

Public service blowout

VICTORIANS have paid more than \$4 billion for 60,000 public servants employed since Labor won power in 1999.

A State Services Authority report tabled in Parliament showed Labor had employed an extra 60,396 since 1999 — about 11,000 more than last year's average MCG crowd.

Opposition industry spokesman Richard Dalla-Riva said the figures revealed Victoria as the public service blow-out capital of Australia. "With the average cost of each bureaucrat estimated to be \$70,000, an increase of more than 60,000 public servants will conservatively cost Victorian taxpayers hundreds of millions of extra dollars every year," he said.

"Where are these tens of thousands of public servants and billions of dollars of taxpayers' money going?"

"They are certainly not going into the police force, local schools or public hospitals, which have received a modest 20,880 new staff over the life of this Government."

Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen said the additional \$4 billion could have up-

Nick Higginbottom

graded public transport across Melbourne, fixing overcrowding, cutting traffic congestion and pollution.

"For \$4 billion you could buy 50 new trains, build rail lines to Doncaster, Rowville, Mernda and Cranbourne East, and have plenty of money left over to extend tram lines," he said.

Community and Public Services Union state secretary Karen Batt said the figures needed to be viewed in light of population growth.

"Is that all?" she said.

"We're still a third on the June 1992 figure prior to the election of the Kennett government while the population has increased by half and demands on services soar."

Ms Batt said public sector workers cost \$50,000 an employee, or \$3 billion extra.

Premier John Brumby's spokeswoman Fiona Macrae said: "Our Government is proud of significantly boosting front-line services for families — delivering more than 8800 extra nurses, 2580 doctors, 8100 teachers and support staff and 1400 additional police since 1999."



Wheel good mates: Berrick Wilson (left) has been nominated by friend Garry Prigg. Picture: TREVOR PINDER

Nomination is a chain reaction

Amelia Harris

GARRY Prigg has only known Berrick Wilson for six months, but that hasn't stopped him nominating his friend for a Pride of Australia medal.

Mr Prigg won last year's Community Spirit Medal for 20 years of volunteer work with the Cerebral Palsy Education Centre, and has nominated Mr Wilson in the same category.

Mr Wilson founded the



Chain Reaction Challenge, a 1000km cycling event, three years ago after his daughter Milla suffered a brain haemorrhage soon after birth.

"I wanted to do something to say thank you to the

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Pride medals: Nominate an unsung hero today

people who helped Milla and for the people in similar situations," Brighton property consultant Mr Wilson said.

Mr Wilson and 35 cyclists finished the latest challenge around Tasmania last Friday.

The event has raised \$1.86 million for children's charities, including more than \$200,000 for CPEC this year.

Mr Wilson, 39, said he was humbled and proud to be nominated.

"You don't do things like this for an award," he said.

Pride of Australia medals are awarded in 10 categories.

Nominations close at 5pm on Monday, April 13.

Winners will be announced in July.

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