

ISSUE 2320

# "In Support of Progress" Newsletter

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## Yet another week! *An aftermath*

The former Attorney General has resigned from parliament and has ridden off into the sunset of her political career. What a strange ending!

The Premier, noting a series of text messages sent by Archer, including one which Archer says was taken out of context, and with bullying actions against Ms. Archer looming, caused him to seek her resignation from Cabinet, and then forced her out of the Cabinet.

In retaliation, and on the spur of the moment, Ms. Archer promptly resigned from the Liberal Party and stated she would stand down from Parliament altogether. The following day, on reflection, she backtracked from her decision to resign from Parliament, and openly considered staying on to wreak havoc on the government.

The Premier, having gained the support of all remaining members of his parliamentary party for his actions to date, then stated that, considering Ms. Archer's actions, she should resign from parliament altogether.

After a couple of days deliberating, she did.

She stated that she was a popular member of the electorate and that she held her seat despite the Liberal Party, which had endorsed her.

To put it kindly, she was "gilding the lily". She was definitely diligent and hard-working, and was well-known in the electorate, but is she missed now that she is gone? A sad way to go, bitter, alone, without allies.

I suspect the Premier's position is enhanced by taking such a hard line, but he did place his government in jeopardy by allowing Ms. Archer to call the shots for a brief moment when he stated that it was "up to her to determine whether we go to an election".

I guess this is what happens when you don't have the numbers.

### **Meanwhile...**

With yet another shuffle of the deck chairs, the government is "getting on with the job". Minister Ellis is a confident Minister, and obviously not one to shy away from controversy.

His decision to bring all Emergency Services under one administration hit rocky ground with Fire Services personnel in open revolt. It seemed to be very much a top-down decision, and there has been very little buy-in from the troops.

Personally, I am not a fan of mega departments. It may involve cost savings, but it also means errors are magnified and "purpose" clouded. Good inter-department communications can be achieved just as easily through appropriate protocols.

And now he is playing around with the Fire levy. A recent analysis shows the levy on some properties going up by over 600%. That is one HUGE increase. This has the property and investment community up in arms, and questioning where on earth the Minister is coming from. Again, it seems to be very much a top-down decision with very little consultation or communication with those who will be adversely affected by such a decision.

And for what purpose – what has been gained here?

I wish the Minister well in his career, but the way it is going it may not be a long one.

## Energy

We have a new Minister for Energy. The former Minister - who has yet to face the Parliament's Privileges Committee over a past "transgression" - has now moved into the Health portfolio where his messianic approach to policy will be sorely tested, and another member of the Legislative Council, a relative neophyte in the parliament, has stepped into the Cabinet and taken on the heavy load of energy.

First of all, the Legislative Council is meant to be a house of review, as distinct from a house of government. Having such a small number in the lower House requires a government to search for talent elsewhere, and governments of either persuasion have found it in the LegCo. However, it does very little for the integrity of parliament.

Having said that, the Minister faces two big issues. What to do with power prices and what to do with Marinus. The Minister has it in his power to lower the price of energy – in fact at one stage his predecessor was going to do just that until he decided to save the nation instead. Business and domestic consumers – both are hurting and hurting unnecessarily. Doing nothing is an option, but it is politically, socially and economically a very dangerous option to take.

As for Marinus, with costs blowing out and developments on the mainland making the project increasingly questionable, the Minister faces a parliament where his two former colleagues now sitting on the cross-bench continue raising their concerns about this project. Not being in the Lower House may be a blessing, but it may also be a curse. His approach to this matter will determine whether the government can survive. We await with interest.

## Parliament

A number of commentators have queried whether having a motion of no-confidence in the government is an appropriate thing to do "at this time". Of course it is. Irrespective of whether a group wish to govern, they need the numbers to do so. That is democracy. A minority government will always face additional scrutiny because of that, and any wobble in its authority, such as the resignation of a Cabinet Minister, should be questioned, scrutinized and tested. This motion of no-confidence may be seen by the government as being disruptive and a distraction, but let's face it, what if the shoe was on the other foot?

## And elsewhere

It seems the US has weathered the threat of insolvency, at least in the short term, but its government continues to face uncertainty in Congress. With an election looming, it is obviously tempting to create as many waves as possible, however the ramifications of such flow far beyond its own boundaries. We see it in Europe, and we see it in the Pacific.

As if the Russian invasion of Ukraine wasn't enough, the attack by Hamas on Israel has left us horrified. Whatever one's view as to the justice of the Palestinian cause, the barbarism shown in these attacks cannot be justified, and must be condemned. What is now frightening is the retaliation that is imminent. An eye for an eye, magnified. Whatever Hamas thought it would achieve by its actions, I suspect their own annihilation and the awful, further suffering of the Palestinian people was surely not on their agenda. Absolutely no winners here – none.

Australia is a lucky country – it has been a home for many escaping the horrors of war and deprivation. It must remain so – a refuge offering a new start. It is NOT a place where hatreds from another place fill our streets and our airwaves, nor can it become such a place. Politicians have a special role to play here – to calm rage, anger and fear. As Robert Kennedy said in that amazing and remarkable speech on the death of Martin Luther King, to replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed...with an effort to understand with compassion and love. It is a speech worth reading again – and again.

## The Voice

Tomorrow - are we hopeful of what might be, or fearful? – that is the question!