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# THE AUSTRALIAN

THE HEART OF THE NATION

## Favouring substance over spin

Ms Gillard's office needs a greater focus on policy

JULIA Gillard's decision to appoint Ben Hubbard as her chief of staff appears to be a first step towards giving her office a deeper policy focus. After Kevin Rudd's problems brought on by senior staff who lacked sufficient policy experience, Mr Hubbard's appointment is a welcome move and halts the contagion of NSW Labor in federal politics. The Prime Minister's outgoing chief of staff, Amanda Lampe, may have excellent political and media skills, but her appointment sent all the wrong signals. Ms Lampe was schooled in the dark art of spin by NSW Premier Bob Carr, the father figure of the "all spin and no substance" brand of politics. In contrast, Mr Hubbard has stronger

policy and managerial credentials, having helped guide the Bracks government to power before working in Canberra for Ms Gillard and then as head of Victoria's bushfire reconstruction authority.

Based on limited information available, *The Australian* has led media coverage on the poor quality of advisers in Canberra. The government has shrouded the identity of most of its 319 advisers, no longer releasing a list in its directory. Our request to ministers for a list of advisers has been refused and our Freedom of Information request has been met with an astronomical fee from the Department of Finance, which seems more interested in secrecy.