

# “In Support of Progress” Newsletter

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## ***The Tarkine Mine***

The Federal Minister has once again given the go-ahead to Shree Minerals to develop the mine, this time citing the relevant documents, and announcing further restrictions on the mine's operation. And right on cue, the Tarkine National Coalition (TNC) has announced that it will once again seek an injunction in the courts.

If the purpose of imposing further restrictions was to encourage the TNC to cease their court action then it has failed – it has simply encouraged them to continue their campaign to stop this development altogether.

The trouble with appeasement is that it NEVER works. Perhaps what the Minister should have done in his review was to **reduce** the number of restrictions - on the basis that he found them too onerous. The end result, ie further court action, would have been no different. However, the message certainly would have been!

As it is, the message to the protestors is that all they have to do is to continue their campaign and they will win further restrictions. After all, so far the cost of these legal injunctions has been borne by the mining company, so no skin off their nose.

And the message to those wanting to invest in the State is that it has all become too hard.

There has been NO justification by the government as to the dollar figures being mentioned by way of “compensation” for devil research, or orchid research, or quoll research, other than “they can afford it”. What an absurd comment.

Considering the recent announcements of closures at Australian Weaving Mills, ACL Bearings, the difficulties with the NBN rollout, and the recent disruption to traffic on the TT Line terminal in Melbourne, to name only today's news, one has to ask whether the State can continue to afford the antics of the TNC. With the country's highest level of unemployment, the behavior of the TNC and the level of complacency to what they represent has become a luxury we can ill afford.

Their actions should come at a cost – a cost to them. The arrogant disregard for their fellow Tasmanians knows no bounds. If I was them I would not be planning to organize a protest march in Burnie any time soon.

Should we hold our collective breath waiting for McKim to appeal to the protestors not to continue their protest. I note he stood by a forestry bridge when appealing to forest protestors to desist their actions. The irony was exquisite.

Methinks it would be a futile gesture to hold our collective breath. Where are you exactly, Minister McKim?

### **The Health Budget**

I don't often delve into such matters, but an article in yesterday's Australian newspaper by Editor Nick Cater is well worth a read.

In it he describes the way in which the bureaucracy that is the federal department of health has taken over the policy agenda, then buried it in "a sludge of bureaucratise". In particular he states:

*the ranks of senior executives have almost doubled over the last 15 years  
four out of ten are on 6-figure salaries  
the duplication between federal and state governments is enormous  
the unmistakeable conclusion is that the department doubts its own purpose*

Further, recent comments by Martyn Goddard, to be found on the Tasmanian Times website, expose the fact that there is enormous waste in the health system.

For those on a hospital waiting list, for those of us who are really concerned about the blowout in health costs, and for those of us who are even more concerned at the proper use of taxpayers' money, these articles are a real wake-up call.

People who head large bureaucracies must be held to account, and it is the proper role of government to manage its public service so that it does not become a law unto itself.

We have seen these issues surface in this State as well, and I have commented previously on the appalling management of Aurora and of our totally absurd regulatory environment. Every day new stories emerge of the nightmare that is our planning framework, and of the damage it is doing to the economy. And within the political system, a singular lack of urgency to fix these bureaucratic processes. The time is upon us. Delay is no longer an option.

### **Freight**

While on that topic, isn't it wonderful to know that governments are presently considering the problems of Bass Strait. And the warm inner glow that we get from knowing that Ministers have a committee that has been appointed to look into it, and that after 6 months they are still on the job, looking into it.

Such mirror committees are quite frankly nothing but a waste of time, and an expensive one at that. Snail's pace reform is not reform at all. We can do so much better!

### **Federal Election**

I do not share the view of many who believe the election is any time soon. It is my view that the Prime Minister is in no hurry to call an election. He will want to consolidate his team, his policy agenda and his ascendancy over the Opposition. Real or otherwise, it is this perception that is in play here.

This newsletter is supported by Tasman Management Services.

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