

# THE AUSTRALIAN



\$2.70  
MONDAY  
December 28, 2015  
PRICE INCLUDES GST  
FREIGHT EXTRA

WWW.THEAUSTRALIAN.COM.AU | THE HEART OF THE NATION

**SUMMER LIVING**  
{P8-9}  
+ Australia's most accident-prone cars  
+ A short story by SJ Finn

**The greatest songs of the 20th century**  
"THE REAL THING" (Part 1)  
RUSSELL MORRIS  
Original Recording by M.I. (Australia) Ltd  
DIAMOND RECORDS INC. 1650 BROADWAY NYC, NY

**SPORT {P24}**  
**WINDIES WIPE OUT**  
Visitors belted with bat and ball

**COMMENTARY {P10}**  
**Can Western governments tame the anarchy, let alone renew hope?**  
HENRY ERGAS

NEWS Arise Sir Lynton Crosby {P3} | WORLD Floods devastate northern Britain and South America {P7} | MAURICE NEWMAN Behind the climate propaganda, bullying and bogus science {P10}

## Shorten in a parlous state as Turnbull turns Victoria on Labor

EXCLUSIVE

PHILIP HUDSON

Bill Shorten enters an election year with Labor's standing in his home state of Victoria at a four-year low after the biggest collapse of support in any state for the ALP since the rise of Malcolm Turnbull to the prime ministership.

Victorian between October and this month.

Victoria had been Labor's strongest state when Tony Abbott was in power, but since the change to Mr Turnbull in September it has become the opposition's weakest.

The plunge suggests Labor-held marginal seats of McEwen and Bendigo, as well as Chisholm and Bruce where long-time MPs are retiring, are at risk.

The analysis, based on News-poll surveys of 8013 people across the nation, also reveals Mr Shorten's satisfaction rating in his home state has crashed 14 points since this time last year to 25 per cent, the lowest for any federal

TWO-PARTY PREFERRED

Percentage support	NSW		VIC		QLD		WA		SA	
	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec								
<b>COALITION</b>	49	53	43	51	47	52	46	54	46	48
<b>LABOR</b>	51	47	57	49	53	48	54	46	54	52
<b>BETTER PM</b>										
<b>ABBOTT/TURNBULL</b>	40*	60	34*	60	39*	63	36*	62	35*	60
<b>SHORTEN</b>	38	17	43	17	36	16	33	16	39	16

FULL TABLES P2

opposition leader in Victoria in 12 years. In South Australia, Mr Shorten's satisfaction has slumped to a record low of 24 per cent.

Mr Turnbull, who ousted Mr Abbott in a partyroom challenge

just over 100 days ago, has in some cases doubled the voter satisfaction levels for his predecessor and reversed the government's fortunes to give it a two-party-preferred lead in every state,

except South Australia. The change has been most dramatic in Victoria, where Labor's primary vote has dived eight points to a four-year low of 33 per cent. It is the second worst result for the

ALP in Victoria since the News-poll time series began in 1996.

Labor's primary vote has fallen below 40 per cent in every state.

In Queensland it fell five points to 35 per cent, in WA it dropped

four points to 35 per cent, in SA it eased three points to 36 per cent and in NSW it lost two points to 34 per cent.

In contrast, the Coalition's core support surged nine points to 48 per cent in WA, its strongest state. It jumped eight points to 44 per cent in Victoria, gained six points to 45 per cent in Queensland, lifted four points to 46 per cent in NSW and rose two points to 38 per cent in SA, the only state where it was not above 40 per cent.

In capital cities, the Coalition's vote has jumped seven points to reach 45 per cent for the first time since before the last election while its primary vote in rural and

regional areas was up four points to also beat 45 per cent.

The Greens' strongest state is leader Richard Di Natale's home of Victoria, where it has 15 per cent of the vote, but there was a surprise four-point tumble to 9 per cent in WA where the Greens had been polling well in previous quarters.

Based on preference flows from the 2013 election, the 57 per cent-43 per cent two-party-preferred lead enjoyed by Labor in Victoria in the September quarter has vanished in a 16-point turnaround, and the Coalition is now

Continued on Page 2

COMMENT P2

DISPUTE OVER BAGHDAD SECURITY

## Embassy guards say lives at risk

EXCLUSIVE

PAOLA TOTARO

The team of 67 former soldiers who guard Foreign Affairs staff in one of the most dangerous diplomatic missions in the world — Baghdad — fear embassy workers' lives could be put at risk by cost-cutting forced on them by their Dubai-based employer.

In September 2012, Islamic militants stormed the US embassy in the Libyan city of Benghazi, killing ambassador Chris Stevens and one other official.

A spokeswoman for DFAT said yesterday that the Australian government placed "a high priority on the safety of all its personnel, including those at the Australian embassy Baghdad".

She said DFAT had "conducted a competitive tender for protective security services at the embassy", in line with commonwealth procurement rules.

"Throughout the tender process, DFAT determined that URG has the required technical capability to effectively deliver the requirements of the contract," the spokeswoman said.

"DFAT is confident that URG will provide a high standard of security services to the Australian embassy in Baghdad and that the new security contract will not result in a reduction of security services for staff at the Australian embassy Baghdad."

The URG teams in Baghdad are mainly former Australian, New Zealand and British military or police officers and are contracted to provide static security services as well as protection for the Australian embassy physical cordon in the International Zone in Baghdad.

They generally work on a roster of up to three teams of 10, using four cars that are armoured to B6 level in the measure of steel and thickness.

Close personal protection and armed bodyguard services are provided not only to the head of mission, the ambassador and associated DFAT staff but also to visiting VIPs and dignitaries to Iraqi ministries and other national embassies.

According to the document, of the 67 Australian contractors working with URG, only 25 have signed to return next year while another 38 have confirmed that they will not sign the new contract.

"URG has bullied and tried on numerous occasions to use strong-arm tactics to force contractors to sign the new contract in order to show DFAT Canberra that it will have its proposed numbers available on January 1, 2016," numbers available on January 1, 2016, security picture." Continued on Page 2

## Houses razed, memories erased, but we're alive



One house remains untouched among the devastation around Durimbil Avenue, Wye River

RACHEL BAXENDALE  
JOHN FERGUSON  
KATHERINE TOWERS

Great Ocean Road fire victims returned to their flattened homes yesterday to find decades of memories trashed as authorities declared that 100 more properties would have fallen without the work of firefighters.

As the economic cost of the Christmas Day bushfire climbed

towards \$100 million, many of the 116 home owners who lost houses have been discreetly escorted by bus through the hamlets of Wye River and Separation Creek.

They found gutting scenes of mangled tin and melted cars that the latest destructive fire to tear through southeastern Australia destroyed property, but not lives.

Victorian Emergency Management Commissioner Craig Lapsley warned yesterday that the bushfire above Wye River would

strike again because it could not be extinguished in steep, thick bush in the Great Otway National Park.

Mr Lapsley said twice as many homes would have fallen in Wye River without the work of firefighters.

"I would have thought they would have lost at least 200 homes in this town," Mr Lapsley said in the hamlet yesterday.

"They were able to fight the fire in the streets in the afternoon, in the evening and in the night."

He also declared that the culture imposed on fire authorities after the 2009 Black Saturday disaster had changed forever the way disasters were fought in Victoria, by backing the primacy of life and ensuring effective warnings were sent to the community.

But the extraordinary achievement of saving every life in the massive blaze, about 160km southwest of Melbourne, did not extinguish the grief of home owners who lost their properties.



Anna Cuttriss from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning inspects a burnt-out car at Wye River



Wye River CFA captain Roy Moriarty, centre, with fellow firefighters, who authorities say helped save 100 homes

There were 98 houses destroyed in Wye River and another 18 in nearby Separation Creek.

Matt Christie's 14-year-old daughter Lucy discovered the family had lost its Separation Creek holiday house via Twitter on Saturday.

Tom Jacobs, who kept locals informed through social media after discovering his parents' Separation Creek home had narrowly survived on Christmas

Day, tweeted on Saturday morning that three houses had been destroyed in Mitchell Grove. "What number Mitchell Grove?" Lucy tweeted back.

A short time later, Mr Jacobs confirmed the worst. No 5 was gone.

Yesterday Lucy, her step-mother Alison, 46, and Matt, 52, Continued on Page 4

MORE REPORTS P4  
EDITORIAL P11

## All hands on deck: how Brindabella was busted by the buster

SIMON KING



It was on us in an instant. We knew it was coming — had prepared for its arrival — and generally a southerly gives you a few clues with a gradual shift in wind before it knocks down the front door. Not this time.

"It came really quick; faster than usual," says Bill Sykes, a veteran of 27 Sydney-to-Hobarts, who is at the helm alongside skipper and owner Jim Cooney when the weather hits.

"We were ready for two reefs (to reduce the sail area), had them ready to go up. But, bang, 35 knots

straight away. The hardest thing to do was see, with the rain, wind and 5m seas hitting us all at the same time."

I had gone up on watch at 9pm, about 30 minutes before the mayhem started. From the back of the boat, it was terrifying.

One moment sitting chatting with Cooney, the next lying prone on the deck jammed — appropriately though unconventionally — between the two life rafts, clinging to their covers for dear life as the rain and sea water attacked in a pincer, with only the red light of the instrument gauges to see by.

Like a nightmare merry-go-round ride you can't get off, we are tearing along, the boat pushed to a 45-degree angle as the boom repeatedly hit the water.

And big boats don't just creek to smack you in the face, they scream.

In the onslaught, Sykes yells at me to shine a torch on the main



The moment Brindabella split a spinnaker on Saturday afternoon. Then the trouble really started

sail. The bright beam in the darkness just adds to the surreal nature of the battle, silhouetting the crew tethered to their positions and giving you a split-second glimpse of the rain about to smack you in the face.

Also on deck trimming is one of the youngest racers in the competition, 18-year-old Julia Cooney.

"Everyone says its going to be like that and you think you're ready for it but nothing can prepare you for something like that," she says.

"It was like hitting a wall of water; hitting you in the face, sea water, rain water — you couldn't tell.

"It was pitch black and the boat

was crashing through the waves at 11 knots. You think you're ready for Hobart but you're not."

Realising that clinging to the back of the boat I am only a danger to myself, and offering the crew very little, I crawl below deck. Then you realise you are in a fleet of more than a hundred yachts fighting this battle.

On the crackling radio it is announced the new-look favourite Wild Oats and its dream of a ninth line honours is over, courtesy of a split sail, as is that of the star-studded crew of Perpetual Loyal.

By last night, just 80 of the fleet of 109 remain in the race, with forecasts of a gale-force southeasterly before the winds drop. Limping towards the line late are the US pair Rambler and Comanche, both with damaged dagger boards and neither suited to the much lighter conditions in the

Continued on Page 4

## IKEA shrinks profit, tax bill

EXCLUSIVE

ELI GREENBLAT

Swedish furniture giant IKEA's poor run of profitability in Australia has continued despite booming sales and a growing store network, with the group again sending tens of millions of pre-tax dollars offshore, significantly shrinking its profit and local tax bill. While 2014-15 revenue rose 13 per cent, net profit fell 30 per cent to \$15.1 million.

FULL REPORT P13



SPORT P24



YOUR NEWSPAPER EDITOR'S PICKS TIMING AN ISSUE BUT THERE'S LIFE IN FIVE-DAY CRICKET

Nostalgia is proving a pain in the past but are the best days of five-day cricket gone? {PETER LALOR, SPORT P24}

RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE JOURNEY

Key Carmody draws on a rich history for his new album but also paints a vivid picture pretty much every time he opens his mouth {ARTS P12}



MODEL CITY'S SHOCK

A landslide shocked many not just for its destruction but because it took place in futuristic and wealthy Shenzhen {WSJ P16}



INDEX

- WORLD P6-7 SUMMER LIVING P8-9 COMMENTARY P10-11 ARTS P12 BUSINESS P13-17 WSJ P16 TELEVISION P18 WEATHER P19 SPORT P20-24

YOUR NATION

Hastie troubled by indigenous jail rates

Western Australia's newly elected federal MP, Andrew Hastie, has spoken about the impact of a visit inside Perth's Hakea Prison, where 40 per cent of inmates are Aboriginal and many prisoners are struggling with the effects of ice addiction.

after being seen signalling for help and is suffering from hypothermia. Neither of the men were wearing lifejackets.

Wild nightclub brawl leads to five arrests

Four men and a woman were arrested and taken into custody by police after a wild brawl outside a nightclub in Carlton, in Melbourne's inner north, about 5.30am yesterday.

Man faces harm charge after forcing entry

A man has been charged after he allegedly forced his way into a NSW unit and struck another man, who fell through a window. The man forced himself into the Glendale unit about midday on Boxing Day where two men and a woman were present, police said.

Fisherman missing after boat capsizes

Police and emergency services have continued their search for a fisherman who went missing after his boat capsized off South Australia's coast on Saturday morning.

Thieves menace cabbie as he pumps up tyres

Canberra police have called for witnesses to help identify two men who menaced a taxi driver with a shotgun and a knife as he was parked in a tyre-pump bay at a service station in the suburb of Giralang at 5.15am on December 19.

LETTER TO PM TRIES TO MINIMISE HEYDON COMMISSION FALLOUT

ALP's 11th-hour union bid

JOE KELLY

Bill Shorten has tried to pre-empt the findings of a damning report into trade union corruption by appealing directly to Malcolm Turnbull to accept a series of Labor measures, including an overhaul of political donations rules.

The Opposition Leader has used a letter, sent to the Prime Minister on Wednesday, to try to ensure Labor is not trapped in a crucial election year by the findings of the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, which will hand the government more ammunition to push for union reform after a series of scandals.

The royal commission is due to hand its final report to Governor-General Peter Cosgrove today and the government is expected to release the document as early as tomorrow, with Employment Minister Michaelia Cash canvassing toughening-up the Coalition's proposed union governance laws as a potential response.

Senator Cash also identified the militant Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union as one of the targets of any government response.

"I believe that all Australians would want to see in place laws that ensure greater transparency and accountability for registered organisations — whether they be employer or employee representative bodies," the minister told The Australian.

"The construction industry has been repeatedly identified as one with endemic problems of lawlessness. "When repeat offending by the construction division of the CFMEU gets so bad that the Federal Court has to ask whether there has ever been a worse recidivist in the history of the common law", there is clearly a problem in the industry and this division of the CFMEU."

The royal commission's findings were to be a central plank in the re-election strategy of Tony Abbott and his successor, Mr Turnbull, is standing by royal commissioner Dyson Heydon amid an attack on Mr Heydon's integrity led by Labor and the union movement.

Mr Shorten's letter urges Mr Turnbull to consider a series of Labor measures to improve union governance, as well as linking the issue to a reduction in the political donation disclosure threshold from \$13,000 to \$1000 for individuals, companies and unions.

The opposition has attacked the government's legislation to clean up the union movement as too onerous, saying it was unfair to bring penalties for union volunteers into line with those applying to highly paid company directors.

Mr Shorten has urged Mr Turnbull to engage with Labor on the issue in an attempt to negotiate a breakthrough to the political impasse, saying the "flagrant misuse of union members' money by a small number of union officials" was unacceptable.

"Unlike the government's Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Bill, Labor's new proposals do not place more onerous obligations on volunteers involved in unions and employer organisations," he said.

After taking over the top job in September, Mr Turnbull engineered a breakthrough to the political impasse over the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement in response to Labor calls for more serious engagement with its concerns.

Tenacity forged from iron will

Last month, Gina Rinehart realised a dream when she completed the nation's single biggest iron mine. Built within four years and now exporting product from the West Australian Pilbara to Asia, Mrs Rinehart is elevated to a new league in the annals of Australian business.

She said her ambition to develop Roy Hill had not wavered since 1992 when she took over family company Hancock Prospecting upon the death of her father, Lang Hancock.

There have been obstacles and still challenges ahead, including an iron ore price that fell to \$39 a tonne before the first shipment set sail. Mrs Rinehart, 61, has shown tenacity, an indefatigable optimism about Australia's development potential and created thousands of jobs. More than 50,000 people worked on the Roy Hill project since its inception.

Readers can nominate stand-out citizens for this newspaper's Australian of the Year, judged by a panel of senior editors.

The winner will be announced in The Weekend Australian on January 23.



FEDERAL PRIMARY VOTE

Table showing percentage support for Labor, Coalition, Greens, and Others across various states and territories from 2013 to 2015.

Question: If a federal election for the House of Representatives was held today, which one of the following would you vote for? If "uncommitted", to which one of these do you have a leaning?

TWO-PARTY PREFERRED

Table showing percentage support for Labor and Coalition across various states and territories from 2013 to 2015.

Based on preference flow at September 2013 federal election \*Including ACT. These surveys were conducted among voters in all states of Australia and in both city and country areas. The data has been weighted to reflect the population distribution.

Turnbull puts Shorten in parlous state

Continued from Page 1

ahead by 51 per cent to 49 per cent, the first time it has been in front in Victoria since September 2011.

Western Australia is once again the Coalition's strongest state, recovering from 14-year lows in the March quarter, with a 16-point turnaround in the December quarter to lead Labor by 54 per cent to 46 per cent.

In NSW, which has the most seats and had been the Coalition's strongest state under Mr Abbott, the switch delivered an eight-point change to give the government a 53 per cent-47 per cent lead.

In SA, the turnaround was four points but Labor still holds a 52 per cent to 48 per cent lead, based on weak support for the Coalition and more than one-quarter of primary votes going to the Greens or others, which reflects high support for independent senator Nick Xenophon.

In all states, Mr Turnbull is ranked as the preferred prime minister by a margin of at least 43 points, and in Queensland he is 47 points in front of Mr Shorten.

Lives at risk: embassy guards

Continued from Page 1

cover. Numerous requests for the paperwork outlining the company's policy since 2011 — when the original cover is believed to have expired — have allegedly been refused.

"The heavy-handed, arrogant and obtuse behaviour of URG management has succeeded in entirely alienating existing staff, including many who have signed the current contract. It is expected that turnover will be extremely high after 1 January, 2016, which will continue to compromise operational effectiveness as long as URG retains the contract."

The Australian provided a series of detailed questions in writing to Kevin Carlin, the Iraq country director for URG. He responded by email stating only that it was "not appropriate to comment on confidential matters".

The Baghdad staff have called for DFAT to launch a formal inquiry into the company's work practices, and in their deposition, allege URG has:

- Repeatedly refused to provide details of its employees' accident, injury and death insurance

ABBOTT/TURNBULL'S PERFORMANCE

Table showing performance metrics for Abbott and Turnbull across various states and territories from 2013 to 2015.

Question: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Tony Abbott/Malcolm Turnbull is doing his job as Prime Minister? \*Including ACT # Malcolm Turnbull

SHORTEN'S PERFORMANCE

Table showing performance metrics for Shorten across various states and territories from 2013 to 2015.

Question: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Bill Shorten is doing his job as Leader of the Opposition? \*Including ACT # Malcolm Turnbull

BETTER PM

Table showing who voters think would make a better prime minister: Abbott/Turnbull or Shorten.

Question: Who do you think would make the better prime minister? \*Including ACT # Malcolm Turnbull

Early poll must now be in the thinking

PHILLIP HUDSON



Temptation must be growing for Malcolm Turnbull to give serious consideration to an early election.

The ministers and MPs urging him to go to the polls sooner rather than later will find evidence in the state-based breakdown of Newspoll surveys for the December quarter to support their push.

And there's also a warning that strong support in vital states can evaporate quickly. Just ask Bill Shorten, who will be shocked by the size of the swing against him and Labor in his home state of Victoria.

While South Australia remains a problem for the Coalition, in NSW and Queensland, where there are the highest number of marginal seats to defend, the Prime Minister has virtually restored the government's primary vote to the level of the last election.

And in Victoria, which has been the Coalition's worst state, the

Shorten's home state has gone from Labor's strongest to its weakest in just three months

primary vote is now higher than at the last election.

A particular blow for Shorten will be the realisation that the rise of Turnbull as Prime Minister has lifted the Coalition's two-party-preferred level of support in Victoria above 50 per cent.

Victoria may have once been the jewel in the Liberal crown in the era of Robert Menzies and Henry Bolte but if Turnbull could maintain this support in an election, it would be only the third time in 14 elections since 1977 that the Coalition reached 50 per cent in the state.

The last time was in 2004 when then Labor leader Mark Latham's schools hit list was particularly unpopular in Victoria. The other occasion was in 1990 under the last Victorian to lead the Liberal Party, Andrew Peacock.

And not only does this scenario show the government holding seats, it would also be a reasonable chance in four marginal Labor seats in Victoria all requiring a swing of less than 2 per cent.

Chisholm and Bruce, where long-term MPs Anna Burke and Alan Griffin are retiring, are particularly vulnerable, as are the state's most marginal seat of McEwen as well as Bendigo.

A year ago, when he was riding high, Shorten taunted the former prime minister that he was "box office poison" in Victoria as Labor used every opportunity and advertising to make Tony Abbott's unpopularity an issue in the state election.

Now Shorten's home state has gone from Labor's strongest to its weakest in just three months.

And Shorten's standing on his home turf is lower than even Latham or Abbott.

FIRST EDITION NO 15,920

Editor-in-Chief Paul Whittaker

Editor, The Australian Clive Mathieson Editor, The Weekend Australian Michelle Gunn

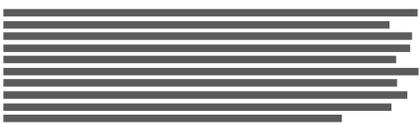
ISSN 1038-8761

SUBSCRIBE to The Australian New subscriptions: 1300 260 483 theaustralian.com.au/subscribe Existing subscribers: 1300 My News (1300 696 397)

ADVERTISE in The Australian 1300 287 287 bookings@theaustralian.com.au

CONTACTS Sydney 9288 3000 Canberra 814 8600 Melbourne 9292 2888 Brisbane 3666 7444 Adelaide 8206 2686 Perth 9326 8412 Hobart 6230 0644

News, tips and comment: feedback@theaustralian.com.au



The Australian is bound by the standards of practice of the Australian Press Council. If you believe the standards may have been breached, you may approach The Australian itself or contact the council by email at info@presscouncil.org.au or by phone (02) 9261 9330. For further information see www.presscouncil.org.au.



Australian of the Year nomination form with fields for name, address, post, and nomination details.