

ISSUE 1806

“In Support of Progress”

# Newsletter

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## **The State Election**

Two weeks down, and two weeks to go. It has been a fascinating time, with the Federal backdrop of an imploding coalition government, and more locally an imploding Jacque Lambie Network. Both have ramifications for the state election.

Both major parties have now officially “launched” their campaigns, and as predicted, they have begun to coalesce on a number of issues, including health, education and roads (see #1805).

The government seems to be in catch-up mode. Labor announces a policy, and a few days later, the government tries to trump it, I am reliably informed that to date Labor has promised some \$1.2b worth of expenditure, with the Liberals promising over \$2.5b. Which makes the Treasurer's cry “How is Labor going to pay for its promises?” somewhat hollow.

Money promises can be a bit deceiving. For example, which is the more valuable – a promise of \$100m over 4 years, or a promise of \$150m over 6 years? I would argue the former, because the value proposition of the \$100m is that it will be spent in the life of the next parliament, whereas the greater number over an extended period means little needs be spent in the first 4 years.

The campaign has had its full share of negative campaigning, not just from the political parties (the fear of a hung parliament), but from third party lobby groups. The AHA is on about freedom to gamble, and various celebrities have entered the fray to push particular gambling positions, while the Wilderness Society has its “Will Will...? Will won't” campaign.

Negative, or fear campaigns are risky, as I have alluded to previously. The Attorney General has called for Labor to dis-endorse a candidate because of an allegation made against him, of which he has not only denied, but has since been cleared. At the same time an allegation has been made against a Liberal MP and Cabinet Minister who has a legitimate case to answer concerning an allegation that he made a policy decision which, one way or another, led to a private gain. So, Madam Attorney, I am awaiting an imminent announcement from you regarding the dis-endorsement of this candidate.

I am not holding my breath.

Interesting also the stance taken by the government regarding the wearing of club emblems by so called “outlaw” bkie gangs. On the one hand, the Liberal government is making a big play claiming people have a right to gamble when and where they like, and yet at the same time saying certain people don't have the right to wear certain gear when and where they like.

In fact, I would have thought that it would be easier to monitor the activities of such people by their desire to wear club insignia.

Just as the Liberal Prime Minister has announced that Ministers will be restricted in their private lives, the Liberal Premier is now restricting what people can wear. So much for “liberalism”.

## **The State Election**

**Promises,  
more promises**

## **Hobart City**

## **Myer**

The last week of government before calling the election was obviously quite frenetic, and it would have been interesting to have been a fly on the wall at that meeting. Money was made available for a new sawmill facility in Burnie, and now we have found the Minister for Planning approved access to the cable car proponents to enable preliminary work to be carried out.

For a proposal to be approved by a Council, a DA (development application) needs to be submitted, but in order for the DA to be done, the proponent requires access to the land to determine what can and cannot be done on-site. The Catch 22 for the cable car proponents was that the Hobart City Council, the owners of the land, would not give them access to the land until such time as a DA had been submitted.

The government quite rightly moved to break this impasse by taking over the ownership of the land to enable the proponents to have access to the site to enable a proper site investigation.

Which makes it passing strange that a separate proposal, for a facility on Freycinet peninsula that would enable a better management of traffic, could not proceed to a DA because the government refused permission for the proponent to access the site. It seems inconsistent, to say the least.

Anyway, the campaign continues, parties are promoting their policies and candidates are busily promoting their personal attributes. I wish them well. I hope behind this "spendathon", which in many ways is a band-aid approach to policy, we are getting a glimpse of a "bigger picture" vision of where we might be heading as a state.

The latest "big bang" is Labor's commitment to abolish school fees. That is big. It joins the big issues of health, cost of living (power pricing) and traffic congestion as the deciding factors which will determine the outcome of this election.

### ***Hobart City***

The Mercury newspaper keeps banging on about the need to make city parking more difficult, thereby forcing people to take public transport. It obviously has a bent towards the use of public transport. No doubt all their reporters take public transport when chasing the news-of-the-day stories. Presumably their executives do as well. Not!!! It is one of the sillier arguments that keeps being promoted. Beware the consequence of such an action. Join the dots. The end result will be that people will not come into town to shop at all, and Hobart will become a ghost town.

### ***The Hobart City Myer Deal***

While on the topic of retail, readers may recall the Hobart City Council entered into an underwriting arrangement with the Myer department store, guaranteeing a certain level of turnover. Unfortunately, Myer has been hemorrhaging over the last two years as shoppers seek their goods elsewhere. It is a timely reminder that both the state and local government have skin in this game. It was a bad decision at the time – backing "winners" nearly always is - and with ramifications still to be determined.