

THE STANDARD

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" ALBURY-WODONGA: Victoria and NSW police will ride the XPT between Melbourne and Sydney in a new operation to discourage illegal behaviour on the trip. The joint operation will see VIC police board the train in Melbourne and NSW police board from Sydney. [Read more](#).

" BENDIGO: [Police have charged a 34-year-old Ascot man with drug trafficking, possession of firearms and possessing proceeds of crime](#). The charges come after raids at a business and a home in Arrawalli Avenue in Ascot where police found a loaded gun, drugs, ammunition and large amounts of cash. Police are seeking to submit a remand application to keep the man in custody rather than release him until his appearance in court. VIDEO.

" CANBERRA: It's shaping up as a winning Christmas for **Hong Kong billionaire** entrepreneur father and son Tony and Justin Fung, with approval of their bid for Canberra's ailing casino expected to be announced early next week. The ACT Gambling and Racing Commission will likely deliver the pair's second return in as many weeks after their Aquis Resorts **company** was granted environmental approval for its proposed \$8.15 **billion** resort and casino development in far north Queensland on Thursday. [Read more](#).

" GLOUCESTER: Potentially contaminated wastewater used to frack AGL's Gloucester **coal** seam gas project has been dumped unlawfully into the Hunter's sewer system by the private **company** hired to treat it. Transpacific, one of the nation's largest wastewater management firms, has been fined \$30,000 by Hunter Water for releasing treated "flow-back" fluid from the gas project into the region's sewer network. [Read more](#).

" LAUNCESTON: Emergency patients at the Launceston General Hospital are [waiting as long as 20 hours for a bed](#), but new research has found a surprising 27 per cent of patients occupying beds do not need to be there. The research, commissioned by the University of Tasmania as part of a Commonwealth-funded clinical redesign program, has also revealed that LGH patients are potentially waiting hours for beds that were empty when they arrived at the hospital.

" MANDURAH: [Police seized about 70 cannabis plants and hydroponics equipment](#) during a drug warrant search in Madora Bay on Thursday. About 7.30am officers attended the home after they received anonymous information that cannabis was being grown on the property. Drug paraphernalia and dried cannabis was also found.

" MORUYA: A Moruya family is reeling after [two of their own were taken as hostages and subsequently injured in Monday's Lindt Caf- siege](#). Robin Hope (nee Quinn), 74, and her daughter, Louisa Hope, 52, are both former Moruya residents and now live in Sydney. It is understood Louisa, who has MS and uses a walking stick, was used as human shield by the gunman, and was dragged around each time he moved his position.

" WARRNAMBOOL: WHILE most two-year-olds will be enjoying the thrill of opening Christmas presents in their family home, [Remy Roberts will be in a hospital isolation ward awaiting a life-saving operation](#). She has severe aplastic anaemia " a rare condition that causes bone marrow failure " and

is being kept alive by blood transfusions. Her future depends on being able to receive a compatible bone marrow transplant.

" WHYALLA: [QantasLink has officially announced it will start flying to Whyalla next year](#). QantasLink will offer a double daily service on its 50-seat Q300 aircraft from April 13, 2015, providing 1300 seats per week or more than 65,000 seats a year between Whyalla and Adelaide. QantasLink chief executive officer John Gissing said the new route would expand business and tourism opportunities for the Whyalla community.

" Woolworths buyers have told suppliers their products could be pulled from shelves just days before Christmas if they refuse to fund the supermarket giant's new Cheap Cheap advertising campaign. [Read more](#).

" A GP of 20 years, Charlotte Hespe fears for the future of her profession. "Under these incentives, what junior doctor would want to come and work in primary care?" she asked. "You'd be better off going and working as a barista than as an expert GP." [Read more](#).

" The NSW government is [planning to sell the first of the state's electricity distributors as soon as it can](#) " if it receives electoral support at the March state election, and has already begun work to prepare for the **sale** before the vote. The first asset to be sold will be the high-voltage network **company** Transgrid, which will be fully privatised.

" The bodies of the Martin Place siege victims will be laid to rest before Christmas. Cafe manager Tori Johnson, 34, and barrister Katrina Dawson, 38, were killed at the end of a 16-hour siege staged by gunman Man Haron Monis, who also died. The NSW Coroner announced that the victims' bodies had undergone autopsies and would be released to their families at 7pm on Thursday. [Read more](#).

" [The ABC has lost three Canberra reporters less than a week before Christmas](#). 7.30 ACT presenter Chris Kimball and long-time producer Patricia Barraclough are leaving the public broadcaster after the state editions of the current affairs program were axed amid budget cuts. Parliament house reporter Lyndal Curtis has also announced her resignation.

" It's easy to become jaded about modern-day sportspeople, especially some cricketers. [Thank heavens for Brad Haddin](#). Details have emerged of how Steve Smith became the 45th Test captain of Australia, and while Haddin would be embarrassed about what's about to follow, it needs to be said. When he learned that the selectors and Cricket Australia board would require a long-term solution, because Michael Clarke's hamstring and back problems meant he would be sidelined indefinitely, Haddin felt Smith would be a wiser choice.

" Like most Australians, former Australian Idol contestant Wes Carr found himself dealing with a powerful mix of thoughts and feelings as a result of the Martin Place siege in Sydney. In Wes' case, he put those thoughts and feelings into words, and uploaded the song to Youtube. Called "I Pray", here it is.

" What is extraordinary about this [brutal CIA report into assassination operations](#) is how the spy agency failed to anticipate the devastating cost to US prestige from extrajudicial killing. The report sets out to judge the effectiveness of what is euphemistically called "high value targeting" - **operations** radically expanded as deadly drone attacks under Barack Obama.

" As [funerals began for the 148 victims of the Pakistani Taliban attack on a school in Peshawar](#), Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif vowed to crush the insurgents and lifted a moratorium on the death penalty. With Pakistan reeling from the attack that left 132 students dead, Mr Sharif said all political parties had agreed to draft within a week a national action plan to combat the Taliban, which would be acted on immediately.

" President Barack Obama has opened the door to [restoring full diplomatic relations with Cuba](#) after 50 years of sanctions and embargo, announcing that the US would seek to open an embassy in the coming months and to relax economic and travel restrictions. The announcement was made after an exchange of jailed spies was negotiated struck and, separately, an American imprisoned in Cuba named Alan Gross, was released.

Terry Richardson from Henty has fulfilled one of his lifetime goals by having his novel, Justice for Constable Cook, published after years of writing and years of contacting literary agents.

Mr Richardson attempted to go the traditional route to get his book onto shelves but literary agents in Australia weren't interested.

He then sent it to America and got the offer to have his book published by "Rosedog" who print it on a demand basis.

"I am very proud and very happy," Mr Richardson said.

"I would love to bring it to Australia (to be published) if I got the chance." [Read more.](#)

NS gdrug : Drug Trafficking/Dealing | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gcat : Political/General News | gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling

RE austr : Australia | sydney : Sydney | tasman : Tasmania | victor : Victoria (Australia) | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | nswals : New South Wales

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