

Understand

➤ Melbourne & Victoria

MELBOURNE & VICTORIA TODAY 308

Melbourne's on a high, and the regions have joined the party. But will the good times continue?

HISTORY 311

Victoria's rich and rollicking history doesn't require a textbook – it's all around.

FOOD & WINE 321

It starts at breakfast, and ends when you call time; welcome to a culinary wonderland.

FASHION & SHOPPING 327

Melbourne knows how to rock a look, from hipster cheek to couture chic.

THE ARTS 330

Pack your black skivvy: experimentation rules in the art scene.

SPORT 337

Come watch the big men fly, or get out into the state's beautiful outdoors.



population per sq km



Melbourne & Victoria Today

New Brooms

Melbourne's liveability gets a nod year after year, coming in third over at the *Economist*, and number nine on *Monocle's* quality-of-life index. The state hasn't been immune to the global financial crisis but has weathered it better than much of Australia, which in turn has suffered far less than most of the world. Still, if the democratic process can be taken as a gauge of public opinion, Victorians aren't as content as the surveys might suggest.

Julia Gillard's hometown advantage did not translate to votes in the 2010 federal election, and while the Labor Party held onto government by the skin of its teeth, the safe Labor seat of Melbourne was taken by Adam Bandt, the Green's first federal MP.

In the state election that followed a few months later, the Labor party suffered a shock defeat, and the Liberal-National coalition narrowly formed government, with 'hunk from Hawthorn' Ted Baillieu becoming the new premier. Labor cited voter-fatigue after some 11 years in power, but big losses in outer suburban seats suggested infrastructure shortfalls and the high cost of living played a part in their demise.

City Limits

Melbourne now has another title: Australia's most unaffordable city. While conversations in the city centre on the unpopular Windsor Hotel tower redevelopment and whether Docklands will ever see real life beyond its lanyard-land nine-to-fivers and Costco devotees, the state faces considerable urban planning challenges.

The Bracks Labor government's millennial policies to limit sprawl may have been better in theory than practice. Most population growth continued around outer suburban land releases, making for more car-

» Population: 5.53 million

» GSP per capita: \$52,284

» Average house price: \$565,000

» Unemployment rate: 5.4%

Top Films

» **The Story of the Kelly Gang** (1906) World's first feature.

» **On the Beach** (1957) Apocalypse Now-ish.

» **Picnic at Hanging Rock** (1975) Elliptical, sensual classic.

» **Dogs in Space** (1986) Chaotic chronicle of the city's punk past.

» **Animal Kingdom** (2010) Menacing, moody crime family thriller.

» **Red Hill** (2010) 'Revisionist' Western-cop thriller genre mash-up, set in breathtaking East Gippsland.

Top Playlist

» 'Carlton (Lygon Street Limbo)', Skyhooks

» 'Shivers', Boys Next Door

» 'Beautiful People', Australian Crawl

» 'Leaps and Bounds', Paul Kelly

» 'Under the Sun', Hunters & Collectors