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**Anger builds around Rudd as chaos reigns at the top**

**John Lyons**  
 On the top ranks of the public service, the episodes are symptomatic of Kevin Rudd's disaffection towards the bureaucracy. To others, they merely display the increasing level of chaos that reigns inside the Prime Minister's office.

Last month, Rudd kept two of the nation's most senior officials Australian Defence Force Chief Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston and the secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Michael L'Estrange — waiting for hours outside his office.

He accused the public service staff of leaking and not working hard enough.

And there are increasing reports of an arrogant and inexperienced team advising the Prime Minister — one that last year felt it was appropriate for a 28-year-old flack to dress down ill front-bencher Tony Burke because he would not do a media interview.

Anger towards Rudd over his attitude to the public service has escalated as diplomatic snubs to the French ambassador to Australia. A spokesman for the Prime Minister confirmed Houston and L'Estrange were kept waiting but said it was "a normal part of government".

The pair arrived at parliament last month to meet Rudd and attend the National Security Committee of cabinet. Both are ex-officio members of the NSC but for the next several hours they were kept waiting. "They wandered the corridors," says a public servant who said yesterday.

In recent months, the NSC has been constantly running late, but this was one of the worst cases, causing a diplomatic snub to the French ambassador to Australia.

A spokesman for the Prime Minister confirmed Houston and L'Estrange were kept waiting but said it was "a normal part of government".

The engine room of the Government — the PM's office — has taken shape and a new inner circle of power has been established.

Rudd refers to it as "the team".

And they are his most trusted advisers — two 28-year-olds, Alister Jordan and Lachlan Harris, chief of staff, David Epstein, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Treasurer Wayne Swan.

But there is one word beginning to be used by people in and around the Government: chaos.

Rudd refused several requests from *The Weekend Australian* this week to discuss how his office was operating.

Key decisions are not being made. Rudd, for example, has had in his in-tray since February a list of candidates to replace Richard Alton as high commissioner to London. He cannot decide between three career diplomats — John McCarthy, David Ritchie and John Daulton — and two of his own thoughts for the position, political figures Kim Beazley and Stephen Losey.

Apart from growing anger from the public service, the Prime Minister's office is also alienating. Continued — Page 4  
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**Intervention taskforce pushes 'viability test' for communities**  
**Look to the future for some towns**

**Patricia Karvelas**  
**Natasha Robinson**  
**Inquirer**  
 Don't look back. The revolution promised a year ago is not over. Indeed, it has scarcely begun.

**Nicolas Rothwell** — Page 23

**THE INTERVENTION**  
 One year on

**More reports** — Page 6  
**Editorial** — Page 18  
**Inquirer** — Page 22

On the first anniversary of the intervention, taskforce heads Sue Gordon and Major General Dave Macklin have handed Indigenous Affairs Minister Jerry Macklin a report that makes a number of radical suggestions, including the creation of special tax zones to attract workers such as doctors to remote communities.

In a sweeping overview of the past year in the 73 communities targeted by the intervention, the taskforce heads say suspicion is lifting in remote communities where people are increasingly supporting the intervention.

But Dr Gordon and Major General Chalmers have issued an urgent plea for vast increases in funding for remote communities.

The report stresses that half the communities affected by the intervention — unveiled by John Howard last year to stamp out child abuse and improve living standards — still have no permanent police presence despite some of these being major population centres.

And a \$650 million new housing program unveiled this year by the Labor Government is also seen as woefully inadequate, with new houses yet to be delivered in most communities.

"Overcrowding is an issue in all communities and town camps, and the majority of communities are not receiving new housing," the report says.

Their radical appeal for an assessment of "viable" communities called for the creation of fully resourced small towns with a range of basic educational and social services comparable with those in metropolitan regional communities.

Communities assessed as viable should be provided with adequate housing, a police station, a health clinic, an early-childhood education centre, a store, a primary school, and access to a secondary school, which may not be in the community.

The taskforce "strongly recommends that the Australian Government continue to work with the Northern Territory Government to assess which communities are viable in the longer term, and to plan future investment based on those assessments".

But while calling for many of the intervention's measures to be ramped up, Dr Gordon and Major General Chalmers have simultaneously recommended a softening of two of the key platforms of the intervention — welfare quarantining and alcohol bans.

The taskforce strongly recommends that urgent consideration be given to the future of the income management system — under which a portion of welfare payments are quarantined to ensure they are spent on necessities such as food and children's education — with some communities only just moving on to the program while others have had it in place for many months.

Controversially, the taskforce says that at some point income management should become voluntary.

At the moment, 50 per cent of all income is compulsorily quarantined from all people, regardless of whether they are spending their money appropriately.

Community-specific alcohol-management plans may present a better model than outright alcohol bans, the report says.

It recommends that additional rehabilitation centres that are accessible to a sufferer's family members should be established in regional and remote areas.

The timing of the report is critical for Ms Macklin and the Rudd Government, as its one-year review into the intervention, headed by Kimberley Aboriginal reformer Peter Yu, begins work.

To mark the anniversary, Ms Macklin yesterday used a visit to the Clyde Fenton School in Katherine to announce a program to increase school attendance in six NT communities by denying welfare payments to families who failed to ensure their children attended school.

The trial will apply to both black and white children, and, if successful, will be extended across the country.

Parents receiving welfare in Hermannsburg, Katherine, Katherine Town Camps, Wallace Rockhole, Wadee, and the Tiwi

Continued — Page 6



Eye to eye: Jenny Macklin sits with student Cassie Cole, 8, at the Clyde Fenton School in Katherine yesterday. Picture: Gary Ramage

**Handling of horse flu was a 'disgrace'**

**Tony Koch**  
 HORSE breeders and racing industry identities have accused former federal agriculture minister and now racing industry lobbyist Peter McGauran of not acting quickly enough to stop the spread of equine influenza into Queensland last year.

Industry figures are critical of the Callinan report — chaired by retired High Court judge Ian Callinan QC and tabled to parliament last week — having narrow guidelines that excluded an investigation of the political handling of the outbreak, and the part played by the big breeders and owners in getting what many interpreted as favourable treatment.

Defence and mining sectors are initiating a long-term boom in South Australia, the survey says.

"Residents are experiencing a robust labour market resulting in accelerated wages, growth, higher disposable incomes and a low unemployment rate," the survey says.

"Between us, my partners and I had over 100 years' experience in potatoes and we saw there was an opportunity for an Australian product unlike the others on the market at the time. You don't get too many opportunities come along in life that are exciting, so you have to grab it and run with it."

His success with The Kettle Chip Company, opening 5000 accounts over three years, proved irresistible to multi-national Arnott's which bought the business in 1996.

He thought retirement was an option but, like any good entrepreneur, couldn't sit still for long. In 1999 he bought the 75-year-old Sweet William chocolate company and turned it on its head, changing the business focus to the production of dairy-free chocolate. Since then Sweet William has had huge growth and is distributed nationally through supermarkets.

Mandrees says any budding entrepreneur should follow a few basic principles.

"These are the same — whatever the business you're in, be honest, don't give up, believe in the product and get the right people on the bus with you. If you want to achieve anything you must put money, time and commitment into it and then just go for it."

**WHAT IT TAKES**

- Lack of fear.
- Comfortable with a high level of risk (eg, house mortgaged for business).
- Able to fast-track — knows how to find information in the fastest way.
- Well-connected — understands the importance of networking.
- A doer, not a thinker.
- Solid self-belief and self-esteem.



Best advice: Emma Isaacs says mentorship of doers is a great help. Picture: Bob Flitayson

**WORKOUT**  
**Largesse in mining fuels expectations**

THE flow-on effect from higher salaries in the resources sector is creating pressure on other areas of the workforce.

Mining and construction sectors are paying more and more in order to attract and retain talent, and companies competing with these sectors are compelled to follow suit, says global recruitment firm Kelly Services in its 2008 *Employment Outlook and Salary Guide*.

Unrealistic expectations are being fuelled across the board, including in the unskilled sector. The consequent staff turnover is affecting many firms, the survey says. Based on the views of senior executives in 240 companies, the nationwide survey has found five or more staff have left in about 45 per cent of firms.

Attracting new talent and retaining staff is a greater issue for companies than ever before.

"Companies successfully retaining staff are actively involved with finding out what their top talent wants," Kelly Services managing director James Bowmer says. "It is cheaper to keep your current staff than to find new ones."

Successful organisations attracting and retaining staff make remuneration in part or above market rates and provide performance-based incentives, such as bonuses or rewards.

The most popular strategies employed by companies to lure and keep their prized staff include salary sacrificing (71 per cent), flexible working hours (66 per cent), bonus and rewards (48 per cent), paid maternity leave (43 per cent) and offering company uniforms (41 per cent).

Retention of staff was indicated as the top priority by 93 per cent of the companies surveyed.

Succession planning (66 per cent) and leadership development (81 per cent) were next in the list.

Among all the regions, NSW is the only state likely to experience a downturn in employment. The global credit crisis and rising interest rates are to blame for this, according to the survey.

Finance and manufacturing sectors in the labour market in Victoria may undergo a period of instability in the coming months. The market remains strong in ACT and Northern Territory.

Western Australia and Queensland are charging ahead, propelled by the resources and construction boom.

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**Success a matter of faith**

Entrepreneurs are action-oriented and are driven by more than a good idea, writes Helen Bennett

SUCCESSFUL entrepreneurs are doers, not dreamers. A lot of people have ideas, but there are few who decide to do something about them. And of those who decide to do something about it, there are few who decide to do it now.

Not tomorrow. Not next week. Today.

They are also brave and ready to accept the consequences of their actions.

According to Victor Kiam, best known for his "I liked it so much, I bought the company" ads for Remington electric shavers, "Entrepreneurs are risk takers, willing to roll the dice with their money or reputation on the line in support of an idea or enterprise. They willingly assume responsibility for the success or failure of a venture, and are answerable for all its facets."

Australia has a great track record of producing successful entrepreneurs: retailers and business leaders Gerry Harvey, Dick Smith, John Ilihan, Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch are well-known names. But there are thousands of less well-known entrepreneurs in the Australian corporate landscape running with their dreams and forging new paths in the world of business.

In August 1993, Michael Paul opened the first Pack & Send store in Parramatta, Sydney.

He filled a niche market in Australia's multi-billion dollar logistics industry — Pack & Send specialises in transporting goods for businesses and individuals, providing a complete service of tailored packaging, transport and tracking solutions through retail shopfronts.

At 46, Michael Paul has created a multi-million-dollar national enterprise. His innovation and specialisation has built Pack & Send into a national retail chain of more than 80 stores, and won the 2007 PriceWaterhouseCoopers Franchisor of the Year Award.

Like many successful entrepreneurs before him, Paul built his career from the ground up, in his case beginning in a mailroom at the age of 18.

When Paul opened the first Pack & Send store on August 17, 1993, its first and only sale that day was a \$2.90 cardboard box. "The original receipt for this sale is still proudly displayed in a picture frame at the Pack & Send office," says Paul.

"We kept it as a reminder that big things start from small beginnings, and that there are no limits if you work hard and think outside the box. It only takes one seed to create a forest."

Paul says it's vital for entrepreneurs to have a firm belief in self, the product and the service.

"And with that belief must come complete commitment to see the project through. All businesses have challenges — you must recognise them, have a positive attitude and see the vision through to the end. If you can't see the goal then you can't go for it."

Andrew Mandrees is another successful entrepreneur who started at the bottom. He first worked as a delivery boy for a potato processing company and then, when his talents were recognised, moved up in the company.

He saw there was a market and he could invest himself and go, along with three partners, started The Kettle Chip Company in 1987.

"Do what you're good at," Mandrees says. "Between us, my partners and I had over 100 years' experience in potatoes and we saw there was an opportunity for an Australian product unlike the others on the market at the time. You don't get too many opportunities come along in life that are exciting, so you have to grab it and run with it."

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**Charges end Pratt's road to recovery**

**INSIDE STORY**  
**Cameron Stewart**  
 WHEN Richard Pratt heard a knock on the door at his Rabben mansion in the exclusive Metbourne suburb of Kew on Thursday night, the billionaire had no idea his life was about to be turned upside down.

His lawyers had arrived to break the grim news that Australia's fourth-richest man was facing criminal charges — and a possible jail term — over evidence and misleading evidence in an investigation with each charge carrying penalties of between \$200 to 12 months' jail. Pratt, who has vowed to vigorously defend himself, has spent recent months trying to reconnect with his social and political power base. His philanthropy was back in full tilt, and even his beloved AFL club Carlton was winning games under his presidency.

The worst chapter in his life appeared to be over less than a year after he had pleaded guilty to price fixing, copping a \$36 million fine and buckets of public shame. But Graeme Samuel had

**I'll do a Packer on tax: Smith**

**Dennis Shanahan**  
**Political editor**  
 DICK Smith, who every year gives \$1 million to charity and pays more than \$1 million in tax, has threatened to "do a Kerry Packer" and become a massive tax minimiser.

The famed philanthropist, aerial adventurer and face of a thousand Dick Smith brands has told the Australian Tax Office he is considering becoming the "greatest legal tax minimiser in the history of Australia".

An angry Mr Smith has protested directly in a letter to tax commissioner Michael D'Ascenzo about a billion-dollar bureaucratic bungle after receiving advice from the tax office that he would be subjected to closer scrutiny.

Mr D'Ascenzo sent a letter and brochure to Mr Smith as someone who "effectively controls \$30 million or more in net wealth", about the ATO building "an open and co-operative working relationship" with him and his tax advisers. The letter said that "given your position of influence in the community, it is important that you don't take unacceptable risks when it comes to tax". It also warned that, as part of a long-term crackdown on wealthy Australians, "our scrutiny of your tax affairs, and the assistance we can provide may greatly increase".

The commissioner's letter, headed "Wealthly and wise — A tax guide for Australia's wealthiest people" and the brochure called "Wealthy Australians and Us" Continued — Page 33

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**Applications to quote position number OPI 174**

**OPERATIVE, TECHNICAL SURVEILLANCE**

- You will have extensive experience of working on sophisticated and contemporary electronic and mechanical security systems, including computer operating software systems, TCP/IP and telecommunications equipment gained from working in a law enforcement area.
- You will enjoy working in a small team, including managing projects, research and development and providing training to other operatives.

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