

# THE QUEENSLAND *onLINE*

WITH SENATOR SUE BOYCE



30 June 2009

## IN CANBERRA

There's no doubt it's been a bizarre couple of weeks in Canberra as 'Utegate' played out.

But one of the more bizarre suggestions is that Malcolm Turnbull's leadership is "terminal". The Coalition knew when we elected Malcolm Turnbull as leader that he was very intelligent, very audacious, and, unlike those on the Labor side, highly experienced in business.

He retains full support as Leader of the Opposition and, like all of us, will be better for and more experienced by events of the past weeks.

Treasurer Wayne Swan has more questions to answer. They will eventually be asked.

But even more bizarre is the suggestion that Kevin Rudd's ruthlessness has been revealed "for the first time".

Just ask the thousands of Queensland public servants who dubbed him "Dr Death" when he worked in the Department of the Premier if Rudd's ruthlessness—and bad temper—are new.

Despite the carefully cultivated folksy exterior, Rudd will do almost anything and say almost anything to stay in power, just as he did to get there.

Of course, "fixing" State public hospitals by June 30 must be top of the list but Rudd's broken election promises are becoming so commonplace that some of them don't even get mentioned:

- First FuelWatch didn't even get started;
- not one of the 20 GP Clinics that were promised by now is functional;
- the dubious and amateurish tendering processes for both the Job Employment Services Network and for the "Building the Education Revolution" shambles are to be audited or examined; and
- most recently [GroceryChoice](#), the election promise designed to hold food prices down, has collapsed into an unworkable and expensive non-event. Try my [ShopSmart](#) site which costs about \$50 a month to administer instead.

Oh, and I forgot--Minister Gillard has watered down the powers of the Australian Building and Construction Commission, set up by the Howard Government to control thuggish elements of the building unions, despite an election promise not to. Some of the [ABCC](#) cases on standover tactics especially on Melbourne and Perth building sites read like an episode of *Underbelly*.

The Government's *Emission Trading Scheme* legislation will now come up for debate in the August sitting after further modelling of the costs to Australia.



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Climate Change and Water Minister Penny Wong initially tried to pressure the Coalition to rush this legislation through by behaving as though the sky would fall if the legislation wasn't passed last week. As far as I can tell this didn't happen.

The Opposition is keen to position Australia as well as possible in Climate Change negotiations. The outcome must be a scheme that leads to responsible reduction of carbon dioxide-type emissions without unnecessary harm to the competitiveness of Australian manufacturers and producers.

There is absolutely no point to a scheme that simply exports jobs...and emissions.

There is also no point to belated efforts to "prove" Climate Change doesn't exist or isn't caused by human activity.

Just on 12 months ago, I suggested to a Master Plumbers' conference that Climate Change sceptics should treat the issue in the same way as they did Y2K.

Sensible business people treated Y2K as a risk management problem, whether they believed the worlds' computers would crash on January 1, 2000, or not.

The same applies to Climate Change. Any sensible company has assessed its exposure to emissions reduction legislation and has plans to do whatever is economically feasible.

Australia must play its part in reducing emissions but not by the 'holier than thou' Labor method of ignoring the damage done to the economy along the way.

## **IMMIGRATION TREATMENT OF DISABILITY**

I'm pleased to have been appointed to the [Joint Standing Committee on Migration's](#) upcoming inquiry into the Immigration Treatment of Disability.

I've made a number of representations to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, about prospective migrants who have children with a disability.

The issue of migration and disability came to prominence last year with the case of Dr Moeller and his son Lukas who has Down syndrome. It's outdated to treat every disability as medical conditions that will inevitably drain the public purse.

I look forward to working on this important inquiry that will hopefully bring a major change to our immigration rules to enable families with a child with a disability to contribute fully to our country, as they want to.

## **ENGAGING WOMEN**

Shadow Minister for Women Sophie Mirabella has recently launched a new Coalition initiative, *Engaging Women*.

We want to hear from Australian women of all ages and lifestyles about issues that affect them and feed those ideas into our policies for the next election.

Getting the work/family balance right is a crucial issue for both men and women and it also has an enormous impact on the well being of children. The Coalition's focus is on policies that support the choices that families make. No two families are the same and we have to allow women to make arrangements that best suit their family – especially when it comes to raising children.



Along with the other Queensland MPs, including the Shadow Minister for Ageing Margaret May, I will be organising forums for women in the coming months. If you'd like to be involved, or have an idea for a forum, please contact my office on 07 3862 4044 (Freecall 1300 301 924) or email [online@sueboyce.com.au](mailto:online@sueboyce.com.au)

You can also contribute ideas via the new Coalition website at [www.liberal.org.au/women/](http://www.liberal.org.au/women/)

## STATE CONVENTION AND REGIONAL AGMS

The [Inaugural LNP State Convention](#) is on July 17-19, at the Hilton Hotel in Brisbane. This is an important milestone, following the State election contested by the Liberal-National Party in March and I look forward to seeing you there. The Regional AGMs are also taking place in June and July. I have prepared a Report for distribution at the AGMs, but if you would like a copy mailed to you please contact my office.

## DEFEAT OF THE RUDDBANK

*"The Rudd Bank, which would have become the lender of last resort for the troubled property industry, was defeated in the Senate on Tuesday night, but even if it had proceeded, profitable development projects would not have been put up for funding. It would have been cheaper for developers to go to their normal bankers." Turi Condon, The Australian 18 June 2009*

The Australian Business Investment Partnership Bill, better known as Rudd Bank, was defeated in the Senate in the recent session.

The scheme would have involved the Federal Government and the major banks putting in \$2 billion each to fund "viable" property development with the Government contributing up to another \$26 billion in loans to the scheme.

Although no evidence was presented, this was to allegedly plug the gap left by the foreign banks withdrawing from the Australian property market.

Rudd Bank would have further consolidated the market dominance and market distortion by the major banks.

But the best reason for voting this legislation down was the memory of what happened last time Labor Governments got themselves involved in development - in WA, in SA and in Victoria - and sent their States broke.

## HOW MUCH DEBT IS ENOUGH?

Having inherited the strongest economy in the world, Kevin Rudd and Labor are spending money and racking up debt at a record rate.

- Debt will surge to \$315 billion - higher than the debt racked up under Gough Whitlam and Paul Keating.
- Two thirds of net public debt will be due to spending decisions taken by the Rudd Government over the past 18 months.
- Since the November 2007 election, Labor has announced new spending of \$124 billion, an average of \$225 million of new spending per day.
- The annual interest bill paid by the Australian people in 2012-13 will be in the billions - much more than the Commonwealth spends each year on infrastructure and housing combined.



## QUEENSLAND STATE BUDGET

Did Anna Bligh lie to the electorate before the State Election? And exactly how bad is Queensland's economy?

According to the latest Galaxy poll, 56 per cent of Queenslanders believing she lied by committing to the fuel subsidy and then dropping it and by failing to mention the fire sale of Queensland assets.

There's certainly no doubt that she lied when she said that the Labor Government would serve its full term just before she called an early election. With the benefit of hindsight it's easy to see why she wanted the election out of the way before the Budget was brought down.

The Bligh Government is in the process of selling off significant state assets including Queensland Rail and forests. We've run out of hollow logs to raid and the Government has projected that debt will top \$85.5 billion, or \$78,000 for each Queensland household.

Because the Queensland Government is the only State Government that has had its credit rating downgraded, we'll be paying even more interest on this debt. Every day, before we pay for teachers, police or nurses, the Bligh Government will have to pay \$14 million just to cover the interest on the debt.

And that's before we try to fill up at the local service station this week.

## EDUCATION "REVOLUTION OR JUST SPIN"

The [Auditor General](#) has announced an inquiry into the *Building Education Revolution* funding following calls by the Australian Education Union and the Coalition.

A number of problems have been identified already, including

- the amount extracted by State Governments;
- whether funding is going to schools that have been earmarked for closure;
- ensuring that projects provide accessible infrastructure;
- inflated building costs;
- selection of builders and criteria for selection; and
- whether the project is the best possible use of funding.

The terms of reference for the Inquiry will be finalised shortly. If you have any information on how the Building Education Revolution program is operating in your area, please let me know.

## ACC REPORT

The Joint Parliamentary Committee's oversight of the Australian Crime Commission's annual report for 2007-2008 was recently tabled in the Senate. There are some major changes happening at the Commission with a new emphasis on intelligence gathering and the investigative work being handed to State and Federal police forces for follow-up.

Career police officer, John Lawler, has replaced Mick Keelty as CEO.

The Commission's major work focuses on organised crime.

The use of the ACC's coercive powers to gather intelligence continues to be an issue.

In the Senate, I said: "(T)he ACC needs to have stronger and more expedient mechanisms for dealing with contempt when a person fails to cooperate with the examiners and the examination process. We have heard from the commission that delays in the court's hearing of contempt matters have often

resulted in 'the importance, relevance and value of the information that comes from those hearings being greatly degraded'.

In short, it is too easy for people called as witnesses to frustrate the process by using court appeals to destroy the timeliness and the value of the information they have. Naturally enough, it is the criminals or the alleged criminals with the deepest pockets who have the most opportunity to delay and frustrate the process of uncovering evidence which will assist the Australian community."

This issue will be explored further in our ongoing Inquiry into Serious and Organised Crime.

## **FINANCIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES INQUIRY**

I'm pleased to announce that the [Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services](#) have approved an additional Queensland date for the Inquiry into financial products and services.

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The Inquiry is looking into the a number of high-profile financial collapses, including Storm Financial and Opes Prime, and the role played by banks and financial advisers.

The Committee will conduct hearings on September 1 in Cairns. This is in addition to the hearings on September 2 in Townsville and September 3 in Brisbane. The next Inquiry hearing will be held in Melbourne on August 26.

## **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA REPLACES AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES**

Area Consultative Committees (ACC) are local network organisations established by Coalition Government that have successfully provided local solutions for local problems for many years now.

There are currently 54 ACC's across Australia, covering urban, regional and rural interests. Each ACC develops a three-year strategy for their area in consultation with local business and community groups.

The Labor Government is now dismantling this scheme to replace it with 12 [Regional Development Australia](#) committees.

Expressions of interest for committee members for the new RDA scheme have been called.

Like many regional Mayors and community leaders, I'll be monitoring these changes closely to ensure firstly that the committees don't become a dumping ground for the ALP and secondly that they maintain their close community and regional focus.

## **SELF-HELP QUEENSLAND**

[Self-Help Queensland Inc.](#) is a network of self-help organisations and groups throughout Queensland.

They are currently putting their directory online, so if you know of any local community groups that would like to include their details please pass this information along. There is no charge to add your details or look for information.



## ACCESS ALL AREAS

The House of Representatives Inquiry Into The Draft Disability (Access To Buildings) Standards has just been released at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/disabilitystandards/report.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/disabilitystandards/report.htm).

The Premises Standards are designed to ensure that new buildings and significant upgrades to existing building will result in vastly improved access for people with a physical disability.

At the same time the Premises Standards will provide certainty to building certifiers, developers and managers that they are complying with their obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act.

The Committee received 146 submissions from both the disability community and building sector.

## REPUBLICAN FICTION COMPETITION

This year marks the tenth anniversary since the republican referendum was lost on November 6, 1999. To mark this occasion the Australian Republican Movement is calling for speculative fiction short stories between 4,000 and 6,000 words that portray an Australian republican future in a positive light.

Stories must be original and unpublished. First prize is \$611.99 with an entry fee of \$11.99. Further information is available at <http://republicanfiction.blogspot.com>.

## JUNE SHOPSMART

The latest ShopSmart figures for June are on the website at [www.shopsmart.sueboyce.com.au](http://www.shopsmart.sueboyce.com.au).

Regional Queensland had the lowest and highest basket of goods in the latest ShopSmart survey, with Woolworths Cairns the cheapest at \$63.50 and Woolworths Gladstone the most expensive at \$70.17.

The average basket of goods across the state has gone up slightly since last month, increasing by \$0.50. The Torres Strait had a small increase in their cost of groceries.

Woolworths this month had the lowest and the most expensive basket of goods, and last month Coles was in this position. It just shows that customers need to be savvy when they go shopping for groceries.



## CSIRO LIFESTYLE PROJECT

CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, is currently completing a [national online survey](#) of Australian lifestyles and consumer habits.

Participants will be helping CSIRO researchers gain a better understanding of lifestyle and consumption choices and establish how to move towards a sustainable future without sacrificing individual choices.

The survey explores consumer preferences in a range of areas including food, transport, housing, energy, recreational time use and water use.

The survey closes on June 30, 2009, and the results are expected before the end of the year.

## LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP INTO DODGY TAX ADVICE

It's the time of the year when too-good-to-be-true tax minimisation schemes are promoted, but are you aware of the effects some of these schemes could have on your future wealth?



[FIDO](#) has some good advice on tax schemes, warning that promoters of dodgy tax schemes are likely to step up their efforts to catch unwary investors as the end of the tax year approaches.

You risk not just your original investment, but also any fines and penalties imposed by the tax office.

Before you invest in any tax scheme:

- investigate carefully, and seek independent advice from a professional advisor, and/or the Australian Taxation Office
- check information and warnings about investment schemes and scams on the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission SCAMwatch websites.

FIDO also has some great advice on switching bank accounts.

## FEEDBACK

*Thank you most sincerely for the leaflet which came to my address, outlining the problems the Rudd government is busy making for Australians on the road ahead. I deeply appreciate this and your efforts to date. JD*

*I have been meaning to make contact with you re the emails you send out they are great full of interesting happenings and meaningful issues. DJ*

*A Good Read Sue, It's great to hear this morning of Rudd's decline in the polls!! BH*

*I appreciated your "newsletter" which was set to me by an "electronic" correspondent. RF*

*I always enjoy reading your newsletter. I am prompted to e-mail you after reading the Bill to hold a plebiscite for a Republic mentioned in your latest newsletter. HW*

*I have again enjoyed reading Qld Online. Very informative. Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Chair of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Australian Crime Commission. TS*

If you know someone who'd like to receive Queensland onLine, please just email the office at [online@sueboyce.com.au](mailto:online@sueboyce.com.au)

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