

ISSUE 1717

“In Support of Progress”

# Newsletter

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## Salmon

### Labor's burden...

### ... and the government's.

### Energy pricing

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## Salmon

The mob from Environment Tasmania have been campaigning to close down the salmon industry for some time now. They just don't like it. They say they are not against salmon farming, just the way it is being managed. But no, it is a far bigger cause than that. Having embarked on the campaign, with a number of media presentations condemning the government's regulatory approach in Macquarie Harbour and the farming methods of individual companies, some of which it must be said is justified, they have entered into an unholy alliance with the Shooters and Fishers Party - and others - to condemn the proposal to farm salmon on the East Coast.

A flotilla of small boats paraded in front of the MoFo crowd, complaining that the venture would destroy habitat, amenity and access. This protest was supported by ET, and organized by Marine Protection Tasmania (MPT). MPT claims to be an East Coast grassroots organization, yet its President is a key member/supporter of "Lets Grow Tasmania's Future (LGTF), an organisation that Graeme Wood funds.

According to the Mercury the FloatMo protest attracted "hundreds" of Tasmanians, but MRT claimed in a paid advertisement in the same paper that 4,000 attended. Perhaps counting the patrons at MOFO enjoying a tasty salmon brunch! Or just part of the misinformation campaign - Identified by the TCCI in a recent media release in relation to the protest - that is "morally justified" at protests!

Not satisfied with this protest, Environment Tasmania, whose income over the last two financial years exceeded a combined \$2.3 million comprising \$1.5 million in government grants and \$0.8 in tax deductible donations, has now embarked on what is tantamount to a secondary boycott campaign called the "Sustainable Salmon Chefs' Charter", a charter that whilst reported upon by the media has yet to be published, and with only two chefs having publically confirmed their participation. The chefs have been conned, well and truly.

What is not recognized in this campaign is the level of certification and recognition that has been achieved by the salmon companies on the world stage, and the extraordinary advances in technology that these companies have achieved.

And a willingness to work with the industry, as distinct from attacking it.

Still, the present situation is now what it is, and it is now up the companies to challenge the challengers, and to get on the front foot with a new approach to selling their message, and being even more open with their data and practices. It is going to be a long haul indeed.

### **Labor's burden**

The loony left within the ALP are at it again. Not content with beating their own chests, they have now called on those MP's with a different moral compass to themselves to be expelled from their party. How dare they? In one fell swoop they have put at risk Labor's resurgence. And all in the name of some "moral" purity. As Whitlam once said only the impotent are pure.

I do not share the views of those under attack, but I do respect and defend their right to be heard.

Some don't believe there should be a conscience vote at all within the party, but presumably only as long as they did not have to exercise their own conscience. Those in the left faction(s) with a semblance of sanity should pull this lot in and read them the riot act. At least such divisiveness is not on display within the parliamentary group.

Arguments from the extremes, be they from the right or the left, may go to prove their own purity, but they do nothing to win over the centre, and they need to if they want to win government. Just as there are many in the Liberals' conservative camp doing their best to destroy their own party, these people are trying to do the same to theirs.

What these critics fail to see is that their criticism only harms their own cause, turns the public away from them, gives greater coverage to those they are condemning, is totally at odds with their stated aim of belonging to a pluralist party, and makes a joke of the stated position of voting on various social matters on the basis of conscience. No wonder the rise of populist candidates, when those in the major parties behave like they are.

Matters of social morality will always be a part of a conversation. In a previous newsletter I commented on certain people seeking a "conversation with the community" to change an existing circumstance, only to condemn any ongoing conversation once they have succeeded in their aim.

It's the ultimate hypocrisy, and these people are the ultimate hypocrites. They should be seen as such.

### **Meanwhile, what the government is grappling with...**

#### **Football**

The Premier is running down rabbit warrens trying to get an AFL football team based in the state – a total waste of money, and effort and time. It reminds me of a former Queen of France - No bread? Give them cake! Well, some of the general public may think it is money well spent, but for me, there are SO many more deserving repositories for our money than the AFL.

#### **Homes for the homeless.**

What an extraordinary spectacle it was, to see the Minister make an announcement of a new development while standing on a piece of public land with the successful mainland tenderer in tow, only to discover that no-one had actually told residents or council officials of the plan. One would have thought that some public consultation would have occurred. Lesson 101. When the inevitable public uprising occurred the Minister then said that nothing had been decided and that the site was only a "preferred" option.

The Minister continues to display a significant vulnerability when it comes to Ministerial competence.

## Forestry

The Minister's Bill to make deferred forest land available for harvesting by private interests was defeated in the Legislative Council, after failing to win over any private interests. Undeterred, the Minister in a published Opinion Piece went on to blame Labor for the loss, using some very strange logic indeed. He didn't have to do it, he was advised not to do it, no-one wanted him to do it, but he blindly went ahead and did it anyway. End result – much egg on face.

With enormous fervor he has suggested that the government is supporting the move of a forest company to Burnie, and has suggested financial support if necessary. How very generous Minister – when will we learn that inducements to individual companies rarely works?

He has now gone ahead to rebadge the name of Forestry Tasmania to Sustainable Timber Tasmania. Why? Why indeed? There would appear to be little logic behind it and visiting the website shows no hint that it has actually happened. Maybe they are saving money by not spending it on rebadging!

## TAFE

The Integrity Commission has provided a damning report into the management of TAFE. In response the Government has engaged a consulting firm for a year to review the report from the Integrity Commission. Why? What a waste of time and money. AS an aside, The Minister has also advised that it is Labor's fault. Helpful!

The Board, as with any Board, should be the ongoing "review body". Either the Board was unaware of what was going on (and they should have known), or they were aware (in which case they were complicit). Either way there has been a failure of governance, and the Chairman must take responsibility for that. Otherwise, why have a Board at all? The Chairman's position is untenable.

## Health

Under increasing pressure over the debacle that is the RHH redevelopment, there have now been calls for an independent audit into the management of the project, while the Minister once gain attempts to blame Labor for the mess.

It is an interesting approach, considering he has been in the position for over 3 years, and one would have thought that by now he would have had something more uplifting to say that that. Interesting also that if the now government had at the time agreed with the previous government about the greenfields site as originally proposed, and supported by the then government, it would be opening its doors right now.

The amount of money that has been wasted trying to build a new hospital within an existing working hospital (what an absurd proposition) has been astronomical.

## Macquarie Point

And talking of wasting money, the Minister has been extraordinarily quiet regarding the New Reset Master Plan for the redevelopment of Macquarie point. Not exactly a ringing endorsement methinks.

## Energy

The Minister for Energy has advised he will legislate to cap power price rises for the following year to 2%, following reports of up to 20% increases in some mainland states. In the last newsletter I asked this simple question – why 2%? Why have any rise at all? After all, network charges have come down some 20%

The larger users of power who are on contract – and not the regulated tariff that most of us are on, have been advised that tariff increases will be upwards of 60% or more, once their contracts expire, some of which will fall due almost immediately. These price hikes are extremely damaging. They are not due to any increase in the price of power, but of the “need” for the issuer of the contract to manage risk, brought on by an increasing unreliability of supply from the mainland. The state risk is, if anything, less than previous years.

The Minister says he is working hard on this issue. He has \$21million available for deployment, but as yet is unsure how to distribute it. By the way, according to the Minister, the contracts were Labor’ fault! I sense a theme here!

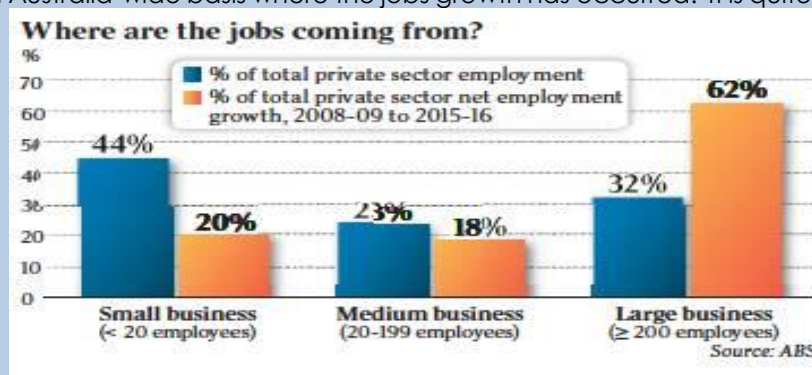
Coming on top of that announcement comes the news yesterday that there has been a breakdown in negotiations with the State’s gas provider and Hydro Tasmania, which if not resolved will cause an increase to all gas users of some 95% once contracts are due for renewal.

The Minister has responded suggesting the government will provide rebates where appropriate. Apart from the timing of the announcement (such a comment at this time weakens the government’s position in any negotiation it might have with the gas provider), the critical requirement should be to recognize that Hydro’s role should not be seen in the context of Hydro alone, but within the broader context of Tas Inc.

A matter somewhat more important than a football team, I suspect. Tassie is open for business???. Watch this space!

### Jobs

The following graph, recently published in *the Australian* newspaper, considers on an Australia-wide basis where the jobs growth has occurred. It is quite a story.



Small businesses, once the major employing group, are no longer where the jobs growth is occurring. Large businesses are taking up the slack, but one suspects they will be more exposed to disruptive technology.

Governments keep wrestling with the need for jobs, and keep coming up with plans to encourage businesses to employ more people. First and foremost, for a business to do so it must be *able* to do so, which means it needs to be profitable and have a need for more employees. Second, it must want to do so, which means having a degree of certainty regarding input costs, and the rigorous rules around compliance, I suspect for them it is all getting too hard

A successful policy for employment will need to understand the underlying causes which have been exposed by this data.