

ISSUE 1729

“In Support of Progress”

# Newsletter

Date: 17 November 2017

**Pembroke - cont**

**TasWater**

**RHH**

**Forestry and Salmon**

## ***The Pembroke by-election***

Ooops - Observant readers will have noted I referred to a 13-seat chamber in the Legislative Council. The figure should be 15 - so apologies all round.

More interestingly, some comment has been made regarding my views on the Liberal's negative campaign, and in particular my comment regarding the flow of preferences. My point was not where the preferences ACTUALLY went – the mayor's vote split more or less equally between Liberal and Labor - but where the Liberal vote MAY have gone if the Libs came in number 3 and their votes were distributed.

Observers at the count noted that they actually would have gone 50/50 if the Liberals had not made second place. However, that wasn't my point, because that came AFTER the negative campaign. I re-iterate it would have been in the government's longer-term interest to have NOT attacked the mayor with their ageist campaign, as it would have allowed for a greater flow to him, and for a more compliant member in the Chamber.

While on the topic, I note that the Minister for Forests chants the mantra of the terrible former Labor-Green government whenever he gets the chance, followed closely by the Minister for Health, both complaining of the legacy left them. Their argument of course is that a Liberal majority government is preferable to some minority coalition. It's become “religious”.

However, it is a peculiar message. Apart from the obvious fact that it basically says “we might be bad but they were/would be worse”, which doesn't say much for what they themselves have done – in fact the legacy of the present Minister for Health is anything but commendable – the obvious retort is that the Liberals are in power in Canberra courtesy of a coalition structure, while in Tasmania we had the spectacle of a Liberal-Green government not so many years ago, led by Tony Rundle.

So the taint cuts both ways. Negative campaigns bring with them consequences, and not always good ones.

## ***TasWater***

The Opposition has stated previously it is opposed to the transfer of TasWater from Council to government ownership. After the Pembroke by-election the Treasurer was bemoaning the fact that the legislation will now probably fail to be passed because of the bloc of Labor votes in the Upper House. (4 out of 15). Not exactly a majority, Mr Treasurer, but still...

The Opposition leader has now written to the Premier, advising they would be prepared to meet with the government in “an attempt to find common ground”, in order to progress the government's legislative agenda, including TasWater.

Within nanoseconds of the offer being made, the government dismissed the offer. "I don't believe her....It's a stunt", said the Minister responsible for government business, (and Minister for Health).

Now, I don't know about you, but if I think I might be in trouble and someone says they might be able to help me, the first thing I wouldn't do is ridicule them. Which is what the Minister did. And yet it is the Minister that heeds to get his legislation through the parliament. Maturity is what is required here, and yet it seems strangely lacking. So, Minister, what is it that you don't get here? Maybe you should just grow up.

I only hope that wiser heads on the government side have now prevailed and that the Opposition's offer remains on the table.

### **RHH**

Not that that is his only concern. The Fairfax media reported during the week that the cladding being used in the RHH redevelopment may be made of a similar suspect flammable material to that which has caused fires at Melbourne's Lacrosse building and London's Grenfell Tower.

Again, according to the Fairfax paper, the supplier has vigorously defended the product. Whether it is true or otherwise remains to be seen. However, the concern has been printed in a national newspaper, and one would have thought some response from the powers-that-be to be appropriate. A serious matter, I am sure you would agree. And yet, at the end of the week not a word from the Minister - or anyone else - to either allay these concerns or to advise of appropriate action. It requires some statement.

### **Forestry and Salmon**

A southern sawmiller has come up with a plan to export woodchips from a purpose-built facility, to be built near Dover, south of Hobart. Chips would be carted along forestry roads to this facility from the company's facility at Southwood, sited at the back of Geeveston.

Finally, an outlet for southern forest residues. No subsidy being sought, no trucks on public roads. Investment, jobs, certified material only, it ticks all boxes.

You would think such a plan would garner universal approval. But no, true to form the naysayers fired back saying "We have no appetite for this project. We are highly skeptical and cynical about it to say the least".

Meanwhile, Tassal has announced a series of new technologies to improve its operations and lessen its environmental footprint. Again, one would think that such an announcement would have universal support.

However, with matters of moment cascading all around him, a Greens senator has been quick to condemn, saying that a "leaked" document showed some job losses would occur as a result of a more automated feeding technology.

On the one hand industry is condemned for not using technology, while on the other hand it is condemned for using technology.

There's just no satisfying some people. Quick to condemn, because that's just so easy. Maybe these guys went to the same school as the Minister for Health. "Better to be pure and fail, than be tainted and achieve success".