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Dear Liberals

The recently announced 2006-07 State Budget yet again confirms the high taxing, high spending Bracks Labor Government continues to mismanage the State's coffers. It will indulge in a pre-election spending spree that delivers very little to country Victoria.

In the coming financial year, each Victorian will be taxed a further \$900 than when Labor came to office, now taxing every Victorian a record \$2,360 a year.

Country Victorians will be shocked to learn the Bracks Government is repeating the same mistakes of the Cain/Kirner years, sending Victoria back into debt with an additional borrowing of \$7.1 billion over the next four years, spending record amounts on the Victorian credit card.

Spending on primary industries has been cut by a whopping \$28 million, and there are no new initiatives to address the rural doctor shortage and the lengthy delays in accessing public dentistry, physiotherapy or podiatry. Hospitals across Western Victoria have missed out on funding, despite demonstrated community needs.

The Bracks Government is scrapping the First Home Buyers Bonus and continues to refuse to reduce the nation's highest levels of stamp duty. It is providing no real land tax relief and many will be paying extra land tax next year.

Country Victorians will be paying more under the fire services levy, even though the Victorian Government fails to manage our national parks and public lands, resulting in the devastating fires that besieged the Stawell region, the Grampians National Park and surrounding rural communities in January.

No financial support has been offered to country councils that have been calling for assistance with country road and bridge infrastructure. The Bracks Government obviously does not see road safety to be important in country Victoria, despite road and bridge infrastructure being identified by the Victorian Farmers Federation as a top budget priority.

The Government's failure to prioritise the upgrading of railway crossings to make them safer continues to claim lives across country Victoria.

Ignoring calls for funding to upgrade facilities at Horsham's railway station, Wimmera's gateway, reinforces the Government's city centric policies. It splurges money on attracting tourists to Melbourne but nothing to assist country tourism.

Country councils struggle to keep community libraries afloat, demonstrates that literacy in country Victoria is not a high priority for the Bracks Government.

The re-announcement of free public transport for seniors on Sundays within the Melbourne CBD and regional cities is of no benefit to those living in country Victoria who are being unfairly discriminated against by the Bracks Government.



David Koch with Katrina Rainsford, endorsed Liberal candidate for Lowan on a recent visit to Horsham.

In the lead-up to 25 November 2006, the Liberals are determined to show country Victorians that the Bracks Labor Government is incapable of governing this state for all Victorians, especially those living in country Victoria. Under the leadership of Ted Baillieu, the Liberal team will give country Victorians a fair go.

We are doing the hard work and offering a better alternative to that of the mismanagement and wasteful Bracks Government. A series of policies for country and regional Victoria have been released with more to come, making a total of over 50 policies now available on the Liberal website. I urge all members to visit the site at www.vic.liberal.org.au

The unanimous election of Ted Baillieu as leader has brought a sense of confidence and enthusiasm to the party and we can look forward to a new era under his leadership. His passion and commitment to the state and all Victorians leaves little doubt of the Liberal's capacity to govern this great state. The Liberals have a very focused team and the Leader has expressed his high expectations from all parliamentary members and candidates in the lead up to the state election.

He has brought together an effective balance of the skills, experience and expertise of the Liberal Parliamentary team who are already working very hard on the issues of importance to all Victorians.

I very much appreciated being appointed Shadow Minister for Racing and Shadow Minister for Forestry.

Having recently undertaken statewide briefings with forestry industry leaders and representatives, I have a much better understanding of the issues that affect the sector and look forward to offering a sound policy that will allow greater stability to this vital rural industry.



Cr Gary Blackwood Liberal Candidate for Narracan, David Koch and Peter Ward from Drouin West Timber, after discussing the industry's recent resource auctions.

My role as Shadow Minister for Racing involves continuing to support Victoria's racing industry. The Liberals have developed a plan to return the majority of unclaimed dividends to racing clubs for much needed upgrades and development of facilities and infrastructure. Over recent years some \$10 million a year of unclaimed dividends has been diverted into consolidated revenue. I believe the majority of this money should stay in the industry and we have developed a policy, *Liberals Support Country Racing*, to ensure future growth of racing in Victoria, with

particular emphasis on increasing funding for country clubs. Our Racing policy is available on the website or can be obtained by contacting my office.

Spring 2006 sitting dates

	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
July	18	19	20	
August	8	9	10	
	22	23	24	
September	12	13	14	
October	3	4	5	6

Western Victoria Candidates for 2006

The Labor Party has rejected local country Victorians in favour of city-based union hacks in the Upper House seats for the new Western Victoria Region. Both Jaala Pulford and Gayle Tierney, holders of Labor's top two winnable ticket positions for Western Victoria, live in Melbourne. Clearly, Labor does not think highly enough of its country constituency, overlooking locals in favour of city candidates who know and care little for country Victoria.

The Liberals are committed in providing effective representation to country Victoria with members of parliament who are part of their local communities. Every Liberal Party candidate for Western Victoria Region and all country upper house seats reside in their prospective electorates.

I welcome recently endorsed candidates for the Western Victoria Region Paul Johnston, Daylesford and John Oxley, Geelong, as 4th and 5th on the Liberal ticket. My congratulation and best wishes to Paul and John, two great rural candidates. Along with John Vogels, myself and Kate Bullen, we are committed to serving the new and very much enlarged electorate.

My congratulations also to Dr Katrina Rainsford who was recently endorsed as the Liberal candidate for the lower house seat of Lowan. Katrina joins previously endorsed Liberal candidates: Geoff Hayes (Ballarat East); Shane Brennan (Ballarat West); Don Gibson (Bellarine); Scott Dixon (Geelong); Angelo Kakouras (Lara); Graham Hooper (Melton); Vic Dunn (Ripon); and Michael King (South Barwon) along with sitting members Terry Mulder (Polwarth) and Denis Naphine (South-West Coast).

My best wishes to all candidates and I appreciate the great support from members for their continuing commitment to the Liberal Party, especially in the lead up to the all important November 2006 State election.

Dana Koch