

ISSUE 2403

"In Support of Progress" Newsletter

8 February 2024

Political games

Political Games – cont..

A number of things have happened in the political sphere since Australia Day, both at a state and federal level. Let's unpack.

State affairs

David O'Byrne has decided to leave the ALP and run as an independent candidate. It is a big step for him to make, but he has now made it. He definitely has a task ahead of him to garner sufficient support, representing himself as both a Labor sympathizer and an independent. He could make it, but he will be a lonely figure. His sister remains an ALP MP, a party member and candidate, which no doubt will lead to some very interesting family conversations.

The Greens have announced their five lead candidates, and the Jacqui Lambie Network is firing up, with the announcement of three candidates in each of four electorates – Clark still to come? Pundits give them a good chance of two seats, one each in Braddon and Lyons, and maybe more. Meanwhile the Greens will be likely winners in Clark and Franklin, retaining their seats..

Two pre-selected candidates, one from each of the major parties, have for fully understandable reasons found it impossible to continue to the election. Both were solid candidates, and this will obviously place pressure on the two major parties to find replacements.

And the Premier has laid down an ultimatum to the two renegade MP's to behave as loyal servants of the government or else he will call an election. He gave them a week to respond - why so long - 24 hours is all it should take. Before the week was done, both have now publicly said they will not accept the onerous conditions, but will abide by their original agreement. The Premier, adamant that his conditions be accepted, now talks of a negotiation. So, back to you Premier!

This all seems to have been an odd move by the Premier, as he provided himself with no wriggle room. Whether this is being stage-managed to blame the recalcitrants for not falling into line beggars the point that they were never going to play ball, and will always be a destabilizing influence. And again, I ask, what is in it for them?

The Premier is on a hiding to nothing, and has essentially wedged himself – go the people and risk losing government or step away from his ultimatum, stay in government and risk losing the confidence of the parliament. His call!

Either way, a dog's breakfast.

I must say this – the government remains the government. It is not losing votes in the Parliament and has been guaranteed supply. As such, on what basis would the Governor agree to proroguing parliament and enabling an election? She may well say "No, Mr. Premier, go back to Parliament and test it."

The government has got a few difficult issues on its plate – the inquiry into sexual abuse of children, the harness racing scandal, the multi-layered difficulties confronting the health system, the poor retention rates in schools, the issues surrounding law and order, the housing crisis, the transport difficulties, the farce that is Mac Point, the stadium, energy pricing, infrastructure spending, the list is long. No shortage of election issues!

...Federally

The Federal Government has changed its position with respect to the Stage 3 tax cuts. These cuts, first legislated in 2018, and due to commence on July 1 this year, were designed to provide tax relief for those in the higher income brackets. Labor supported those changes then, and has re-iterated its support until now.

Now, It has changed tack and introduced a different range of tax cuts. These will provide tax cuts for all – **yes all**, but less than promised for higher income earners, who will still receive tax relief.

One would have thought the sky had fallen in, particularly if one followed much of the mainstream press. Broken Promises, a Tax Ambush, the PM's Deceit, Labor's Word Is Worthless, Government Integrity Trashed etc etc.

And leading the charge was the Opposition – the PM is a liar etc etc. All good grist for the mill, no doubt, and of course, no reference to former broken promises by the former government.

However, now it is the Opposition that has changed its position and is now supporting the government's tax cuts. Really? So, would one not argue that this also is a broken promise? Of course it is! But where now is the mainstream media to condemn this latest act of duplicity. Actually, nowhere to be found - nary a word.

Yes the government went back on its promise, and it deserves criticism for that, or rather for being so adamant earlier that it would not bend, but lets face it, both sides have now done so. And in overall terms, **all** tax-payers have benefited.

It goes to the heart of the difficulty with political campaigning – making promises in one set of economic or social markers, to be confronted later on with a different set of markers. In this circumstance, all of us are aware that cost of living pressures increased substantially since the promise was first made. As the saying goes, "When the facts change, I change my mind – what do you do?"

I am pleased they did it! Indexation?

The ABC

The ABC has long been criticised for its policy of inclusion, which has led to it being seen to advocate for "progressive" causes. It does give many who are disaffected a voice, which is worthwhile, but which has led to it being seen to be "left-leaning". Personally, I think they stretch the boundaries in doing so, and quite frankly, "woke" causes are not really my cup of tea. However...

When commenting upon and questioning those in the mainstream, many in the ABC paint a picture of disillusionment with the "state of the State", and those in the firing line see that as being biased against them.

Sarah Ferguson is the lead interviewer on the ABC's 7.30 Report. She is aggressive, forceful, invasive, rude, interrupting, and basically totally unpleasant. Not a very attractive wrap. I don't like watching her show – her modus operandi it would seem is to destroy rather than to discover.

Her interview the other evening with the Opposition leader led him to claim on air that the "left-leaning" ABC was biased against him and his party. It was not a smart call for him to make, uncomfortable as he may have felt from the questioning. Because it was unnecessarily provocative, it took away from his point, and let's face it, both sides cop it.

Personally, I think the show fails because people on that program are being pushed into the bunker, when in fact they should be encouraged to talk more. After all, isn't that the purpose of the show?