

Victorian Election Brief

October 2014

The Victorian State Election will be held on 29 November 2014, with the incumbent Coalition Government seeking a second term in office following their victory at the 2010 election.

They will be led by Premier the Hon. Dr Denis Napthine MP, who replaced the Hon. Ted Baillieu MP as Premier in March 2013.

Opposition Leader, and former Minister for Health, the Hon. Daniel Andrews MP, will lead the Labor Party as they seek to return to the Government benches, a position they occupied for 11 years prior to the Coalition’s victory in 2010.

To achieve this feat, they will require a net gain of two seats (five seats on new state boundaries) and in doing so would become the first Victorian Opposition since 1955 to defeat a first term Government.

The election is set to be fought on a number of key issues including transport infrastructure, jobs, education and health, with clear battlelines separating the major parties.

For access to Hawker Britton’s Occasional Paper on Forthcoming Elections, click [here](#).

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Current Composition

Legislative Assembly

Party	Votes	%	Swing (%)	Seats Won	Change
Liberal Party of Victoria	1,203,654	38.03	+3.59	35	+12
Victorian Labor Party	1,147,348	36.25	-6.81	43	-12
National Party	213,492	6.75	+1.58	10	+1
Greens	354,697	11.21	+1.17	0	No change
Others	245,538	7.76	+0.47	0	-1
Liberal/National Coalition					
		51.58	+5.97	45	
Victorian Labor Party					
		48.42	-5.97	43	

Under the leadership of then Opposition Leader, the Hon. Ted Baillieu MP, the Liberal/Nationals Coalition achieved a net gain of 13 seats and a two party preferred swing in their favour of 5.97 per cent at the 2010 election.

In total, the Coalition secured 45 seats (35 seats to the Liberal Party and 10 seats to the Nationals) – one more than the threshold required to form Government in their own right.

This brought to an end 11 consecutive years of Labor Government in the State, with a primary vote swing against the party of 6.81 per cent culminating in a loss of 12 seats.

Since March 2013, the Coalition's slender majority has been regularly tested following the Member for Frankston, Mr Geoff Shaw MP's decision to resign from the Parliamentary Liberal Party and sit on the crossbenches as an Independent Member.

With a Member of the Government traditionally occupying the Speaker's chair, the composition of the Legislative Assembly has effectively been 43 seats to both the Coalition and the Labor Party, plus the Independent Member for Frankston.

This has meant that without the support of either the Opposition or Member for Frankston, the Government has been incapable of passing Legislation through the Lower House.

Legislative Council

Party	Votes	%	Swing (%)	Seats Won	Change
Victorian Labor Party	1,137,461	35.36	-6.09	16	-3
Liberal Party (Metropolitan)	792,702	24.65	+3.35	12	+3
Liberal Party (Country)/National Party	595,330	18.51	+0.83	9	+1
Greens	386,172	12.01	+1.43	3	No change
Others	304,721	9.47	+0.48	0	-1

The Coalition won a majority 21 of 40 upper house seats at the 2010 election, enabling them to govern without the requirement of negotiating with minor parties.

It should be noted that this will be just the third election where Victorians will be voting in the Legislative Council using Senate-style proportional representation across eight five-member electorates.

From a base of only 16 seats currently, it is difficult to see how a Labor majority could eventuate, even if they were to form a majority in the lower house.

As we've seen in recent Federal Senate elections however, minor party preference flows may have a strong bearing on the final composition of the Parliament, especially given that the Palmer United Party and a host of other micro parties will be contesting the Victorian election for the first time.

Electoral Redistribution

The Victorian Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC) underwent a review of the State's Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council electoral boundaries in 2013.

The changes, including the abolition, creation and renaming of a number of seats, will take effect in time for the 2014 election.

Based on results at the 2010 election, the Liberal Party notionally gains a total of four seats from the redistribution; three from the Labor Party and one from the Nationals.

While the Labor Party now notionally requires a net gain of five seats, the redistribution has also reduced the margin in a number of seats, lowering the uniform swing required by the ALP to form Government from 1.2 to 0.8 per cent.

For access to Antony Green's analysis of the redistribution, click [here](#).

Developments since 2010

Resignation of Premier the Hon. Ted Baillieu MP

On 7 March 2013, less than two and a half years after leading the Coalition to victory at the 2010 election, the Hon. Ted Baillieu MP resigned as Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and consequently, as Premier of Victoria.

His resignation followed a tumultuous period in which the then-Premier had been under pressure as a result of a perceived malaise on the part of the Government, and exacerbated by a series of factors including poor polling, controversy surrounding his Chief of Staff, Tony Nutt, and the resignation of Frankston MP Geoff Shaw from the Parliamentary Liberal Party, which effectively plunged the Coalition into minority Government.

While he has remained in Parliament since his resignation as Premier, in August this year Mr Baillieu announced that he would not be recontesting his seat of Hawthorn at the 2014 election.

Member for Frankston

In May 2012, allegations first arose concerning the misuse of parliamentary entitlements by the Liberal Member for Frankston, Mr Geoff Shaw MP.

The matter was initially referred to the Speaker and Department of Parliamentary Services by Premier Baillieu.

On 6 March 2012, Mr Shaw withdrew his support for Premier Baillieu and resigned from the Parliamentary Liberal Party, opting instead to sit on the crossbenches as an Independent Member of the Legislative Assembly while simultaneously refusing to guarantee confidence or supply for the Coalition Government.

In September 2013, Victorian Police charged Mr Shaw with 23 counts of obtaining financial benefit by deception and one count of misconduct in public office. These charges were later withdrawn with the matter instead referred to the Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

Following the release of the Privileges Committee's report, and the refusal of Premier Napthine to guarantee his position in the House, Mr Shaw stated that he would now support a no confidence motion in the Premier and the Government. The Opposition chose not to pursue this offer from the Independent Member but instead sought Mr Shaw's expulsion on the grounds of the Privileges Committee's findings.

Rather than expel the Member for Frankston, the Coalition opted instead to move a suspension motion, which was ultimately successful.

For access to Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on the Motion to Suspend the Member for Frankston, click [here](#).

For access to Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on the Member for Frankston's Return to Parliament, click [here](#).

Resignation of Speaker Ken Smith

On 4 February 2014, Speaker Ken Smith resigned from his position after a period of chaos in which the Member for Frankston withdrew his support for the Speaker and joined with the Opposition to vote down the Government's legislative program, removing the Government's ability to suspend debate and control their legislative agenda.

By-elections

Since the 2010 Victorian Election, four by-elections have been held in Labor-held seats, following the retirements of former Premier the Hon. John Brumby MP (Broadmeadows), as well as former Ministers the Hon. Rob Hulls MP (Niddrie), the Hon. Bronwyn Pike MP (Melbourne) and the Hon. Tim Holding MP (Lyndhurst).

The Labor Party retained each of these seats with the election of Frank McGuire, Ben Carroll, Jennifer Kanis and Martin Pakula respectively. The Coalition did not contest any of these elections.

Election 2014

Key Seats

Inner-City

Seat Name	Sitting Member (Party)	Margin	Held Since
Prahran	Clem Newton-Brown (Liberal Party)	4.7%	2010
Albert Park	Martin Foley (ALP)	0.9%	1947
Brunswick	Jane Garrett (ALP)	3.6% (vs Greens)	2002
Melbourne	Jennifer Kanis (ALP)	4.7% (vs Greens)	1955
Richmond	Richard Wynne (ALP)	6.4% (vs Greens)	1958
Northcote	Fiona Richardson (ALP)	10.3% (vs Greens)	1927

These seats are characterised by their proximity to the city centre as well as a rise in prominence of the Greens.

At the 2010 election, each of these seats recorded a higher than average Greens vote and, in the cases of Brunswick, Melbourne, Richmond and Northcote, a primary vote for the Greens in excess of 30 per cent.

Transport policy will play a significant role in determining the outcome of these seats. While the Greens had sought to wedge the ALP on the Government's proposed East West Link, the Opposition's decision to not proceed with the road tunnel should serve to solidify the party's vote, particularly in the aforementioned seats. Furthermore, Labor's intention to pursue the Melbourne Metro Rail project in Government would also be expected to positively influence voters in these areas.

The Liberal-held division of Prahran has changed hands repeatedly over its history and will be a key target for the ALP in its attempt to return to Government. In addition to public transport, the proposed construction of a new school in the electorate by both major parties will also be crucial in determining the outcome of the seat.

Frankston Train Line/Sandbelt

Seat Name	Sitting Member	Margin Post-Redistribution	Held Since
Carrum	Donna Bauer (Liberal Party)	0.3%	2010
Bentleigh	Elizabeth Miller (Liberal Party)	0.9%	2010
Mordialloc	Lorraine Wreford (Liberal Party)	1.5%	2010
Frankston	Geoff Shaw (Independent)	0.4% (vs Labor)	2010

With swings ranging from 5.3 to 8.7 per cent, the perceived neglect of public transport in seats running along the Frankston train line played a pivotal role in the demise of the Brumby Labor Government at the 2010 election.

The Opposition will be hoping to win back at least two of Carrum, Bentleigh and Mordialloc, plus the seat of Frankston held by Independent MP Geoff Shaw, if it is to successfully form Government at the 2014 election.

Given its importance at the 2010 election, how each of the major parties' public transport policies are received in these seats will be key to their outcome. The Coalition will head to the election promising to build the Melbourne Rail Link and Airport Link, an alternative to the previously proposed (and Labor's favoured) Melbourne Metro Rail, while the ALP have also promised in Government to remove 50 level crossings over eight years.

Urban Fringe

Seat Name	Sitting Member	Margin (Post-redistribution)	Held Since
Monbulk	James Merlino (Labor)	-1.1% (Notionally Liberal)	2002
Yan Yean	Danielle Green (Labor)	-0.1% (Notionally Liberal)	1992
Eltham	Steve Herbert (Labor)	0.8%	2002
Cranbourne	Jude Perera (Labor)	1.1%	2002
Macedon	Joanne Duncan (Labor)	2.3%	2002

A host of seats that the Labor Party need to hold if they are to form Government, characterised by their geographic position on the outskirts of Melbourne's urban boundary with rapidly changing demographics.

As in other more regional areas of the state, high unemployment is a feature of these seats, particularly among young people, with the major parties' jobs policies key to influencing voters.

Both major parties will also be spruiking their policies in the traditional state service areas of health and education to these aspirational voters in areas where the provision of quality services tends to be more problematic than in established suburbs closer to the city.

Regions

Seat Name	Sitting Member	Margin (Post-redistribution)	Held Since
South Barwon	Andrew Katos (Liberal Party)	4.9%	2010
Morwell	Russell Northe (The Nationals)	13.3%	2006
Bellarine	Lisa Neville (Labor)	-2.5% (Notionally Liberal)	2002
Ripon	Joe Helper (Labor)	-1.6% (Notionally Liberal)	1999
Wendouree	Sharon Knight (Labor)	-0.1% (Notionally Liberal)	1999
Buninyong	Geoff Howard (Labor)	1.6%	1999
Bendigo West	Maree Edwards (Labor)	3.1%	1996
Bendigo East	Jacinta Allan (Labor)	3.2%	1999

Following widespread job losses in the manufacturing sector, regional seats will undoubtedly play a significant role in determining who forms Government at the upcoming election.

The anomaly would appear to be Morwell, where despite a healthy margin of 13.3 per cent, the Nationals will face a battle to retain the seat after a fire at the Hazelwood Coal Mine in February 2014 blanketed surrounding towns in smoke for several weeks, with the Government was widely criticised for their handling of the fire.

Key Issues

Transport Infrastructure

Both major parties have committed to major expenditure in transport infrastructure to keep pace with Victoria's population growth.

The Coalition Government's signature commitment is to build Stage 1 (Eastern Section) of the East West Link, a 6.6 kilometre cross-city road connection running from the Eastern Freeway to CityLink and featuring twin 4.4 kilometre tunnels.

The ALP's opposition to the project is seen as the defining issue of the 2014 election however, both parties would argue it is only one component of a broader debate about what transport infrastructure is most appropriate for the state.

Despite contracts for the East West Link being signed by the Napthine Government, the Labor Party have promised not to proceed with the project, citing legal advice stating that there can be no certainty that the contracts that have been signed are legally binding as a consequence of an unresolved Supreme Court challenge by the Cities of Moreland and Yarra regarding the legitimacy of the Government's approval process.

The Labor Party have instead sought to focus the debate on the opportunity for voters to choose between the Government's \$8 billion tunnel and their own policy of improved public transport and local roads. This includes early stage works on the Melbourne Metro Rail project, featuring a 9 kilometre tunnel connecting the Sunbury and Pakenham-Dandenong lines and the construction of five new underground stations, as well as the removal of 50 level crossings.

For access to Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on Project 10,000: Victorian Labor's Transport Alternative, click [here](#).

In addition to the East West Link project, the Coalition have committed to building the Melbourne Rail Link, an alternative to the Melbourne Metro Rail project. It includes the construction of two new stations (one of which would be in the vicinity of the soon to be developed suburb of Fishermans Bend) as well as the Melbourne Airport Rail Link, connecting Melbourne Airport to Southern Cross Station and the Frankston-Pakenham Line.

Jobs

With unemployment in Victoria currently sitting at 6.8 per cent, well above the national average of 6.1 per cent, and a series of high profile manufacturing closures hitting the state in recent years, jobs will be a major focus at the upcoming election.

Both major parties have released their jobs plans prior to the official commencement of the campaign period.

Victorian Labor's \$1 billion jobs fund, with the stated objective of creating 100,000 full time jobs over two years, includes:

- The *Back To Work Act* – a \$100 million payroll tax relief fund;
- The *Premier's Jobs and Investments Panel*;
- The *Future Industries Fund* – a \$200 million grant program to support job-creating projects;
- The *Regional Jobs Fund* – a \$200 million investment fund to support job creating projects in Regional Victoria; and
- The establishment of new reverse super trade missions and International Victorian Government Business Offices.

For access to Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on Back To Work: Victorian Labor's Plan for 100,000 Jobs, click [here](#).

The Coalition's *Victorian Jobs in the 21st Century* plan outlines their strategy of creating 200,000 new jobs over the next five years.

For access to the Coalition's media release on the announcement of their jobs plan, click [here](#).

Education and Skills

The ALP have made a series of announcements over recent months with respect to funding for school capital projects.

The funding commitments, totalling more than \$300 million, have principally focussed on the rebuilding and upgrading of local primary and secondary schools across the state.

The Coalition have also allocated funding towards school capital projects and maintenance works however, at this stage it appears they will not match the Opposition's spending commitments in this area.

Funding cuts to TAFEs across Victoria were announced by the Coalition Government at the 2012-13 Budget.

The ALP have also sought to capitalise on this issue by announcing a number of measures including:

- Funding for TAFEs to deliver their Community Service Obligations;
- Supporting TAFEs to establish one-stop-shop Industry Skills Centres;
- Investing in TAFE infrastructure; and
- Supporting the VET in Schools program.

These commitments, as well as other skills related policies, are contained in *Victorian Labor's Plan for Jobs and Growth*.

For access to the policy document, click [here](#).

For access to Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on Victorian Labor's Plan for Jobs and Growth, click [here](#).

Health

Health has become a feature of election campaigns in Australia as a consequence of the significant amount of budget revenue it consumes.

With declining GST revenues hitting state budgets, and states being increasingly required to administer public health systems, the issue has become more acute in state election campaigns with a growing disparity between community expectations and the Government's ability to fund new or expanded services.

In Victoria, both major parties have made some limited commitments to new services (such as a new cardiac centre in Melbourne's south-east) however, both will more likely focus on their record in delivering health infrastructure that was either built in the last decade or is currently under construction (such as the Royal Children's Hospital and new cancer precinct).

On the negative side for the Government, Labor can be expected to highlight the Government's failure to address a long-running dispute in Victoria's ambulance services. They can also be expected to try and link the Coalition State Government with the unpopular aspects of the 2014 Federal Health Budget.

Party Leaders

Liberal Party | Premier The Hon. Dr Denis Napthine MP

Dr Napthine was elected to the Victorian Parliament as the Liberal Member for Portland in 1988, and was subsequently re-elected in 1992, 1996 and 1999.

In 2002, Dr Napthine contested and won the new division of South-West Coast and has since been re-elected at the 2006 and 2010 elections.

During the period of the Kennett Government (1992-99), Dr Napthine served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health (1992-96) and later as Minister for Youth Affairs (1996-99).



Following the Kennett Government's defeat in 1999, Dr Napthine took control of the Party's leadership and served as Opposition Leader until 2002.

In 2010, Dr Napthine was handed ministerial responsibility for regional cities, ports, major projects and racing in the newly elected Baillieu Coalition Government.

In March 2013, Dr Napthine became the 47th Premier of Victoria, replacing the Hon. Ted Baillieu MP.

During this period he has remained Minister for Regional Cities and Racing.

The Nationals | The Hon. Peter Ryan MP

Peter Ryan has contested and won each election for the Division of Gippsland South since 1992.

Between 1999 and 2010, Mr Ryan held a number of shadow portfolios as well as the position of Deputy Leader of The Nationals.

After the victorious 2010 election, Mr Ryan was elevated to The Nationals leadership and consequently, Deputy Premier.

Mr Ryan has also served as Minister for Regional and Rural Development since 2010, Minister for State Development since 2013, and Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Bushfire Response (2010-2013).

Labor Party | The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP

Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Daniel Andrews MP has represented the Division of Mulgrave since 2002.

Mr Andrews served as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health for the duration of his first term in the Legislative Assembly before being promoted to Cabinet as Minister for Gaming and Minister for Consumer Affairs following Labor's victory at the 2006 election.

In August 2007, Mr Andrews was promoted to Minister for Health and, following the party's defeat at the 2010 election, replaced The Hon. John Brumby MP as Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and consequently, as Leader of the Opposition.

Greens | Mr Greg Barber

Greg Barber was elected MLC for Northern Metropolitan at the 2006 election and was subsequently re-elected in 2010.

Mr Barber served as the Greens' spokesperson for the Environment, Finance and Indigenous Affairs during his first term before being elevated to the party's leadership in 2010.