



# LIVES

Words/Peter Barrett, Greg Foyster Photography/James Gee

Whether they're sharing inspirational personal stories or running the most challenging government departments, these eight Melburnians are making a difference.



## Matt McCullough

bicycle charity founder

080

**Pedal power:** Matt McCullough collects second-hand donated bikes and ships them to Africa as part of his work with Bicycles for Humanity, the Melbourne chapter of which he founded in 2008. Some bikes are used as transport for health-care workers in Namibia, Zambia and Botswana and the rest become stock in instant bike-repair shops made with the shipping container they arrived in.

**Gearing up:** The 40-year-old animator from Brighton East quadrupled the number of bikes he sent to Africa this year to 1600, and saw them in action in Opuwo, Namibia. "Walking down the street, we knew that all the bikes that passed us were from Melbourne." He also started selling \$35 solar-powered camping lights, each sale funding a lamp for Africa. He hopes to send 700 early in 2012.

**Pedal power #2:** In 2011, McCullough also organised for 250 bikes to go to schoolchildren on the Fijian island of Rabi. "We're having conversations with organisations in both Cambodia and East Timor at this stage as well."

## Andrew Robb

shadow minister and author

081

**Truth in politics:** Andrew Robb has been praised for his brave and straightforward public remarks on his 43-year battle with depression. The opposition finance spokesman launched his book, *Black Dog Daze: Public Life, Private Demons* (Melbourne University Press), in September.

**Behind the scenes:** In 2009, Robb was under pressure trying to manage his illness while being touted as a replacement for then-Liberal leader Malcolm Turnbull. After feeling particularly flat in a shadow cabinet meeting, he finally decided to tell his wife, Maureen, there was something wrong. Doctors prescribed him medication and one morning six months later he finally woke up with a clear head. "I've had 18 months now of mornings that are better than any morning that I've had in 43 years."

**The message:** Robb, 60, wants his book to help remove the stigma around depression. "What I would hope is that people realise that you can confront these things. Once you say, 'I've got a problem', you're halfway there."

## Ian Shann

family lawyer and author

082

**Keep it in the family:** Don't call a lawyer, says this lawyer. In September, the 63-year-old Slater and Gordon family lawyer launched a book, *Know Where You Stand*, a guide to family law designed to help couples breaking up avoid unnecessary legal costs and personal anguish.

**Hard to do:** Shann's break-up advice includes: (1) if you have children, it's about them, not you; (2) it's about compromise, not "winner takes all" and (3) the sooner you find a solution that lets you move on, the better. "I've just tried to help people to, in the first place, stay away from lawyers if you can, but if you do need lawyers, use them sensibly, and don't get caught up in the cost vortex."

**Based on a true story:** When Shann's first marriage ended in the early 1990s he decided to run his own case, drawing on a law degree he'd earned (but never used) 20 years earlier. It was the beginnings of his new career in family law. "At the time, I was a prawn farmer in Indonesia. It was, may I say, quite a change in vocation."

## Mary Wooldridge

state government minister

083

**The challenge:** The state member for Doncaster is the first minister to take on three of Victoria's toughest