

**The Honourable John Brumby MP**  
**Treasurer of Victoria**  
**Melbourne Town Hall**  
**Thursday 15 June 2006**

---

- Your Excellency, Professor David de Kretser
- Premier and Cabinet colleagues
- Current and former members of the Victorian and commonwealth Parliaments
- Current and former State and Commonwealth Departmental secretaries
- A special welcome to Ian's wife Clair, his daughters Kristina and Natalie, and his mother, Jean and sister, Helen.

Today we join together to express our deepest sorrow at the passing of Ian Little 10 days ago and pay tribute to his outstanding contribution to the people of Victoria.

Ian served respective Governments with great distinction, great loyalty and great professionalism.

He was an outstanding public sector leader, a first rate manager and a hugely effective policy adviser.

He will be greatly missed, professionally and personally, not only by his colleagues in Treasury, but also more broadly across the banking and economic communities.

For 12 years, first as Deputy Secretary and for 8 years as Secretary, he brought an intelligent mind, immense skill, clear vision and shrewd judgement to bear on securing a strong economic future for 5 million people.

And beyond that, his hard work and leadership on projects like the National Reform Initiative and reform of Commonwealth – State financial relations (HFE) also made a major contribution to the national economic debate.

Can I echo the Premiers support in establishment of the **Annual Ian Little Lecture** as a fitting tribute to Ian's work.

Many people have remarked on how he served two respective State Governments with the utmost professionalism and impartiality. Ian was able to do this because he believed he was really serving the people of Victoria.

He was a true Public Servant. He was a great one too.

With his background at the Reserve Bank and then later with the ANZ he was superbly qualified to head up the State's lead economic and financial department. Ian was recognised by everyone that worked with him as one of the best economists of his generation.

He combined a deep understanding of the practical realities of finance and economics with considerable intellectual capability.

Whether it was tax policy, Commonwealth State financial relations, superannuation management or driving economic reform, Ian was always in command of the issues, delivering excellent advice and strong outcomes.

He could effortlessly move from driving innovative policy development to overseeing the practical complexities of budget strategies. And he was quick at mental arithmetic, able to instantly price the wine bill at any function he attended or calculate the run rate required in a one day international.

And Ian was not only a skilled economic thinker and planner; he was also a tremendous team leader, building up the Department of Treasury of Finance (DTF) as a widely admired organisation within the broader Australian public sector and business community.

He did this in several key ways. He put in place a set of core values for DTF that I think should be the benchmark for any organisation. He developed systems and processes to deliver policy and management objectives that set a new standard for the public sector.

And above all he built up a strong team, finding and mentoring many talented people and providing the leadership, guidance and human touch that inspired universal respect, affection and loyalty with DTF.

Ian was also a mentor and friend to me. I worked alongside him for six years and got to know him well.

I still clearly recall our first meetings after forming Government in 1999 and with the Premier our first visit to Moody's and Standard & Poor's in New York in winter 2000. I remember our weekly meetings, our annual pilgrimage to Canberra for Treasurer's Conference and of course the annual ERC and Budget process, followed by Budget drinks. And I remember too

our last meeting on Monday last week when we prepared for Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, when I learnt of Franco Modigliani and when we chewed the fat about the Budget and Snowy Hydro.

Ian was a gentleman in every sense of the word, and a great believer in his staff. He encouraged each and every one of them to step up and take on new challenges.

And above all he was a man of tremendous integrity, a man whose word was his bond – a person I trusted implicitly to put the best case for Victoria, and Australia, regardless of who he was dealing with.

There was only thing that Ian was more dedicated to than his job and that was his family. We all feel the shock and sadness that Ian is no longer with us. But none more deeply than Clair, Kristina and Natalie and his mother Jean and sister Helen. On behalf of all us, please accept our deepest sympathies.

It was an honour and a privilege to work along side Ian. He was one of the most outstanding public servants in this country.

He leaves us with many wonderful memories and leaves Victoria with a priceless legacy of economic security and prosperity.

Thank you Ian.