



PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

A Publication of the Community & Public Sector Union / Victorian Branch www.cpsuvic.org

Save Our Services



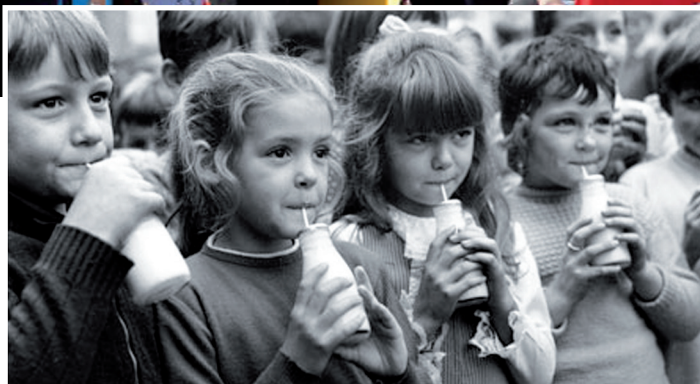
A wave of change is sweeping through the public services since the switch of government here in Victoria.

After promising to fix services and protect jobs, many government employees switched allegiances and voted accordingly at the end of 2010.

The Baillieu Government's first budget in 2011 then kept pretty much to script with promises debt funded and jobs protected.

It was as if the electoral cycle had been overtaken by the timing of budget preparation.

Then the Independent Review of State Finances (Vertigan Inquiry) got rolling just as it did (Commission of Audit) for Jeff Kennett in 1993.



School milk for all in the 70s. It was during Thatcher's term as education secretary that she earned the 'milk snatcher' nickname.

Photograph: Evening Standard/Getty



**'Real Jobs, Real People with Real Families
– Help Stop Baillieu's 4,200 Job Cuts'**

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By Christmas last year, the mid-year budget update changed the direction of Government radically.

3,600 public service jobs, not "frontline" of course, would be shed, infrastructure would be funded from the surplus driven recurrent budget not borrowings, cheaper contracted labour would replace permanent and secure public employment and the ideology propelling these changes would be hidden from public oversight.

This year's budget cemented the changes but, as if the forward projection calculations didn't satisfactorily equate, a further 600 jobs were to be cut with further savings requirements imposed on Departments totalling a another \$1 billion over four years.

The program of cuts is being implemented through a freeze, the non-renewal of fixed term contract employees, and eventually a redundancy program although some time off.

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Services to be Sacrificed

Big Society, Brighter Future, Less Government for all, Four Pillars, Privatisation

What does David Cameron's 'Big Society', John Key's 'Brighter Future', Stephen Harper's 'Less Government for All', Campbell Newman's 'four pillars', Colin Barnett's privatisation agenda, Barry O'Farrell's and Baillieu's 'Better Services', all have in common? Public Perspective exposes their agenda.

The agenda is a cover for the silent promotion of a single ideology, that of market capitalism.

More public service productivity calls are being dressed up as the need for service contestability.

This call is underpinned by an outsourcing mantra that will flood the suburbs with privateers determined to drive employee conditions and entitlements of future public service deliverers back into the last century.

The agenda's not home-grown but we know who ends up paying when it all falls over.

Conservatives say their decisions are determined by "austerity", that the state doesn't have enough money to be caring but saying we can't afford it is just a way of being coy about their political priorities.

There is plenty of money; it's just being creamed off at the top and to benefactors.

Britons are being caught in a "perfect storm" of rising living costs and falling incomes at a time of public services cuts that threaten to return the country to levels of inequality not seen since Victorian times says **UK** Oxfam.

According to the Sunday Times rich list, the combined fortunes of the wealthiest thousand people in Britain have risen to a record £414bn this year.

And in a delicious irony, it is the involvement of private firms – trumpeted by Cameron and co for driving efficiency and cost-cutting – that is responsible for the apparent doubling in the cost of services over the last four years.

Across the ditch, John Key has signalled another wave of public service restructuring, with more mergers of government departments and further redundancies likely with the PM not ruling out Google and other multinational corporations ending up with **New Zealand** Government contracts to carry out work currently done by the public sector.

In its first term, the National-led Government cut at least 2,500 jobs from the public service. In this next phase, John Key says some existing jobs will be eliminated.

Claiming that **Canada's** prosperity and that of all developed countries is at risk, Harper said his government is primed to make the "hard" choices needed to sustain "economic growth, job creation and prosperity, now and for the next generation."

The Public Service Alliance of Canada says public services are going to be cut while private corporations receive billions of dollars in tax benefits.

This means less government services in our lives and more money for the rich and powerful.

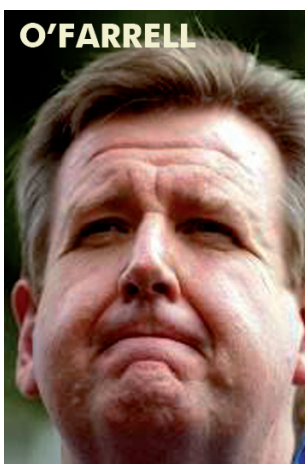
Truly not what the average Canadian wants.

In **Queensland** the newly elected Premier told Parliament there are 20,000 more public servants than the State can afford.

Campbell Newman then emailed his entire workforce to assure them he is trying to save their jobs.

Taking a cue from the **NSW** O'Farrell Government, Newman is also moving towards the implementation of a so-called "one-stop shop" solution.

This seeks a generic classification of employees, as already proposed here in **Victoria**, to consolidate the sprawl of government shop fronts, contact phone numbers and websites.



Former Liberal federal treasurer Peter Costello was chosen to head an audit of the state's finances.

Starting to sound familiar.

The findings plagiarise Alan Stockdale's efforts from the early 90's in Victoria.

In **W.A.** the Barnett Government's agenda to radically undermine rights and conditions for public sector employees is well underway.

Implementation of more than 40 recommendations put forward in their independent report designed to re-focus the State's public service

Sacrificed

Privatisation, Sustainable Govt, Better Services

support priority business-facing getting
Government advice five
Government's reducing department way departments time
lay Ministry Department staff years
example well report Government
three overall lower services
public building announcing really New
expect service number
positions new next increase
important just around children focus
education competitive



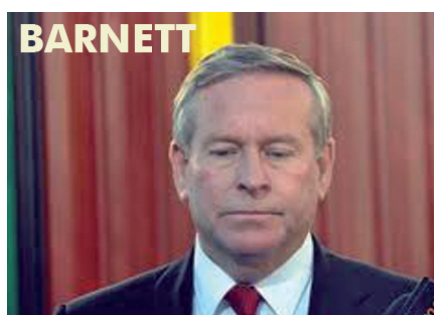
CAMERON



BAILLIEU



Satire is officially dead when millionaire politicians talk about working people's 'sense of entitlement'



BARNETT

to deliver better services for **West Australians** is well underway.

The spin is clever and unambiguous 'give people more power over the services provided to them' but the sting comes as existing public services are under-funded and wither as employees depart.

The shift is on.

Quality public services are the foundation of democratic societies and successful economies.

They ensure that everyone has equal access to vital services, including health care, education, electricity, clean water and sanitation.

The public should not be forced to shop around.

When these services are privatised, maximizing corporate profits replaces the public interest as the driving force.



Save Our Services

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In this time of uncertainty, when jobs are potentially coming under threat, nothing is more important to public sector workers than secure employment.

The Baillieu Government's public sector policies will result in the public sector becoming an increasingly less attractive place to work, with many workers leaving for other opportunities.

This flow will be accentuated as the economy heats up and the private sector actively recruits.

The remaining public sector workers will be forced to work in an environment with fewer staff and resources to deliver services, with additional pressure placed on staff in privatised facilities that have to make a profit.

The result will be poorer quality public services for the community.

These changes will affect each of us in different ways.

We don't know what all changes will bring but we do know that the changes are going to continue for some time to come.

Critics of this policy approach say they can't understand why Baillieu wanted to win government if he doesn't want to run one.

Budget measures will devastate services and frontline staff cannot be quarantined from cuts of this extent.

Paying for capital works by cutting your services, your human capital, is the wrong approach.

Victoria already has the lowest public service numbers versus population of all the states.

Victoria is on the bottom of the ladder.

Our low employee numbers, and low wages compared to other states, works against Victoria when GST distribution occurs.

Victoria gets less GST because of this.

Jeff Kennett cut 30,000 jobs and services collapsed and Baillieu is recycling Kennett and this policy approach was soundly rejected by the community.

For a man elected as Premier on a promise to fix services, Baillieu seems hell bent on leaving the same destructive legacy.

	Public Sector Nos	POP(M)	%
NT	24,200	0.23	10.47%
TAS	40,900	0.51	8.0%
WA	162,800	2.37	6.88%
SA	109,500	1.66	6.60%
QLD	300,200	4.60	6.53%
ACT	22,700	0.37	6.19%
NSW	437,100	7.32	5.97%
VIC	316,800	5.64	5.62%

Audit Agenda

The Commissioning of the Vertigan Report by Baillieu in 2011 and the very broad terms of reference for this enquiry gave our Union a clear focus on the ideological underpinnings of this new Government.

Notwithstanding the public spin and the attempt at a "soft face" stemming from lessons learnt from the Kennett era, it was clear from the day of the announcement of the establishment of the Audit Committee in Victorian Finances, chaired by Michael Vertigan, a former Kennett era Secretary of Treasury, that this Government would renege on its publicly stated and repeatedly emphasised commitment to not cut one PS job.

The 15th December announcement that 3,600 would go followed then by the 2012 budget cut of a further 600 positions crystallised this Government's approach.

It was intent to be openly hostile to the very people who would deliver the work program the Government promised voters.

The attempt at spinning the non-impact on frontline services and the emphasis that it was "only back room staff" was not anything new.

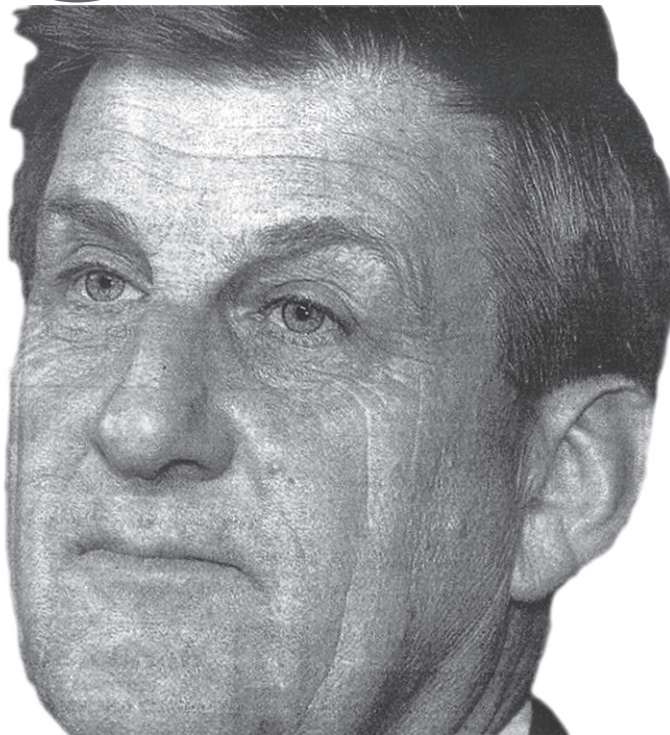
The announcement of the Better Services Task Force personnel made it clear that the public service delivery model to be considered for Victoria was the Better Administrative and Support Services program operating in New Zealand.

The appointment to the Taskforce of Iain Rennie, NZ's PS Commissioner, underscored that point.

I had many teleconference discussions with our NZ PSA cousins about the impact of his program on jobs, conditions of employment, and on the budget bottom line across the ditch.

The overall view, supported by economic data, was that the program did not save the state money and the reports on the New Zealand Prime Ministers website highlight this point.

Rather the overall expenditure was the same but the work had been contracted out.



Former Victorian Liberal Premier, Jeff Kennett.



The Howard Government's Fair Pay Commission from Dr Vertigan (centre) is a former Secretary of DTF in Victoria and Tasmania and has a record of conducting reviews. Don Challen (left) is a former Secretary of DTF in Tasmania. Professor Ian Harper (right) served as Chairman of the Australian Fair Pay Commission during the Howard years from 2005 to 2009.

No major savings to the Government, but an ideological mantra about reducing public servant numbers with no impact on frontline services, was being rolled out.

The NSW government budget announced also that 10,000 public servants would lose their jobs but there would be "no impact on frontline services".

A similar situation is occurring in Western Australia with many core services being outsourced under reducing public service numbers and improving services mantra.

Even services as vital as Youth Justice is being privatised.

Many of the cuts in WA are mirrored on the Big Society programs in the UK.

Whilst Victoria is tied to NZ, our colleagues in Wellington tell us that aspects of the BASS also stem from the ideological underpinnings of Big Society.

S.A., Queensland, and even the Commonwealth to differing

degrees are cutting jobs in our sector whilst bemoaning the cuts in the private sector as if they do not intersect.

That one group of workers are more "important" than another and more worthy of public money to secure their employment.

UK and NZ are not, however, the only push occurring internationally on the ability for public servants to be meaningfully employed on good terms and conditions.

The rise of the Tea Party in the US and their success in a number of state elections has seen unprecedented attacks on PS jobs and conditions including wages.

Our Government's push to cut direct employment responsibility is best highlighted by the excessive use by departments of labour hire as a way around the current staff freeze.

Fixed term contracts and the non-filling of vacancies is seeing departments move to use labour hire as the only alternative to deliver on programs but not to directly employ.

This way Department's do not have responsibility for many of our Agreement conditions but become industrially 'hands off' as staff are engaged now in precarious employment with little or no protections.

Not the way to have your economy humming as confident citizens spend and generate growth and prosperity for all.

- KAREN BATT



Public Perspective is a publication of the Community and Public Sector Union, SPSF Group (Victorian Branch), authorised by Karen Batt, CPSU Victorian Branch Secretary.
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