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“In Support of Progress”

Newsletter

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The State Election The next 100 days

The State Election – the next 100 days

A long weekend – counting continues tomorrow, with surpluses distributed and exclusions commencing.

Although the precise makeup of the parliament is unclear, what is clear is that the government has been re-elected, a **Majority Liberal Government**. All the advertising emphasized the value of 1. a majority government and 2. a Liberal majority government. And that is what we have got.

What can we now expect? Leaving aside the various campaigns by vested interests for the moment, the Liberals have a mandate to govern for the next 4 years. What does “mandate” mean? In one sense, it means that the government made certain promises during the campaign and is now able to deliver on those promises. Yes, but...

I am intrigued that the Premier sees nothing wrong with releasing 100 policies during the campaign, but keeping some 200 policies away from public scrutiny, and yet now says his government has a mandate to implement all 300 policies. Of the 200, according to the Premier, only those affected were advised. To this day I have not seen published what those 200 policies were.

However, presumably they involve the expenditure of public money, so the public had a right to know. Hopefully they will be published, and not just on the party's website. Keeping them away from the public gaze compromises those policies and any beneficiaries.

To those who feel I am wrong, what if the shoe was on the other foot? What if Labor had won, and had kept certain policies secret?

A mandate also means that the government has been given the authority to govern in what it sees to be in the best interests of the state, and in that regard, a government has the flexibility to respond as it sees fit to changing circumstances. However, it will need to keep the public informed, otherwise it will be compromised and lose its “social licence” to act. Maybe that's where the 200 secret policies will come into play?

It's also fair to note that the campaign was memorable for money spent, and by whom. It is passing strange that on the one hand the Premier says that it is an insult to voters' intelligence to suggest that they were influenced by the amount of advertising, and yet on the other hand he suggests an inquiry into such expenditures is in order.

The simple fact remains: People don't spend money on advertising if they do not believe it is going to have an effect. So Premier, you can't have it both ways.

Moving on...Governments are judged by what they do in the first 100 days, whether they be reformist or cautious. After that period, a sense of calm or “stasis” or “keeping to the status quo” tends to set in, and from that point on the die is cast. So, what will the next 100 days bring? What is their agenda?

Here is a challenge for you. What do you consider the most important matters that require government's attention NOW? What would your priority list be? Below is my list - a list of 10 reforms that are freely acknowledged as needing addressing - and yet my bet is that they won't be. Talked about maybe, but action? Let's see on 30 June, 100 days away.

- 1 Increase the the size of Parliament back to 35 members
I have argued for 7 electorates, each of 5 members.
- 2 Reform the election spending laws.
What limits should apply, and to whom?
- 3 Tax Reform
Abolish Payroll Tax – it is a tax on employment
Establish a universal Land Tax on all land holdngs, and abolish stamp duties.
- 4 Power Pricing Reform
Immediate reductions in power charges would follow leaving the NEM.
It can - and should - be done NOW
- 5 Health
Hospital administration requires immediate reform.
- 6 Education
Close down the colleges – they simply do not deliver.
- 7 Infrastructure
Growth is inevitable. Plan for it.
Where will people live, and how will they move about?
- 8 Local Government Reform
Amalgamation of local governments, the election of mayor from within the Council, and establish Regional Planning authorities.
- 9 Natural Disasters
Fire and flood are natural and frequent phenomena. More needs to be done in prevention, whether fuel reduction burns or building levee banks around flood-prone towns .
- 10 Macquarie Point
A favourite talking point, because...that's what *they* are good at!

Not to mention a broader and ongoing reform of the operations and structure of the public service.

Many of these were not mentioned during the campaign, yet they should have been.

Each of these items are important matters where reform is urgently needed, and many of them are connected. (For example, a land tax can be offset by lower power prices). So, a holistic approach is very much in order.

Each of them deserves much more than a line in this newsletter. And each deserves immediate attention.