

THE TIMES

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Tax alert on CEO's handsome salary

INVESTIGATION

CAMPASPE Shire rate payers are footing the bill for council executives lavish salaries, including our own CEO Keith Baillie.

Baillie is employed with the benefit of the Remote Area Housing Benefit Scheme. That scheme been placed under a tax alert by the ATO, under the authority of a tax office commissioner.

The scheme is an "emerging concern" and Baillie receives "tax deductions" on his property and the scheme exempts him from paying fringe benefits tax.

Documents seen by *The Times* reveal that Baillie's salary for this financial year will be \$216,000 – which is over triple the mayor's salary. However this is standard for most CEO's across the state, with some earning more than \$300,000 a year.

Under the scheme "The employee leases the property to his or her employer and receives rent from the employer. The property is then provided to the employee rent-free by the employer."

The scheme applies for individuals who come to work in remote areas,

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Campaspe Shire CEO Keith Baillie is paid \$216,000 a year.

Concern for CEO's handsome salary

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such as Echuca, and receive extra tax benefits.

Baillie – who comes from South Melbourne – formally worked as a Chief Financial Officer at a greeting card company and a Mt. Macedon Shire volunteer before he was lured to Echuca under the scheme.

Included in Baillie's salary is a fully serviced car, which includes fuel costs and fringe benefits tax, which costs \$12,046.

He also receives \$17,834 in superannuation

contributions. The previous financial year, his salary totalled at \$200,000.

Currently councillors receive \$20,000 a year and the mayor is given \$62,300 in tax payer's money.

Mr. Baillie's office made a brief statement on the issue to *The Times*, speaking in relation to the scheme.

"If a person relocates for the purpose of work and the town they are moving to is entitled to Remote Area Housing benefits, then an employee may be eligible for the Remote Area Housing scheme," Human Resources manager Simone Lambert said.



Mayor Peter Williams says that the scheme is under tax alert because of the Henry Tax Review.

"The review is looking at a whole range of things," he said. However the tax alert was issued in 2002, well before the review started.

"The CEO benefits with a contract from council which is standard with other CEO's across the state."

"Our area comes under that scheme, however sadly I'm not part of it," he said.

Melbourne City Council CEO Dr. Kathy Alexander is the highest paid CEO in the state, with \$390,000 her annual salary - \$50,000 more than the Prime Ministers.

It comes as Mornington Peninsula Shire CEO Michael Kennedy is being probed by a Government lawyer, who is investigating the validity of his almost \$300,000 salary.

In the Campaspe Shire, the eleven executives are all paid over \$100,000 more than the minimum annual wage.

Assets and Planning Manager Jon Aujard is paid the second most, at \$151,798 and Kelly Sampson coming in third at \$143,000. Paul McKenzie and Strategy Executive Manager Anne Howard both receive \$137,000.

Rates in the Shire have gone up 6% for the past three years.

Youth Allowance again in limbo

THE RUDD Government is attempting to push the Youth Allowance changes through the Senate again, despite there being financial concern for rural and regional students.

This week, the Government was able to pass laws in the House of Representatives that mean that students will be required to work 30 hours a week for 18 months in a 2 year period in order to become eligible for Youth Allowance.

Ongoing opposition to the changes has not swayed the Governments decisions on the issue and attempts to negotiate with Education Minister Julia Gillard seem to have failed.

Students tried to persuade Gillard to exempt rural students from the changes, however have been unsuccessful.

Member for Murray, Dr Sharman Stone says its unfair to pass the legislation.

“If this legislation is passed rural students will have no option but to struggle to try to find near full time work in a difficult employment environment, competing for jobs with others not intending to pursue further studies,” she said.

The amendments to Youth Allowance will be sent back to the Senate, where the Coalition has promised to “stand firm” against them.

Briefly...

Street

- ECHUCA households and businesses could soon be asked to pay for the carbon they emit if the Emissions Trading Scheme is passed. Although coalition amendments have exempted the agriculture industry from the scheme, so our farmers will remain unaffected.

Local

- DESPITE rural concern, the Rudd Government is again trying to push through controversial changes to Youth Allowance through the Senate. Using their numbers, the Government was this week able to pass the amendments through the House of Reps, although the Coalition is promising to block the motion in the Senate.

National

- LIBERAL leader Malcolm Turnbull has stood defiant against his shattered party, who want his head, saying he will not be spooked by leadership challenges from Liberal members. Joe Hockey is the likely candidate to replace Turnbull if he is eventually removed as leader. The party is unhappy with his handling of the ETS.

World

- INVESTIGATIONS into Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program have reached a “dead end” according to the director of the UN Nuclear watchdog. The US and other western nations are considering tougher economic sanctions against Tehran unless their Nuclear program stops.

Echuca on a winning streak

Echuca has notched up another win against Echuca South. See more in Sport>



Cheap fast food a root cause for obesity

Opinion

IT'S amazing to think that over sixty percent of all Australian adults are overweight. We're fatter than the US per capita, could you believe. That means there are millions of us who are overweight. It's a "big" problem...

The government has been trying to tackle the problem for years now by screening a few ad campaigns, which really haven't done much. The real cause of this problem lies with the fast food companies. When the cost of living is becoming increasingly higher, we generally go for the cheapest option for food. KFC, McDonalds, Burger King, Hungry Jacks, to name a few, all sell food for incredibly cheap prices, so cheap that you could buy a meal for under 5 dollars. In America, leaked



document's have revealed that McDonalds is considering introducing a \$1 breakfast, with a collection of bagels and coffees for dirt cheap prices. This may help the struggling families affected by the financial crisis, however is not helping the obesity epidemic. The WHO directly linked the rise in obesity to fast food restaurants, and when you can get fatty foods for less than five bucks, it's hard not to see why. Last year, McDonalds sales

rose by 8.2% globally, while the rest of the share market suffered, which is probably why it can afford to offer cheap food for it's millions of customers. McDonalds continues to expand globally, with the franchise setting up in Uganda and across Africa. With an estimated billion people overweight across the world, it's quite easy to point the finger at the multi national fast food giants. But just remember, it's all our choice to eat their food.

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SPORT



Echuca on a roll as another team tumbles

ECHUCA is shaping up to be the juggernaut of the 2009 cricket season, following yet another win against cross town rival Echuca South last weekend. Echuca won by six easy wickets in the end to finish with a score of 4/150, replying to South's 7/148.

Bizarrely, the match was held without an umpire present and players were forced to regulate themselves. South had a slow start at batting, with openers Dean Bruns and Mark Peterson making a 30-run partnership. Peterson went on to make a smashing team with Jayden Rosin, to make 65 off

88 balls before being caught out by Jon Varcoe in the 30th over. Moama finished with 148 runs, before Echuca took to the crease.

Adam Jones and Grant Harrison opened, with Harrison being dismissed early for 5. However Jones went on to make a massive 74 runs of 77 balls, with partners Varcoe (12), Ryan Hon (6), and finally Wade Johnson who made 45 runs with Jones not out.

Echuca commended South on their score of 148, however they attributed their win to Jones' mammoth performance.

EDITORIAL

Do we need to know?

“I HAVE not had sex with her and the idea that I would have sex between meetings in my office in Parliament Office while parliament was sitting is so patently ridiculous, I would have thought all of you would have known this.”

Those were the words of South Australian Premier Mike Rann, who, quite obviously, vehemently denies allegations that he had an affair with a parliamentary secretary.

Channel 7’s *Sunday Night* this week revealed claims of a woman about “intimacy” between her and the premier.

This isn’t the first time something like this has happened.

Pauline Hanson’s nude pictures, published in News Ltd. Newspapers, not only turned out to be not her, but a complete hoax.

Being sued is no longer an issue, if the stories sell papers, that is.

“F1 Boss Has Sick Nazi Orgy With 5 Hookers,” the *News of the World* screamed.

And who could forget Bill Clinton’s affair with Monica Lewinsky, which was also

■ The secret photos hidden for 30 years
Pauline betrayed



revealed by the US media. These stories, which are claimed to be in the public interest, are nothing more than entertainment.

If the incident involves tax payer’s money, then it is of interest, but to report on politician’s sex lives is quite intrusive.

The same rule applies with celebrities, who are stalked by the paparazzi constantly. It is bad practice for our media to get into the same habit as the foreign press. Tabloid journalism sells, however if journalists stoop to low levels to report on



Michelle Chantollos being interviewed. Above: Pauline Hanson’s fake nude pictures.

an issue which is no body’s business, then we shouldn’t believe any word of it. Freedom of Speech is very important, however when the tabloid media abuse this right it becomes less valued and less respected.

OPINION

Your views, your say, your Opinion

ODD BOX A Canadian woman on long-term sick leave for major depression says she lost her benefits after her insurance agent found photos of her on Facebook in which she appeared to be having fun, including at a Chippendales bar show and on a holiday.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

My computer beat me at checkers, but I sure beat it at kickboxing.
Emo Philips

JOKE BY JAKE

Where do you find a tortoise with no legs?
 Where you left it.

HOROSCOPE



WRITERS block really sucks. You could sit there for hours, thinking about what to write about until you realise you really need to go to the toilet. The thing is, you probably end up writing something totally absurd. For instance, I write this horoscope every week and it no longer has anything to do with star signs or predictions. There are plenty of things you can write about, however none of which you can think of at that time. Some people leave note books beside their beds in case they think of anything in bed. I had a bad dream about zombies the other night, although I'm sure you wouldn't want to hear about that. It's not like your constantly thinking about things to write about your whole life, that you need to document every thought you have. That's a little weird.

“Do you care about the Mike Rann sex scandal?”



Rupert Murdoch

“Sex sells. If there aren't boobs in a story, it's not news as far as I'm concerned.”



Mike Rann

“Do people expect me to answer ‘yes’ when they ask if I've had sex with that woman?”



Bill Clinton

“Finally. Something to take the heat off me!”

Critic's choice

Ugly Betty

7-Two, 7.30pm Tuesday

EVER wondered where all those shows you once enjoyed watching end up? Probably on 7-Two.

Brothers and Sisters, *Lipstick Jungle*, *Samantha Who?* And guess what; even *Ugly Betty* is on TV again! So if you wanted to watch some more American television, 7-Two is the way to go. Even *Lost* might be on there.

RPA: Where are they now?

Channel 9, 8.30 Wednesday

IF you've ever wanted to relive all those wonderful surgeries and see what happy lives these people went on to live, then buy a romance novel. *RPA* is gross and disgusting. No one wants to see a detailed lung transplant. Or lots of organs hanging out. It's not as bad as *Last Chance Surgery* though.

Deck the Halls

Channel 9, tonight 7.30

UGH... I hate Christmas movies. And there is no shortage of them because there's about ten made every year. This particular movie revolves around Christmas lighting and there's always going to be a happy ending. Once all the good TV shows wrap up for the year, we get Christmas movies. And surprise, surprise: *Deck the Halls* is followed by *Christmas with the Kranks*.

'Antiques Roadshow'

IF I wanted a quick way to make some cash in thirty seconds, I'd probably grab all the junk around me and bring it into *Antiques Roadshow* for inspection.

Anything from old door knobs to priceless portraits are taken in and assessed by a number of "experts" who say smart words then tell the owner how much it is.

"Now I guess you didn't think this blanket would cost this much, did you?" is a regular line on the show.

Although it is incredibly dorky and lame to watch, it's engages you and it ends up becoming a game about guessing how much the next item will cost.

Some people have weird things sitting in their attics or backyard sheds. Stuff that is priceless, although gathering a pile of dust, unnoticed. A collection of walking sticks was brought in by one man and ended up being valued at \$120,000! Another had a "19th century octopus bag", which turned out to be made by Native Americans in Canada in 1860. That fetched \$6,000. Although one of the greatest finds was a man who possessed Lawrence of Arabia's pilot watch and didn't even know it. "Good God. To be truthfully honest, I always thought he was a fictional character," he said when he found out. He made \$15,000. If only we had an *Antiques Roadshow* in Australia... I could sell off all of my junk and make a fortune!

