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**JESINTA
TAKES ON
THE WORLD**

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**ROOS NOW
CAUGHT ON
THE HOP**

JON RALPH, SPORT



**MAX COOKS
UP BIG
SURPRISE**

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL, P18-19

Test of faith for Bombers

EXCLUSIVE

SAM LANDSBERGER

NEW Essendon chief executive Andrew Thorburn is chairman of a church organisation which likens abortion to the operation of concentration camps and declares homosexual acts a sin.

Thorburn, 57, was appointed to the Bombers' role on Monday, a move described by club president David Barham as "bold and decisive".

Former NAB chief Thorburn is also listed as chairman of an eight-church movement called City on a Hill.

Among a host of sermons promoted on that movement's website, one on abortion reads: "We believe that we must be a voice for the voiceless, and stand for the rights of the unborn baby and be pro-life."

"Human life begins at conception," it adds.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 6



Andrew Thorburn

Libs take knife to key staff

EXCLUSIVE

SHANNON DEERY

THE Victorian Liberals' election campaign is again under a cloud with a string of senior staff being sacked in a major bloodletting ahead of November's poll.

Deputy state director Scott Samson was among a series of officers forced out of the party last week, amid a major restructure.

One senior figure described the bloodletting as "imposed repair" after years of chaos.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 4

E-SCOOTER TRAGEDY



» Agony over man who died after hitting speed hump

» Police launch crackdown on dangerous drivers

LETHAL RIDE

LAURA PLACELLA

HEARTBROKEN relatives of a Pascoe Vale rider who died from injuries sustained in an e-scooter crash describe him as a "sweet and humble soul".

Moustafa Abou-Eid, 28, died in hospital on Friday, more than a week after he travelled over a speed hump and lost control of his e-scooter. He was riding the e-scooter without a helmet on September 22 about 8.20am when he lost control.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 7

Bombers' test of faith over religious views

New CEO is chair of church group

EXCLUSIVE
SAM LANDSBERGER

NEW Essendon chief executive Andrew Thorburn is chairman of a church organisation that likens abortion to the operation of concentration camps and declares homosexual behaviour to be wrong.

Thorburn, 57, was appointed to the top Bombers role on Monday in a move president David Barham described as "bold and decisive".

It can be revealed that former NAB chief Thorburn is also listed as chairman of an eight-church movement called City on a Hill.

On the church's website it says Thorburn became a Christian in 2002 and has attended since 2014.

And among a host of sermons promoted on the website, one on abortion reads: "We believe that we must be a voice for the voiceless, and stand for the rights of the unborn baby and be pro-life."

"Human life begins at conception," the sermon first published in 2016 says.

"All women and men have intrinsic value and worth as images of God. Abortion denies the voice of the most vulnerable ... 80 per cent of those who have aborted their child have regretted it."

In another sermon on the site, it is stated: "Whereas today we look back at (sic) sadness and disgust over concentration camps, future generations will look back with sadness at the legal murder of hundreds of thousands human beings every day through medicine and in the name of freedom."

That sermon was originally published in 2013, but the text

is still prominent on City on a Hill's site.

A further sermon on homosexuality says: "Sex is designed for marriage, and marriage for fulfilling God's mandate for humans to 'be fruitful and multiply'."

Further on it says: "The Bible never calls same-sex attraction a sin. Lust is a sin, sex outside of marriage is a sin, practicing (sic) homosexuality is a sin, but same-sex attraction is not a sin."

Thorburn is listed on the site as chair, an accredited sports chaplain and a City on a Hill warden.

The Essendon Football Club had no comment on the issue on Monday.

Dr Dvir Abramovich, chairman of leading civil rights group the Anti-Defamation Commission, described the comparison between abortion and concentration camps as "shameful". "Let's get something clear: to compare a woman's right to choose to the systematic extermination of six million Jews is beyond shameful and crosses so many red lines I stopped counting," he said.

"For any organisation to cheaply and perversely exploit the gassing of men, women, and children in order to promote a cause takes the abuse of the Holocaust to a new low and poisons an important debate which demands civility and respect."

City on a Hill describes itself as one movement of men and women gathered across eight churches in five cities united around the mission "to know Jesus and make Jesus known".

Four of those churches are in Victoria, three in Melbourne and one in Geelong.

Thorburn was chief executive of NAB from 2014-19 and previously the Bank of NZ from 2008-14.

He was forced to resign from NAB in the wake of the scathing 2019 royal commission into misconduct in the banking industry.

The commission's final report singled out Thorburn and Dr Ken Henry – who also resigned – for harsh criticism, saying they had not learnt the lessons of past misconduct, particularly in NAB's wealth management arm that had charged \$100m in fees without providing services.

He has more recently been involved with start-ups, entrepreneurs and not-for-profit organisations.

"In Andrew, we have secured a highly credentialled leader, with a proven track record in development and building the leadership capabilities of his people," Barham said of his appointment.

"Andrew's focus will be on running Essendon like a club, with a renewed focus on our members and the core reason which we exist – football."

Thorburn has links to the AFL through the league's corporate affairs manager Brian Walsh, who worked with Thorburn at NAB during his first year in the job.

Thorburn will begin his new role on November 1.

sam.landsberger@news.com.au



New Essendon chief Andrew Thorburn is also the chair of an eight-church movement called City on a Hill.

Pro-choice advocates see abortion as providing safety and security to the woman and family unit, and the foetus as a non-autonomous entity, a life worth sacrificing for the safety and freedom of the woman. Whereas today we look back at sadness and disgust over concentration camps, future generations will look back with sadness at the legal murder of hundreds of thousands human beings every day through medicine and in the name of freedom.

The Bible never calls same-sex attraction a sin. Lust is a sin, sex outside of marriage is a sin, practicing homosexuality is a sin, but same-sex attraction is not a sin. The Christian walk is one of struggle with sin yet in the gospel we can find forgiveness and grace. We ought to find our true love, satisfaction, and acceptance in Jesus.

Extracts from City on a Hill sermons

Nobel medicine prize for Swedish scientist

A SWEDISH paleogeneticist has won the 2022 Nobel prize in physiology or medicine.

Svante Paabo, who sequenced the genome of the Neanderthal and discovered the previously unknown hominin Denisova, on Monday won the Nobel Medicine Prize.

Paabo, 67, who will take home a prize of 10 million Swedish kronor (\$901,500), will receive the prize from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of scientist Alfred Nobel who created the prizes in his last will and testament.

"By revealing genetic differences that distinguish all living humans from extinct hominins, his discoveries provide the basis for exploring what makes us uniquely human," the Nobel committee said.

Paabo found that gene transfer had occurred from these now extinct hominins to Homo sapiens.

"This ancient flow of genes to present-day humans has physiological relevance today, for example affecting how our immune system reacts to infections," the jury said.

The Nobel season continues this week, winding up on October 10.

\$7m worth of love for city

BRUSSELS: A "mystery" Dutch woman who fell in love with the medieval city of Bruges has left it her €5m (\$7.62m) fortune.

The woman died in her house in the city centre, dubbed the "Venice of the north" for its lace, gothic architecture and quiet canals, which enthrall its nine million visitors each year. A mining heiress, 80, she bequeathed her personal wealth of €3.3m, another €1m in shares and her house, worth €700,000, to the city's authorities.

"She must have loved Bruges very much," said city councillor Mercedes Van Volcem.

Famed vintage yours for \$150k

KARLIE RUTHERFORD



Langton's head of auctions Tamara Grischy with a bottle of 1951 Penfolds Grange.

A LUXE wine auction is set to make history, with a rare bottle of Penfolds Grange expected to sell for over \$30,000 a glass.

One of only about 40 existing bottles of the famed drop's first ever vintage – Penfolds Bin 1 Grange Hermitage Shiraz 1951 – is tipped to fetch more than \$150,000 at auction on Thursday in Sydney.

A bottle of the 1951 vintage went for \$157,624 last year, making it the most expensive bottle of Australian wine ever sold, but it's predicted Thursday's auction by fine wine retailer Langton will attract even higher bids.

The current online bid is close to \$130,000.

Langton's general manager Tamara Grischy said the Penfolds wine was "liquid gold".

"What we know about our wine collectors is that they are an eclectic group but all who love the finest things in the world," she said. "Some will store wine like a piece of art. But in the past when we've sold a 1951 Grange we stored it for our client for a year, before one day they called to collect it so they could drink it."

Even the auction itself is expensive, costing \$295 to attend, including a three-course meal.

Ms Grischy said she had been overwhelmed by the demand to attend the event and said it confirmed that clients enjoy the high-stakes environment of a live auction.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022

\$2.50 (inc GST) HERALDSUN.COM.AU

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'I SAID NO HALF A DOZEN TIMES'

A tearful Brittany Higgins has appeared at the trial of Bruce Lehrmann (right), the former colleague charged with raping her in a minister's office in Parliament House. **FULL REPORT, PAGES 6-7**

New CEO quits after a day, choosing controversial church over Bombers

DONS' HOLY FAIL

SAM LANDSBERGER, JAY CLARK

ESSENDON is searching for its third chief executive in 40 days after the bombshell resignation of Andrew Thorburn just one day after he was appointed to the job.

Revelations in the Herald Sun that Thorburn was chair of a church organisation with controversial views on homosexuality and abortion – which it likened to the operation of concentration camps – made his position untenable.

Thorburn, 57, who has attended the City on a Hill church since 2014, said his “personal Christian faith is not tolerated or permitted in the public square”. **FULL REPORT, PAGE 8**



School probed on bullying, sexism

EXCLUSIVE TIM COX, SUSIE O'BRIEN, HAYLEY ELG, OLIVIA JENKINS

ONE of Victoria's best-performing private schools is under investigation for having a “slimy and creepy” culture of endemic racism, sexism

and misogyny. WorkSafe is investigating explosive claims about bullying, received from up to 20 staff at Ballarat Clarendon College.

A whistleblower letter alleges that when a young teacher informed principal David Shepherd

she was pregnant, “she was told she was too young to have a baby and he would help pay for an abortion”.

It is claimed the bullying is having an “enduring and sometimes devastating” effect on staff. **CONTINUED PAGE 4**



3 DAYS TO GO

CARLTON DRAUGHT

CAULFIELD CUP CARNIVAL

08-15 OCTOBER

 Caulfield Cup Carnival Tickets

CEO quits after one day, choosing church instead of Dons

'Faith' wins over footy

SAM LANDSBERGER
JAY CLARK
PETER ROLFE

ESSENDON is searching for its third chief executive in 40 days after the bombshell resignation of Andrew Thorburn just one day after he was appointed to the top job.

Revelations in the Herald Sun that Thorburn was also chair of a church organisation with controversial views on abortion and homosexuality made his position untenable.

On another dramatic day for the Bombers, Thorburn was faced with the dilemma of choosing between his faith and football.

The 57-year-old, who has attended the City on a Hill church since 2014 and joined the board two years ago, decided his Christianity was more important than the club he grew up supporting.

Essendon president David Barham conceded Thorburn couldn't serve both roles after reading a sermon from the City on a Hill church in the Herald Sun on Tuesday morning which likened abortion to concentration camps.

"I want to stress that neither the board nor Andrew was aware of the comments from the 2013 sermon until we read about them this morning," Mr Barham said.

It is an embarrassing situation for the Bombers, who will face questioning from their 80,000 members over the due diligence it completed when appointing Xavier Campbell's successor.

Mr Barham, who visited Thorburn's home before his official resignation on Tuesday, claimed he had thoroughly "reference checked" Thorburn before the appointment and on Tuesday owned the calamity.

Remarkably, Thorburn has been leading Essendon's external review of the football department, which included the search for a new chief executive. While Thorburn stepped aside from the chief executive search last week when he interviewed for the

role, he had been leading the process for more than a month to find a position he ultimately landed.

They are now expected to zero in on Richmond's chief marketing officer Simon Matthews, the brother of Greater Western Sydney CEO David Matthews.

"Yesterday was one of the proudest days of my life. To be offered the role of CEO of the Essendon Football Club - who I have followed since I was a boy - was a profound honour," Thorburn said on Tuesday night.

"However, today it became clear to me that my personal Christian faith is not tolerated or permitted in the public square, at least by some and perhaps by many.

"I was being required to compromise beyond a level that my conscience allowed.

"Despite my leadership record, within hours of my appointment being announced, the media and leaders of our community had spoken.

"My faith is central to who I am," he added. Thorburn also said he hoped the external review led to "great change" at the Bombers.

In a bizarre 24 hours, Thorburn addressed the Essendon faithful on Monday night at the club's Crichton Medal count just minutes after the Herald Sun's story on his controversial church links was published online.

On Tuesday morning, he then attempted to calm outraged Essendon supporters in a radio interview.

Thorburn said it was "very important" his church's views on abortion and homosexuality could be expressed.

But that failed to stop the backlash, and three hours later Victorian Premier Dan Andrews hit out at the Bombers.

"There are many reasons to be a somewhat disappointed Essendon supporter," Mr Andrews said.

"Those views are absolutely appalling. I don't support those views, that kind of intolerance, that kind of ha-

Andrew Thorburn has made his choice.



tred, bigotry. It is just wrong."

The Thorburn debacle caps a nightmare six-week period for Essendon, which has now parted ways with its senior coach (Ben Rutten), two chief executives (Campbell and Thorburn), its football director (Sean Wellman) and president (Paul Brasher).

Director Kevin Sheedy's position is also under pressure after speaking out against the appointment of new coach Brad Scott on Friday.

Thorburn was also on the panel that selected Scott.

And then there was Barham's failed pursuit of coach Alastair Clarkson, which was executed while Rutten was still in charge.

Barham declared he was still the right man to lead Essendon despite "a couple of missteps".

Senior football figures around the league privately praised Essendon on Tuesday night for making the gut-wrenching call following the Herald Sun's revelations.

The heat was on the Bombers to cut ties with

Thorburn following the launch of the club's AFLW team just six weeks ago and support for equality.

Essendon board member Dorothy Hisgrove has been lauded for her work on inclusion and has also used social media to promote choice when it comes to abortion, as well as women's rights.

But Hisgrove helped appoint Thorburn and lauded the signing as "another outstanding leadership appointment" when Essendon tweeted the news on Monday.

That tweet has since been deleted.

Acting chief executive Nick Ryan will continue in that role until a replacement is found.

"We are deeply committed to our values and support wholeheartedly the work of the AFL in continuing to stamp out any discrimination based on race, sex, religion, gender, sexual identity or orientation, or physical or mental disability," Barham said.

Forty-year Essendon

member Jason Tuazon-McCheyne, founder of the Purple Bombers - Essendon's official diversity and inclusion supporter group - said Thorburn's appointment was "incredibly disappointing".

While Mr Andrews slammed the views of the church, in comparison former Victorian Opposition leader Michael O'Brien took to social media saying: "Who knew the 'A' in @afl stood for Atheist?"

"Seems being a person of faith is enough to get you run out of footy these days."

On Tuesday night the Australian Christian Lobby said the "forced resignation" should "concern every single Australian".

National Director for Politics of the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) Wendy Francis said: "Essendon president David Barham has made it clear that Christian views, accepted by millions of everyday Australians, are contrary to the club's values."

ANDREW THORBURN
STATEMENT, PAGE 27

City on Hill grew from small Bible study class

BROOKE GREBERT-CRAIG

ANDREW Thorburn's links to a controversial church have cast a spotlight on the group.

City on a Hill was founded in 2007 by a small team that met at a Bible study group in a Melbourne apartment.

The organisation launched its first public service in a Docklands pub and now has eight churches in five cities across Victoria, Queensland and NSW.

There are four churches in this state, including Melbourne CBD, Malvern East, West Footscray and Geelong.

The group plans to open another 50 churches in 10 cities in order to see more "men, women and children going from death to life in Jesus's name across the country".

Mr Thorburn plays a key role at the organisation, becoming chairman after he joined in 2014.

Another important figure is Guy Mason, a senior pastor who founded the church.

He is an ordained Anglican minister and a father of four.

Other leaders include directors Luke Nelson, Nick Coombs, Ryan Hansen and Simon Angus.

The group is supported by a movement board and local church councils, which provide "specialised governance" in areas such as finance, risk, people and culture.

City on a Hill holds divisive beliefs on topics such as same-sex relationships, abortion and marriage. In an article published on its website, the organisation said "curiosity is a dangerous thing" and sex should be "enjoyed within marriage between one man and one woman".

"In the Bible, homosexuality is described as a sin when it refers not to the attraction itself but rather the lustful, sexual behaviour associated with homosexual activity," it says. "Lust is the catalyst that turns same-sex attraction into a sin. If you struggle with same-sex attraction, it is vital to speak to a mature Christian whom you trust, so you can receive the support and accountability you will need in the long term to survive these temptations."

The group also believes "abortion denies the voice of the most vulnerable" and "80 per cent of those who have aborted their child have regretted it".

In another article on the site, the group said Christians should marry people of the same religion. It says: "The Bible is clear in its command that professing Christians are not to marry unbelievers. As 'dating' is a 20th-century term, we can't quote the Bible directly on it's 'dating advice'."

Each of City on a Hill's entities are registered as not-for-profit charities.