

Liberals too clever by half

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■ Daniel Mercer

At a news conference announcing the State Government was going to scrap the Swan River Trust as a stand-alone body, Albert Jacob declared, barefaced, that no one should have been surprised.

The date was September 26 and the Environment Minister was adamant the decision had been flagged clearly by the Liberal Party in the run-up to the March State election.

He even used the event as an opportunity to verbal the State Opposition by saying Labor, too, had been planning to do away with the trust.

However, as evidence from the trust to a parliamentary inquiry last week showed, the decision *was* a surprise — even for those charged with running the agency.

Not only did the Government not consult the trust about the move, the sole extent to which it was disclosed was an obscure reference buried in a Liberal Party environmental policy document.

Meanwhile, Labor, for its part, said it never advocated the disbandment of the trust and has opposed the Government's decision.

The whole episode gives the impression of a government being too clever by half.