



FERRARI-LOVING DEVELOPER'S 'ACT OF CHARITY' FOR FORMER MAYOR, HOLED UP IN CAIRO PAGE 4



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2019

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Jones to fly back from UK to front Gobbo royal commission

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SIR KEN JONES

HERE COMES SIR KEN

LAWYER

FORMER top cop Sir Ken Jones is set to return to Melbourne to blow the lid on how Victoria Police sought to cover up its use of barrister Nicola Gobbo as an informer.

The one-time deputy commissioner was pushed out of the force in 2011 after clashing with his then-boss Simon Overland over police tactics — including the use of Gobbo to inform on her clients.

The Lawyer X royal commission

ANTHONY DOWSLEY, PATRICK CARLYON AND ANTHONY PIOVESAN

yesterday confirmed Sir Ken — a decorated former chief constable of Sussex who returned to the UK after the 2011 fallout — would fly back here within weeks to give evidence.

In an explosive climax to the commission, he will be joined by several of the most powerful figures

in Victoria Police over the past two decades.

Current Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton and former chiefs Christine Nixon — who was in charge during Gobbo's most prolific informing period, between 2005 and 2009 — and Mr Overland are also scheduled to take the stand before December 20.

Mr Overland yesterday announced he was stepping away

from his highly paid role as chief executive of Whittlesea Council to concentrate on his health.

Sir Ken is expected to provide a detailed account of the culture of Victoria Police command at a turbulent time. It is believed he raised concerns about using Gobbo as a "human source", as he considered it an incompetent strategy.

He is also understood to have challenged the cover-up of the

tactic, which he is understood to have found after the prison murder of gangland kingpin Carl Williams in 2010.

His fractured relationship with Mr Overland became a public spat in 2011. At that time, Sir Ken's phone was tapped by the now-defunct Office of Police Integrity after Mr Overland accused Sir Ken of leaking information to undermine him.

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West Gate Tunnel thrown into chaos

MAJOR tunnelling on Melbourne's second river crossing in the west that should have already started will be delayed until at least February because of a soil contamination crisis.

The issue has thrown the \$6.7 billion West Gate Tunnel into chaos and sparked fears it will not be completed by the 2022 state election as budget overruns rise amid massive remediation costs.

EXCLUSIVE MATT JOHNSTON, TOM MINEAR AND JAMES CAMPBELL

The scale of the contamination has fuelled delays, and asbestos found on site and the presence of industrial chemical PFAS — revealed by the *Herald Sun* in July — have limited the number of tips that can take the hazardous material.

The consortium leading the construction, which includes CPB and John Holland, has now agreed to expensive "bulk excavation" of earth at problem sites in former industrial areas.

Major boring was expected to start in July but the *Herald Sun* has been told it will be delayed until at least February.

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THE CITY'S NEW PEAK

NATHAN MAWBY

MELBOURNE has just raised the roof to heights never before seen in the Southern Hemisphere with the city's biggest skyscraper, Australia 108, now looking down on Grocon's 297m Eureka Tower. **FULL REPORT, PAGE 3**

Contaminated soil throws West Gate Tunnel project into chaos

FROM PAGE 1

Hundreds of tunnel workers brought in for the project have been given Christmas leave after earlier being told they would be working through the holiday period.

"No one knows what will happen in February, the hope is they will start then," an industry source said.

A spokeswoman for Transport Infrastructure Minister Jacinta Allan said Transurban

— which is responsible for delivering the tunnel — "must deliver the project by late 2022" under its contract.

A source said 200 specialist tunnellers who were brought in had been left with little to do. The construction of boring machines has been deliberately slowed to extend the timeline and give workers something to do.

A source said the consortium was likely to make a cost

claim to the government — which is already dealing with blowouts on the Metro Tunnel and other major projects — of up to \$1 billion.

About 1.5 million cubic metres of rock and soil has to be removed to tunnel under Yarraville between the West Gate Freeway and the Maribyrnong River. Project chief Peter Sammut said two tunnel boring machines were installed in launch sites while preparations

for spoil management were finalised, with work continuing on other parts of the project.

The EPA, which oversees the disposal of contaminated soil, said it was working with project managers "on establishing preferred options for the management of soil from the project".

An EPA spokesman said asbestos had to be tracked and taken to a licensed site. "Any proposal to re-use the soil will

need to satisfy the EPA to ensure any risk is managed," he said.

CFMEU occupational health and safety manager Dr Gerry Ayers said: "Safety needs to be treated with the utmost seriousness and it's good to see that the consortium has now recognised that."

Ms Allan's spokeswoman said last night: "Transurban and its builder are working with the EPA and WorkSafe to

ensure contaminated soil is managed and removed safely, and soil testing is being carried out."

Opposition transport infrastructure spokesman David Davis said: "The Andrews Government's failure to properly scope the project has again put taxpayers in trouble. The overruns are adding up and Labor can't manage these major projects."

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A very awkward handshake between then deputy commissioner Sir Ken Jones and chief commissioner Simon Overland in 2011, when the two were at odds.

Here comes Sir Ken's key evidence

FROM PAGE 1

The affidavits provided by police to gain approval to tap the phones of several officers opposed to Mr Overland could be presented to the commission.

Mr Overland, Mr Ashton and Assistant Commissioner Luke Cornelius will also be grilled by the commission about the tactics used by the force during joint probes with the Office of Police Integrity into alleged police involvement in gangland murders.

Mr Ashton was a deputy director at the OPI from 2004 to 2009, when he joined Victoria Police.

He and former Australian Federal Police colleagues Mr Overland and Mr Cornelius

sat on the joint steering committees for the two murder probes.

Police poured millions of dollars into failed attempts to connect corrupt police with the 2004 executions of witness Terence Hodson and his wife Christine and the 2003 murder of "vampire" gigolo Shane Chartres-Abbott.

Both investigations involved Gobbo in helping to unearth the alleged police involvement in the killings.

The commission last night said it would begin examining "leadership oversight" of the source development unit that handled Gobbo, starting today, with officers Dean McWhirter and Superintendent John O'Connor in the

witness box. Mr Overland is also considered a central figure in overseeing Gobbo's use as an informer.

Others due to take the stand in the coming weeks include the force's executive director of legal services, Finn McRae.

It has been speculated Mr McRae's statement reveals who knew what, and when.

The *Herald Sun* revealed on Monday that former Labor police minister Bob Cameron personally signed off on a \$2.8 million taxpayer-funded settlement with Gobbo after receiving a briefing note from police command.

Gobbo sued for compensation over the police deci-

sion — approved by Mr Overland, Mr Ashton and Mr Cornelius — to make her a witness in the Hodson murder investigation, claiming it had ruined her legal career and threatened her health and safety.

Stepping away from Witlesea Council yesterday, Mr Overland blamed deteriorating relationships with colleagues.

"The situation has been very difficult now for two years, but with recent changes on council, I now regrettably find my own health and safety significantly affected and accordingly, as of now, I am taking related leave," he said.

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Officer rejects being 'played'

Killer 'fixated' with cop

THE detective following James Gargasoulas before his deadly Bourke St rampage has rejected a claim he was being "played" by the killer.

Detective Senior Constable Murray Gentner thought he could get Gargasoulas to surrender and was following an arrest plan on the day of the January 2017 attack that killed six people and wounded dozens more.

But the barrister representing the families of the victims put it to him he was "nowhere near getting a surrender plan in action" as he tailed Gargasoulas around Melbourne and had "no real back up plan".

Gargasoulas was communicating via text with the detective, but his words became increasingly unhinged.

"But in fact that dialogue was the ramblings of a psychotic delusional man without any grip on reality. That's who you were speaking to at the time?" Aine Magee QC asked.

Sen-Constable Gentner replied: "The fact I had that dialogue and his attention — without that we had nothing."

"Do you accept you lost control of the situation with the offender?" she asked.

There was a long pause before Sen-Constable Gentner said: "It's a difficult question to answer. If you look at the net result, I would've certainly hoped to have prevented what occurred down the track."

The inquest has heard Gargasoulas was trying to impress Sen-Constable Gentner and seemed "fixated" with him.

Ms Magee suggested what

ANDREW KOUBARIDIS

was in fact happening was "the offender was playing you ... he was getting your attention, he was just playing cat and mouse with you and the police."

"From my perspective that wasn't the case. I can't answer what he was doing ... certainly I had a strong belief he may come in and surrender to me," Sen-Constable Gentner said.

He agreed Gargasoulas may have been waiting for him when he lingered at Flinders St.

His view was that it was too dangerous to ram Gargasoulas' car at the intersection of Flinders and Swanston streets. "You'd have to be extremely lucky to make contact with [the] car and stop it immediately and it not career into the hundreds of people surrounding," he said.

In hindsight, he would have attempted it.

"But without knowing then [what eventually happened] that certainly was the wrong decision," he said.

He said then Victoria Police policies on hostile vehicle and pursuits affected his decisions.

Changes to those policies since then had "freed us up to probably police in a more natural way again ... There was an overwhelming feeling at the time of the incident we were hamstrung with vehicles that was a feeling across the force."

Officers were scared of the consequences of engaging.

"It reduced our potential aggression in trying to deal with an incident," Sen-Constable Gentner said.

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