

Turnbull's July poll strategy

SIMON BENSON

MALCOLM Turnbull is preparing to take the extraordinary step of bringing forward the federal Budget and rushing to an early election in July.

Setting up a potential marathon election campaign of more than two months, Employment Minister Michaela Cash yesterday said the government already had one trigger for an early election and could also fight the campaign over the Senate's rejection of legislation bringing back the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

With polls showing the government deadlocked with Labor, Mr Turnbull is said to be contemplating the unusual step of handing down a Budget a week early in order to call the election for July 2.

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Minister's criticism gets an F

BRUCE McDOUGALL

PARENTS have given a big thumbs up to the My School website, visiting it in record numbers despite calls by Education Minister Adrian Piccoli to ban the publication of school performance data.

The website attracted almost 1.5 million user sessions during the last financial year.

The latest data has been posted on the website today, including students' scores in about 10,000 schools.

Two years ago Mr Piccoli condemned My School as a waste of money, claiming it created stress for students.

But parents said they had the "right to know" information that helped them monitor schools' progress and make decisions about their children's education.

FULL REPORT PAGE 8

GOTCHA



The boardroom documents that have ensnared the Eels in a salary cap scandal

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

NICK TABAKOFF

PARRAMATTA Eels board members openly discussed strategies to skirt around the NRL's

stringent salary cap rules to pay the club's players extra cash, explosive board minutes reveal. The minutes, signed by club chairman Steve Sharp, detail boardroom discussions about rewarding third-party sponsors with corporate box tickets and hospitality packages in exchange for player payments.

Former Parramatta superstar Jarryd Hayne has also become embroiled in the scandal, with five separate payments totalling \$39,000 paid into his bank account early last year at a time when he had already left the club to join the San Francisco 49ers.

FULL REPORT PAGES 4-5



AN INVITE TO MURDER

Killer's fatal ambush » P9



JOHN'S IN GOOD HANDS

Kerri-Anne opens up about ill hubby » P7

CLUB'S DODGY DEELS



PARRRA'S THIRD PARTY IS OVER

Jarryd Hayne at the Eels' first-round game last week, and (inset) in action for the 49ers.



SPECIAL TWO-PART INVESTIGATION

NICK TABAKOFF, EDITOR AT LARGE



THE Parramatta Eels board and senior executives have overseen a culture of breaching salary cap rules by rewarding players' third-party sponsors with corporate boxes, explosive internal documents suggest.

Confidential board minutes from 2014 obtained by The Daily Telegraph show there was active discussion at the highest levels of the club about providing rewards — most notably free and fully catered corporate hospitality — to the third parties.

There are also revelations that tens of thousands of dollars in payments were made to departed star Jarryd Hayne by a Parramatta official last year, well after he left the club to join the San Francisco 49ers NFL team.

The Telegraph has obtained documents detailing five separate bank transfers to Hayne from an unnamed Parramatta football club representative totalling \$39,000, well after Hayne left the club.

Bank statements detail five payments were made between January 27 and February 26, 2015 by a Parramatta official into Hayne's account, including three individual payments of \$10,000.

The Daily Telegraph is not suggesting that Hayne has

done anything wrong. An Eels spokesman had no comment.

Hayne's manager Wayne Beavis denied all knowledge of the payments.

"I don't know anything about it. It might have been money owing to him. I don't get involved with his personal stuff," he said.

The 2014 boardroom documents, which were signed by club chairman Steve Sharp, state "the importance of servicing TPA (Third Party Agreement) providers accordingly with hospitality and player appearances".

Any legitimate third-party payments to players must be on an arm's length basis from the club. It is a breach of the salary cap rules if a club makes a payment on behalf of the

third parties or does a deal to compensate companies for a third-party contract.

It is understood that corporate hospitality at the Eels' home ground, Pirtek Stadium, is valued at up to \$300 a head — meaning any third party given the benefit of this over the course of a season could reap a benefit worth thousands of dollars.

When The Telegraph put the allegations to Mr Sharp yesterday he said the minutes could have been "doctored", before later appearing to back down on the claim.

Eels communications chief Josh Drayton later emailed a further comment: "The club denies these allegations show impropriety or wrongdoing in relation to the salary cap."

The NRL's official rules regarding salary cap on its website state: "Many players have third-party agreements that are outside the salary cap" but these must not "become a way for clubs or players to use sponsors or third parties to undermine the salary cap".

The Eels have already paid a \$465,000 fine for salary cap breaches in 2014 and ran the risk of having four points deducted for the 2016 season unless governance was fixed.

A deal with the NRL on this matter is still being finalised.

When The Telegraph made the NRL aware of these new developments yesterday, a spokesman would say only that the governing body was continuing a review of the Eels' salary cap.

"We cannot make any comment on the review until it is completed," he said.

The formal minutes of a March 26, 2014, meeting of the Eels' governing board suggest a culture in which the allocation of free "hospitality" and "corporate tickets" was being used as a virtual cur-



AC/DC loses 'deaf' front man

THE future of rock band AC/DC is up in the air after lead singer Brian Johnson was told by doctors to stop touring or risk going completely deaf.

The band last night pulled out of a show in Atlanta and cancelled 10 dates across the US on their current Rock or Bust World Tour.

In a statement, the band

confirmed fans fears: "Lead singer, Brian Johnson, has been advised to stop touring immediately or risk total hearing loss."

The band plan to replace Johnson, 68, with a "guest vocalist" — the band's fourth singer following Dave Evans and the late Bon Scott.



Brian Johnson.

Ticketek busted double dipping

NAOMI WHITE

TICKETEK is reviewing its processing fees after a nudge from NSW Fair Trading.

The ticket agency was contacted by the regulating body after it received complaints of double dipping on "one-off" processing fees

for tickets to a Tom Roberts exhibition at Canberra's National Gallery of Australia.

Customers had reported being charged the fee both when purchasing voucher tickets and when redeeming them at outlets.

Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe welcomed the review, adding traders should avoid using

wording such as additional fees or conditions may apply: "Ticketek has reviewed the service/delivery fee on the Tom Roberts National Gallery Canberra gift voucher."

"Ticketek is currently rectifying this to ensure the service/delivery fee is not charged twice on both the purchase and redemption on gift vouchers."

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TOMORROW

WE REVEAL THE **OTHER FORMER EELS STAR AT THE CENTRE OF THE SCANDAL**
The Daily Telegraph

\$30,000 motorway study well travelled

EXCLUSIVE

MILES GODFREY

KEY parts of a \$30,000 report commissioned by City of Sydney to analyse the WestConnex motorway were copied from a consultancy report prepared by Leichhardt Council.

City of Sydney's costly 44-page document was described as a waste of time by Roads Minister Duncan Gay.

He said tens of thousands of dollars of ratepayers' money would have been saved "if it (City) had just Googled the Leichhardt Council report".

The City's document was published in February and also contains a major flaw in the way it compares user figures for the \$16.8 billion WestConnex project to other international transport projects, making it look far worse value for money. Leichhardt's report was published in January.

SGS Economics and Planning produced both documents. Leichhardt Council confirmed last night an offer was made to City of Sydney to undertake the study together but the City preferred to replicate the work by commissioning it independently.

"There is no shortage of similarities," Mr Gay said.

"It looks like the City of Sydney paid for a report that someone else had already paid for."

Six passages in Leichhardt Council's report, discussing if alternatives to WestConnex have been considered, are repeated in the City's document either word-for-word or with minor changes.

The City's report also contains a major flaw in the way it presents estimated user figures for WestConnex alongside those of other major international transport projects, such as the UK's Channel Tunnel.

City of Sydney insisted its report was "money well spent" and said similarities between the two documents were "bound to appear" given it tackles the same subject.

The document estimates WestConnex will have 800,000 "users" each year by 2031 and compares this to the 290 million "users" of Japan's \$15.6 billion Toei Oedo subway line, presenting it in a way that makes WestConnex appear worse value for money. The 290 million "users" is actually the number of "trips" taken.



Chairman Steve Sharp (right), football manager Daniel Anderson (above), CEO John Boulous (below left) and deputy chairman Tom Issa (below right), and one of the documents signed by Mr Sharp.



D Anderson spoke to the report and this was noted by the Board. Issues in relation to the salary cap and potential repercussions were discussed. The Board noted the process of Third Party Agreements and the importance of servicing TPA providers accordingly with hospitality and player appearances.

Discussion followed.

D Anderson provided an overview on Junior Development and this was noted.

Department reports: S Seward presented the report as tabled and asked for any questions. Chief Executive Officer No questions were received from the Board.

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Signed:

gested the minutes could have been "doctored".

"You've made me aware of these minutes," he said.

"I'll have to call our CEO. We've had cases around that time (2014) when documentation wasn't correct."

Asked if he was saying his signature had been forged, Mr Sharp then backed away.

"I wouldn't suggest someone has forged my signature at all (but) for what agenda is someone giving you those documents?" he said.

The Eels' game against the Cowboys may have a lot more riding on it than just points.

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rency to compensate third-party providers.

In discussing football operations, they said: "Issues in relation to the salary cap and potential repercussions were discussed. The board noted the process of Third Party Agreements and the importance of servicing TPA providers with hospitality and player appearances."

Minutes from the same meeting also noted "the importance of using corporate tickets for potential sponsors and TPA providers".

Several of those present at the meeting — including Mr Sharp, deputy chairman Tom Issa, John Boulous (now the club's CEO) and the head of football Daniel Anderson — remain with the club.

These minutes, also signed by Mr Sharp, were adopted on April 23, 2014, verifying the statements made at the March 26 meeting.

When contacted yesterday, Mr Sharp said: "I find it extraordinary that's in the board minutes. Of course I know that third-party deals are arm's length."

At one point he even sug-

Inglis family's grief at death of teen daughter



Olivia Inglis.

THE famed Inglis horse racing family yesterday opened up about their heartbreak over the death of their teenage daughter Olivia.

The 17-year-old died after falling from her horse in a cross-country ride during the Scone Horse trials on Sunday.

Describing Olivia as a "beautiful young woman", her parents

Arthur, deputy director of thoroughbred auctioning company Inglis, and Charlotte yesterday said they had been touched by the many tributes to their daughter.

"We have been overwhelmed by the kindness and sympathy from family and friends throughout the school, equestrian and

thoroughbred communities," they said. "We are so proud of Olivia and the beautiful young woman she was in every way.

"We are blessed to have had the opportunity to share our passion for horses with our children. This has led us on a great journey where we have been able to spend countless happy moments and special

family times. So much to celebrate and a life so joyous and well lived."

The family also revealed their sorrow after Olivia's beloved horse Coriolanus had to be put down on Monday when it was discovered he had a displaced fracture in his neck: "He was a talented competitor and loved family member and will be sadly missed."



Olivia on Coriolanus.