all because the Prime Minister was too weak to pick up the phone and take on the unions.

But on many other occasions the Prime Minister had no trouble picking up the phone; such as when she called the CEO of News Limited after the Australian printed a Glenn Milne article which criticised her judgment, or when she spoke to a young boy in prison in Bali, and then leaked details about her conversation to the media.

Is it any wonder Labor's backbench has the Christmas jitters, and clearly Kevin Rudd is eyeing a return to the job snatched from him by Ms Gillard in a midnight political assassination sooner rather than later. The remarkable resignation of Harry Jenkins has just added to a very bad year for the government. Just watch this space in relation to the reason for the Speaker's resignation.

Speaking of that this has been the year that embattled Labor MP Craig Thomson withdrew his defamation proceedings against Fairfax's claims that he had paid for escorts using his union credit card - a scandal which has grown to see Mr Thomson resign as Chair of the House of Representatives economics committee and face three investigations simultaneously by NSW Police, Victoria Police and Fair Work Australia.

And, as Kathy Jackson, the union official who blew the whistle on Thomson was pilloried by union delegates loyal to Sussex Street, Julia Gillard remained Craig Thomson's protector in chief - turning a blind eye to the mounting evidence of Thomson's alleged impropriety.

Further as a consequence of the Thomson investigations, this year also saw a former national president of the Labor Party resign from the party, and one of the biggest unions in south eastern Australia disaffiliate from the ALP and self destruct.

Prime Minister Gillard is in trouble. The Labor-Green Government is in big trouble.

An election could be upon us at any time. Let's be ready.

Government's 'negative' claims a joke

Of the 235 Bills that have passed in the House of Representatives during the 43rd Parliament the Opposition has called a division only 28 times.

This means that the Opposition has only outright opposed 11 per cent of Bills in the House of Representatives.

Most of the time the Opposition either sees the necessity of a Bill or allows it to pass if attempts to amend it fail because while it may not be perfect, on balance it will do more good than harm.

The Opposition makes no apologies for voting against 11 per cent of Bills because the legislation we have opposed will damage our country, our way of life and add to the cost of the family budget.

While in Opposition the Labor Party opposed all the major reforms of the Howard Government. These included Budget measures that paid down Labor's \$96 billion debt and reduced the lowest marginal tax rate from 17 to 15 per cent, the introduction of a goods and services tax, the exemption of small business from unfair dismissal laws, toughened electoral fraud provisions, changing superannuation taxation and the co-contribution scheme and welfare to work measures aimed at increasing workforce participation.

House statistics as of
20 November 2011

There have been at least 195 divisions in the 43rd Parliament called by all parties.

There have been 28 Opposition Second or Third Reading divisions on Government Bills.

Additionally, the Opposition has called at least 53 divisions on Opposition Amendments to Government Bills.

There have been 292 Bills introduced into the House (comprising 244 Government Bills, 19 Bills received from the Senate and 29 Private Members Bills 244)

And 235 Bills have been passed by the House (including one Private Members Bill)

Bills Requiring a Second Or Third Reading Division

- National Health And Hospitals Network Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Competition And Consumer Safeguards) Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Political Donations And Other Measures) Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services And Amenities) Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- National Broadcasting Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Budget Measures) Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Federal Financial Relations Amendment (National Health And Hospitals Network) Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- National Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Tax Laws Amendment (Temporary Flood Reconstruction Levy) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Income Tax Rates Amendment (Temporary Flood Reconstruction Levy) Bill 2011 (Third Reading)
- Electoral And Referendum Amendment (Enrolment And Prisoner Voting) Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Electoral And Referendum Amendment (Provisional Voting) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- National Vocational Education And Training Regulator Bill 2010 (Second Reading)
- Taxation Of Alternative Fuels Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Excise Tariff Amendment (Taxation Of Alternative Fuels) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Customs Tariff Amendment (Taxation Of Alternative Fuels) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Auditor- General Amendment Bill 2011 (Second Reading)

- National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Trade Marks Amendment (Tobacco Plain Packaging) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Parliamentary Service Amendment (Parliamentary Budget Officer) Bill 2011 (Second Reading)

- Parliamentary Service Amendment (Parliamentary Budget Officer) Bill 2011 (End Of Consideration in Detail)
- Clean Energy Bill 2011 [18 Bills , Government imposed Cognate Division] (Second Reading)
- Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011 (Second Reading)
- Clean Energy Bill 2011 [18 Bills,

- Government imposed Cognate Division] (End Of Consideration in Detail)
- Steel Transformation Plan Bill (End Of Consideration in Detail)
- Clean Energy Bill 2011 [18 Bills – Government imposed Cognate Division] (Third Reading)
- Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011 (Third Reading)

Grubby deal prevents debate on veterans' legislation

The Repatriation Commission was given more power last night in legislation passed by the Senate without debate.

While the legislation is welcomed, the absence of any parliamentary debate is not.

Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator Michael Ronaldson, said a grubby deal between Labor and the Greens prevented debate on a package of bills including legislation affecting veterans.

"This week, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs issued a press release congratulating the Senate on passing legislation broadening the eligibility for nuclear testing veterans," Senator Ronaldson said.

"However, the Minister's release did not say that the Senate passed this legislation without, literally, one word of debate.

"The Senate was denied the opportunity to speak about this legislation, or to ask questions of the Government about the details of

provisions which extend powers to the Repatriation Commission.

"Labor and the Greens shut down debate on this legislation because they cannot manage the parliamentary programme.

the Fair Indexation legislation in the Senate on 16 June.

"Labor and the Greens don't want to us have a fair say on legislation affecting veterans, in the same way that they opposed fair index-

"Labor and the Greens have done a dirty deal to deny due process . . .

- Senator Ronaldson



"This week, the Senate was forced to consider 30 pieces of legislation, many without any debate whatsoever, probably because Labor and Greens senators want to start their Christmas holidays early."

Senator Ronaldson said the Labor-Greens decision to stifle debate came on the back of their decision earlier this year to defeat

ation of military superannuation pensions."

"Labor and the Greens have done a dirty deal to deny due process.

"They are riding rough-shod over proper Parliamentary process and democracy in order to pursue their own sectional-interest agenda," Senator Ronaldson said this week.

It's back to the drawing board for flawed carbon tax model



The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage

The cost of the carbon tax on Australian households and businesses is based on flawed Treasury modelling.

So too, is the so-called compensation introduced to partly off-set the carbon price increases.

The result will be higher electricity prices and insufficient compensation to cover the cost of living pressures on Australian families or businesses.

Treasury has made the assumption that there will be a co-ordinated global market for trading foreign carbon credits by 2016 as outlined in its modelling document, Strong Growth, Low Pollution, Modelling a Carbon Price:

- Box 5.5 from Ch. 5 (possibly the most explicit statement): "The modelling assumes comparable carbon pricing in other major economies from 2015-16".

- From Ch. 3: It is stated as an assumption of the modelling that "global co-ordinated action emerges from 2016" and "an equilibrium global permit price emerges to clear the global permit market".

Note that, with the EU already having its own (more limited) carbon pricing mechanism in place, it is hard to see how Treasury could

speak of a shift to "global" co-ordinated action emerging without at the very least one of the US, China and India joining the EU ... yet there is no chance that China or India would start carbon pricing ahead of the US (or even long after it, in all likelihood). Hence, it is very hard to see how these quotes could make any sense if Treasury weren't in effect saying that the US is assumed to have commenced carbon pricing by 2016.

- From Ch. 3: "By 2016, a more coordinated international policy regime allows countries to trade either bilaterally or through a common central market. As a result, a harmonised world carbon price emerges in 2016".

The flaws in Treasury's modelling have been confirmed in articles by Henry Ergas in The Australian, which notes that the Treasury is basing its figures on hope rather than the reality.

See:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/fatal-flaw-in-case-for-a-carbon-tax/story-e6frgd0x-1226094872101>

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/open-your-kimono-and-show-us-your-modelling/story-e6frgd0x-1226099303275>

The purchase of foreign carbon credits is crucial to the operation of the carbon tax.

Australia's domestic emissions will continue to rise and will only be offset by the purchase of \$3.5 billion in foreign carbon credits every year by 2020.

This figure will blow out to \$57 billion by 2050.

The major economies must be a part of the international market if it is to operate effectively.

US President Barack Obama, during his visit to Australia, re-confirmed that the US will not have a cap and trade or carbon tax style system.

"In the United States, although we haven't passed as you know, what we call a cap and trade system, an exchange, what we have done is for example taken steps to double fuel efficiency standards on cars which will have an enormous impact on removing carbon from the atmosphere." (Media Conference, 16 November 2011)

Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird, during his recent visit to Australia, reiterated that Canada would not have a carbon tax and it had been explicitly rejected at an election:

“Certainly not in Canada or the United States,” Mr Baird said. (ABC TV 7.30 Report, 26 October 2011)

Climate Change Minister, Greg Combet, concedes that the Durban climate change conference is unlikely to secure a second Kyoto commitment.

“You have to look at the fact that Japan, Canada and Russia have said that they won’t be in a second commitment period.” (Australian Financial Review, 10 November 2011)

The UK Guardian is now reporting that next week’s Durban conference on climate change will not achieve an international agreement by 2016.

See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/nov/20/rich-nations-give-up-climate-treaty>

Analysis by the Centre for International Economics found that the

actual increase in electricity prices under the carbon tax will be 30 per cent.

Flaws were found in the Treasury modelling which only predicted a 10 per cent rise.

From the Centre for International Economics, Economic Impact of the Carbon Pricing Scheme, November 2011:

“Treasury justifies its approach by saying that ‘we take other countries at their word.’

“History suggests a more sceptical approach is warranted. At Kyoto in 1997, three dozen developed nations set targets for emissions cuts by 2008-2012. But only a handful will meet those targets.

“More importantly, the Treasury analysis also assumes the existence of a (global) mechanism by 2016 that ‘allows individual firms or governments themselves to

trade abatement with other countries.’

“This is despite the fact that the US and Canada have ruled out participation in a trading scheme.

“The recent independent review of the New Zealand emissions trading scheme concluded that ‘the dominant view [of stakeholders] was that international uncertainty would persist in the medium term, with either no binding commitments, or a less formal international accord than at present.’

“We also consider Treasury assumptions, about the availability of abatement from major developing nations from 2016, implausible.

“The Treasury assumption that China will provide one third of all abatement sales by 2020 is unlikely at best,” the Centre for International Economics wrote in the report.

‘Business as usual’ for smugglers

The arrival of the latest illegal boat, with 44 people on board, is the third boat to arrive this week, showing that people smugglers were back to business as usual under Labor’s failed border protection policies, Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Scott Morrison said.

“After the Howard Government implemented their proven border protection policies just three boats were arriving a year. By contrast, under Labor’s failed policies we have had three boats arrive so far this week,” Mr Morrison said.

“People smugglers are cramming more people onto dangerous boats in the lead up to the monsoon season and the government has no policy in place to offer even the slightest deterrence. The last time this many people arrived in a month was in November last year when 14 boats arrived with 733 people on board,.

“Julia Gillard must put aside her political pride, bring on an immediate vote on her Migration Bill and adopt the Coalition’s amendment to ensure it passes the parliament before it rises for the year.

“The Australian people do not deserve a Prime Minister who has thrown in the towel to people smugglers, because she cannot admit that Labor was wrong to abolish the proven measures.

“The Coalition has an amendment to the Migration Act on the table which the Prime Minister . . . should adopt immediately on the floor of the Parliament. The amendment is consistent with the position the Prime Minister took to the election that offshore processing should only occur in countries that have signed the refugee convention.”

A government that ignores rules of sound financial management



The Hon Joe Hockey MP
Shadow Treasurer

Australians deserve better than the chaos and confusion of four years of this Labor Government.

Labor inherited an economy and a federal budget in good shape.

The Coalition left Labor \$45 billion in the bank. We delivered surpluses in 10 out of 12 budgets and left this government with a \$20 billion budget surplus. In our last year of government the ratio of spending to GDP had been cut to 22.9%.

Since then, this Labor Government has been reckless with taxpayers' money and has ignored all the rules of sound financial management.

In just four years, \$45 billion in the bank has turned into a \$110 billion in debt. This Government has delivered four consecutive budget deficits totalling \$154 billion in four years.

Labor has form in talking about delivering surpluses but the record shows they have not produced a surplus in 21 years, since 1989-90.

Spending as a percentage of GDP rose to 26.2% within just two years, and this year's Budget shows the spending ratio will be 23.5% in 2014-15.

When it comes to spending taxpayers' money, the Coalition is

responsible. We show restraint. We spend money wisely. We don't waste it. Labor always does the opposite.

The Coalition has constantly been reminding the Australian people how much extra they have to pay because this Government wastes their money:

- Failed border protection - \$1.75 billion blow-out;
- Building the Education Revolution - \$1.7 billion blow-out, up to \$8 billion wasted;
- Pink Batts - \$2.4 billion wasted;
- \$900 cheques to dead people, and people living overseas;
- Laptops in Schools - \$1.4 billion blow-out with just over half delivered;
- Solar Homes Program - \$850 million blow-out and the program was cancelled;

● Green Loans - \$300 million wasted and the program was cancelled; and

● Broadband Network costing \$50 billion, with no business plan!

Labor has failed. Labor failed alone when elected in November 2007. And Labor continues to fail with the Greens and its other partners.

Four years in government and nothing to show for it – just waste and incompetence.

Australia deserves better.

The Coalition will return stability, certainty and competency back to government. We will build a stronger and more resilient economy.

Most importantly, the Coalition will live within its means.

To read more about the failures of Labor's four years in government - <http://liberal.org.au/Pages/Four-Years-of-Labor.aspx>



Labor plans to weaken funding for veterans' advocacy program

Labor's draft national platform for discussion on December 2, 3 and 4 will weaken Labor's commitment BEST funding and comes on the back of an \$8 million budget cut to advocacy funding earlier this year.

Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator Michael Ronaldson, said it was now clear that Labor's budget cuts in May were only the thin end of the wedge for veterans' advocacy funding.

"Labor National Conference will end the Party's explicit commitment to supporting the BEST programme and completes a watering down of this vital programme begun with a \$4 million budget cut in May this year," Senator Ronaldson said.

"Labor has already slashed a total of \$8 million from veterans' advocacy funding. Now, their platform will remove the Party's explicit support for this long-running and highly-successful programme which supports veterans, their

families and current-serving members of the Australian Defence Force."

Senator Ronaldson said the changes proposed to Labor's Platform were a repudiation on the position taken just two years ago. Labor's current Platform passed in 2009 says:

"Labor will continue to support the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) and Training and Information Program (TIP) programs which are of immense value in assisting ex-service organisations to prepare compensation claims for their members."

The proposed changes, on the other hand, remove Labor's explicit support, instead saying:

"Labor is committed to the support of veterans through a range of programs including the Building Excellence in Support and Training and Training & Information Program programs ensuring that ex-service organisations can

assist with compensation claims for their members and provide welfare support."

"Labor Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, must explain to the veteran and ex-service community why Labor's platform is changing and why Labor no longer recognises the 'immense value' of largely-volunteer veterans' advocates working in the Australian community."

"This Saturday at the Western Australian state congress of the RSL, the Minister has the chance to explain the proposed changes to Labor's platform, as well as why Labor slashed \$8 million from the programme."

"Veterans' advocates, pension and welfare offices in sub-branches and veterans' welfare centres Australia-wide will be scrutinising this Minister's statements very carefully to pick up any further hints of budget cuts to this invaluable programme, which the Coalition will always support.

Coalition's Darwin initiative gets the nod

The Coalition's initiative to ensure the bombing of Darwin is never forgotten was passed by the House of Representatives this week.

Federal Member for Solomon, Natasha Griggs MP, said the House of Representatives unanimously supported her motion to declare 19 February each year "Bombing of Darwin Day".

"The House of Representatives

joined the Senate in supporting the Coalition's call for 19 February to be declared 'Bombing of Darwin Day,'" Mrs Griggs said.

"This support comes on the back of the Leader of the Opposition's 20 September announcement that the Coalition would move to declare 19 February each year a Day of National Significance to be known as Bombing of Darwin Day."

"Parliament has now shown its support for 19 February being declared Bombing of Darwin Day."

Mrs Griggs said the belated support of the Labor Party to this proposal was welcome.

Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator Michael Ronaldson, congratulated Mrs Griggs for her dogged determination to see this motion through the Parliament.

ADVENT CALENDARS

Advent calendars date back to Lutheran Germany at the beginning of the 19th century, when families began to physically count the days until Christmas by drawing lines in chalk on their doors, lighting a candle or hanging religious images on the walls on their homes.

A public advent wreath was hung, for the first time, in December 1839 in the prayer hall of the Rauhes Haus in Hamburg, a relief house founded in 1833.

It is believed that the first hand-made advent calendar dates to 1851 and, according to the Austrian Landesmuseum, the first printed advent calendar was produced in Hamburg in 1902 or 1903.

In 1904, an advent calendar was



also printed in the Neues Tagblatt Stuttgart as a gift for the German newspaper's readers.

However, the date of the first printed advent calendar is disputed.

Several historians argue that the Swabian parishioner Gerhard Lang created the first printed calendar in Munich in 1908, when his printing company Reichhold & Lang produced 24 colour pictures which could be fixed to a piece of cardboard.

Reichhold & Lang thereafter cre-

ated almost 30 different designs of advent calendars before the company went out of business in the 1930s.

During the same period, the Sankt Johannis Printing Company based in Stuttgart also produced religious calendars with Biblical verses printed behind each of the doors.

The production of advent calendars ended during the World War Two.

The first post-war printed advent calendar was made by Richard Sellmar in 1946.

It is believed that advent calendars filled with chocolate were first produced in 1958.

So there you are!

The Parliamentary Library provides resources and publications for MPs and Senators as well as the public.

Here is an update of recent releases. They can be accessed at the library's website - www.aph.gov.au/library

BILLS DIGEST

Tax Laws Amendment (Stronger, Fairer, Simpler and Other Measures) Bill 2011.

Tax Laws Amendment (2011 Measures No. 8) Bill 2011 [and] Pay As You Go Withholding Non-compliance Tax Bill 2011.

Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Amendment Bill 2011.

Broadcasting Services Amend



ment (Review of Future Uses of Broadcasting Services Bands Spectrum) Bill 2011.

Business Names Registration (Application of Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011.

Australian Renewable Energy Agency Bill 2011.

Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Import Levy) Amendment Bill 2011.

Corporations Amendment (Future of Financial Advice) Bill 2011.

Consumer Credit and Corporations Legislation Amendment (Enhancements) Bill 2011.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

What are we doing to ensure the sustainability of the health system?

The e health revolution—easier said than done.

Toward national workplace safety and workers' compensation systems: a chronology Updated.

Chronology of Fair Work: background, events and related legislation Updated.

Monthly Statistical Bulletin November 2011.



Victoria is developing a resilient economy



The Hon Kim Wells MLA
Treasurer

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that Victoria's economy grew by 2.5 per cent in 2010-11, as forecast in the 2011-12 Victorian State Budget.

The result demonstrated the ongoing resilience of the Victorian economy despite continued uncertainties in the global and national economy.

Victoria's Gross State Product increased by 2.5 per cent in 2010-11, in comparison with the Australian economy which grew by 2.1 per cent in the same period.

This represents a strong result for Victoria and reflects an improvement on the result for 2009-10 growth of 2.3 per cent.

Victoria's Gross State Product (GSP) growth was ahead of all other states and territories with the exception of Western Australia and the ACT.

Importantly, Victoria's GSP per capita grew by 1 per cent over the year, when in recent years Victoria's GSP per capita had been going backwards.

GSP per capita fell in 2008-09 and rose only marginally in 2009-10.

Major drivers of the result were growth in the professional, sci-

entific and technical service category, as well as in the finance and construction industries. Victoria also performed well in household final consumption and growth in dwelling investment.

The figures reflected the impact of some of the economic challenges for Victoria, such as the high dollar which has led to some weakness in services trade including tourism and international education and the manufacturing sector.

It is encouraging to see that agriculture grew by 4 per cent in the year, after contracting in 2009-10.

Standard & Poor's recently highlighted the strong and responsible financial management of the Victorian Coalition Government when reaffirming Victoria's AAA credit rating.

The Coalition Government was implementing a responsible plan to return Victoria's finances to a sustainable setting and grow Victoria's economy.

The Brumby Labor Government left Victoria with a structural deficit after government expenditure outpaced revenue over the past decade.

If Victoria had continued down Labor's economically irresponsible path then we would have been forced to borrow just to pay ongoing expenses by 2015-16.

*Good figures:
Agriculture
improves
to increase*

