

THE QUEENSLAND LINE

WITH SENATOR SUE BOYCE

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A COUP IN CANBERRA

All the Queensland public servants celebrating the demise of Kevin Rudd, the original architect of Queensland's health and hospital and infrastructure woes, should stop for a minute to examine what they have in his place.

I wrote a few weeks ago that the anger of many Labor ministers and backbenchers towards Mr Rudd was palpable. It was most evident in the many contemptuous little comments which would once have been held back, and reminded me of the visceral reaction of many otherwise serene Queensland health department staff back in 2007 at the possibility of Mr Rudd becoming Prime Minister.

But it seems to me that the new Prime Minister, Ms Julia Gillard, outshines Rudd in both the 'empty rhetoric' and 'ruthlessness' stakes.

Ms Gillard appears to believe that, provided she uses a measured and even tone and uses short, repetitive sentences, she can trot out the most unbelievable and meaningless twaddle and get away with it.

Let's just take a look at her acceptance speech on achieving the Prime Ministership.

PM Gillard wants:

'A nation where hard work is rewarded and where the dignity of work is respected.'

Imagine no-one thinking of this before! And just ignore the fact that she's trying to "dog-whistle" WorkChoices.

'A nation that prides itself on the excellence of its education system.'

Goodness, another revolutionary idea — all her predecessors have worked to develop a poor education system!

'Where Government can be relied upon to provide high quality services for all Australians.'

Another wonderfully original suggestion — presumably she's not including State Governments or she would have worked harder as Deputy Prime Minister to bring them to account, especially on hospitals and education and domestic violence laws and disability funding and ...

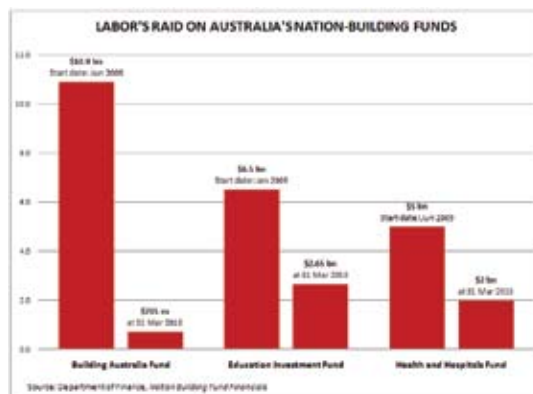
'An Australia that can achieve even greater things in the future. We should not be afraid of the future.'

Well, imagine no-one else thinking of that! Just have a look at the graph of Labor's raids on Australia's nation building funds, established by the Coalition Government, if you want to be afraid for the future.

'A strong Australia respected as a global force for progress, for peace and for tolerance.'

Code for every other Prime Minister has aimed for a weak and disrespected Australia?

'A bright democracy for the world to admire.'



Continued on page 2

A COUP IN CANBERRA

Continued from page 1

Can the 'sentences' get much shorter or much more meaningless?

'And a sanctuary for all of our people.'

Is this meant to be a "dog whistle" on asylum seekers, an aside to Christians, or just pointing out that we'd all better take refuge?

Ms Gillard's other revolutionary decision has been to put "sustainable" into the title of the Minister for Population. Bet former Treasurer Peter Costello wishes he'd thought of that when he commissioned the first Productivity Commission Intergenerational Report to investigate the effects of immigration and ageing on the country's future needs! Bet he just did that on a whim, not because he wanted to find out what was needed for a sustainable Australia in 2050!

It's amazing how much meaningless rubbish she can get away with using her even and measured tone. There's not one original idea or ambition amongst the lot. No Prime Minister has ever aimed for anything less—there's no argument with the intentions. But there's a lot of debate over how these ambitions are to be achieved. Unlike Ms Gillard, most Prime Ministers have given us some inkling of the "how"—I'm missing the *programmatically specific* already.

But Ms Gillard's performance on 'ruthless' even outdoes her 'empty rhetoric' score. Leaving aside how she got the job in the first place, there's a line in her acceptance speech that should have warned Kevin Rudd to get used to the back bench.

First she praised Mr Rudd, using three of his least successful campaigns and his most unsuccessful of all: "*The Leader who saw us through the global financial crisis. The Leader who turned his intelligence and determination to health reform (the States get more money and even less accountability), combating homelessness (the Salvation Army says homelessness has risen 50% in Queensland since 2007) and closing the gap for Indigenous Australians (no-one has a clue because the Bureau of Statistics was starved of funds at a crucial time and Jenny Macklin keeps doing qualitative, not quantitative, research).*"

And he came within a breath of brokering an international agreement on climate change (she would bring the 'great moral challenge' up, wouldn't she?). Truly remarkable (her choices certainly were)".

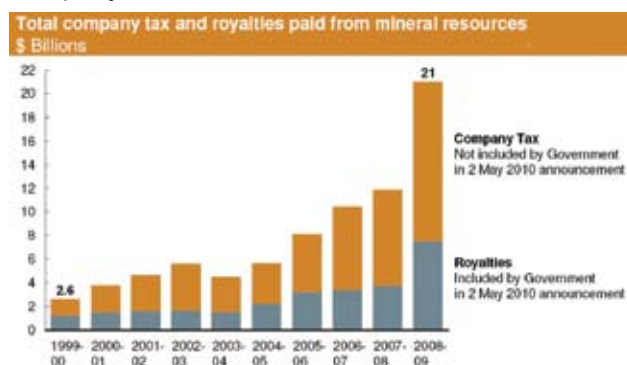
Then she said: "*Of course I will be talking to Kevin Rudd about his future in the Parliamentary Labor Party.*"

The 24/7 workaholic Kevin Rudd had already made it patently clear that he wanted a senior Ministry. Ms Gillard gave him nothing and has apparently succeeded in claiming this is because of her "concern" for Mr Rudd and his "need for a break".

For pity's sake, Ms Gillard, give us a break! You didn't want him anywhere near you during the coming election campaign reminding voters that he'd been such a dud that you'd chopped his head off as PM in his first term and that you were complicit in his every useless act as PM!

I was talking to constituents in Longman recently who spontaneously began listing "waste-of-money" projects under Ms Gillard's Building the Education Revolution program, when one woman plaintively added: "*And what about the computers in schools? Everyone forgets about that promise because it was so long ago but my kids don't have computers yet. What about that promise?*" Indeed, what about that promise, Ms Gillard?

There were almost too many flaws in the Rudd Government's Resources Super Profits Tax to know where to start, but the Coalition was most concerned that there had been no discussion or genuine consultation with the industry. Mining companies already pay royalties to the States for extracting coal, iron ore and other minerals. On top of that they pay company tax at the same rate as every other company, as shown.



PM Gillard has said the election will be held this year and I'm betting on late October — if we're already in election mode by the time you receive this newsletter, you'll know my predictions are as useless as everyone else's.

But whenever the election is, the Coalition will desperately need your help to restore the Australian economy to surplus, to give business back its confidence and to stop the "class wars" being prosecuted by Ms Gillard and Mr Swan.

Please contact the Federal Liberal secretariat www.liberal.org.au, the Liberal National Party www.lnp.org.au or my office online@sueboyce.com.au, if you are able to help in any way.

LABOR: THE RHETORIC AND THE REALITY



THE RHETORIC

THE REALITY



ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

- Deliver budget surpluses equivalent to 1% of GDP
- Keep fuel and grocery prices down by establishing FuelWatch and GroceryChoice
- Invest up to \$4.7 billion in a national broadband network, connecting 98% of households to service 40 times faster than the current network

- Budget surpluses have not been delivered
- FuelWatch and GroceryChoice were abandoned after costing more than \$12 million
- Broadband network budget expanded to \$47 billion, without a business case or any clear objective

HEALTH

- Federal takeover of hospitals should their performance not drastically improve by July 2009
- Reduce waiting lists for elective surgery in public hospitals
- Put 9,250 extra nurses into the hospital system
- Establish 36 GP Super Clinics in local communities
- Make fighting obesity a national health priority
- Ban junk food advertising
- National focus on mental health

- Abandoned promise to take over state health
- Elective surgery waiting lists have gone up, and Queensland hospitals are now treating patients in the back of ambulances on the hospital ramps
- Only 617 extra nurses have signed up after two years
- Only 3 GP Super Clinics have been opened
- Removed Active After-Schools Community funding
- Abandoned commitments on junk food advertising
- Mental health has been ignored, with the Government's handpicked principal adviser on mental health, Professor John Mendoza, resigning

EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

- \$1 billion for every student in years 9 to 12 to have their own school computer
- \$2.5 billion to build trades and training centres in 2,650 secondary schools
- Establish 260 new long day-care centres on school, TAFE, university and community sites
- Deliver value-for-money \$16 billion *Building the Education Revolution* program

- According to DEEWR (*June 3, 2010*), only 297,500 computers are operational on desks out of the 1,000,000 promised.
- Six training centres complete, 60 more planned
- 38 day-care centres established before program stopped
- Hundreds of inappropriate, over-priced BER projects, with Julia Gillard admitting that hundreds of audits are underway

IMMIGRATION

- End detention centres
- *"Another boat on the way, another policy failure"* - Julia Gillard in Opposition when three boats a year arrived

- Christmas Island now full, more detention centres planned to open, ad-hoc centres now operating
- 139 boat arrivals since August 2009, and an estimated 170 deaths since that time. According to the 2010/11 Budget, this failed border protection policy will cost a staggering \$1 billion over the next four years.

ENVIRONMENT

- Introduce Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)
- \$500 million for Green Car Challenge
- \$10,000 low-interest loans for householders to implement energy and water savings such as solar hot water, rainwater tanks and insulation

- Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) abandoned
- Green Car Challenge abandoned
- Green Loans scheme stopped after Government lost control of program

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

- Support constitutional recognition of Indigenous occupation and land rights
- Kevin Rudd declared that on the first sitting day of Parliament each year, he would deliver an update on the progress of 'closing the gap' on Aboriginal well-being

- Refused to support changes to Wild Rivers legislation for Cape York communities
- This didn't happen in 2009 or 2010

SENIORS AND AGED CARE

- Create up to 2,000 transition-care beds for older people waiting in hospital for an aged-care bed and enable others to return to their home
- Restore the value of the TPI and TTI Disability pension by indexing these pensions to CPI or MTAW, whichever is higher

- According to the 2010 Report on Government Services, only 228 new aged care transition care places are operational as of 30 June 2009 out of 2,000 promised.
- Abandoned changes to TPI indexation

"I take my fair share of responsibility for the Rudd Government's record, for our important achievements and for errors made. I know the Rudd Government did not do all it said it would do. And at times, it went off track. I also certainly acknowledge I have not been elected Prime Minister by the Australian people." - **Julia Gillard, June 24, 2010**

A FUTURE FOR ASIC / WHAT IS A BILLION?

I've always been uncomfortable with the dual role of the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) as player, - virtually a monopoly player - and regulator of the Australian stock market.

I'm pleased that the regulatory role is being taken by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) from July 1.

But that in turn leads to concerns as to whether ASIC is being asked to do too much and that their original remit is being broadened too far.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Corporations and Financial Services, of which I'm a member, undertakes the statutory oversight of ASIC and we've increased our number of hearings with ASIC to quarterly during this time of change in the industry.

We're also spending more time in briefings with independent industry experts to ensure a balanced view.

I raised the issue of ASIC's numerous hats—corporate watchdog, corporate prosecutor, corporate and investor educator, and corporate and credit provider registrar—at the most recent meeting in June.

I was assured by ASIC CEO, Tony d'Aloisio, that ASIC had the resources and the structure to undertake all its current tasks but I remain concerned.

The rapid expansion in specialised financial products - particularly derivatives and Contracts For Difference (CFDs) - place ASIC in a difficult position between protecting the consumer and protecting the investor.

Aggressive consumer protection may limit the types of investments available to investors, but sophisticated investment products may introduce 'ordinary' investors to unacceptable risk.

In a briefing to the Committee, Dr Geoffrey Nicoll of the University of Canberra's Faculty of Law at said:

"... we do need to be aware of possible weaknesses in this corporate governance framework ... have led to factionalised and politicised boards."

"It may be difficult to completely harmonise these two areas of law and regulatory needs - they are both distinctly large and significant areas of regulation."

"ASIC's assumption of supervision seems to have been more about the ASX wanting 'out' than about ASIC wanting 'in'. In these circumstances, we might expect ASIC to find it difficult to absorb all the functions of a front-line market regulator."

ASIC runs some excellent financial education programs such as FIDO www.fido.gov.au and their "Investing between the flags" initiative, available on the FIDO website.

I've written before on the crucial role that financial literacy can play in avoiding some of the rorts seen in recent years. If everyone understood that "high return equals high risk", some of the most devastating results of investment vehicle collapses, such as Storm Financial, might be avoided.

\$1,000,000,000

We often hear the term "billion" bandied about, especially by the current Labor Government, until the term loses any meaning.

The much-repeated New York Times editorial - "*It's a billion here and a billion there, and by and by it begins to mount up into money*" - comes to mind as Labor's profligate spending becomes so much background noise.

\$1 billion plus to fix the insulation debacle, \$16 billion for Julia Gillard's *Building the Education Revolution*, \$43 billion for Stephen Conroy's broadband - pretty soon that does start to mount up into money.

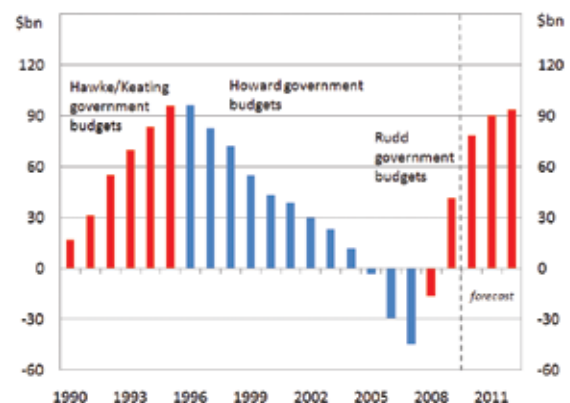
A regular emailer recently made the point to me that it's worth stopping for a moment to think what a billion actually represents.

To put it in perspective

- A billion seconds ago it was December, 1958;
- A billion minutes ago the first recorded instance of the term "Catholic Church" was used;
- A billion hours ago the Earth was entering the last Ice Age and Australia was connected to New Guinea and the Solomon Islands;
- A billion days ago the first modern human was just emerging in Africa.
- A billion dollars was 10 days ago as the Gillard Labor Government borrows \$100 million a day to cover the interest on the debt they have run up in less than three years.

The Debt Rollercoaster

Back to Where we Started...



Source: Commonwealth Budget 2010-11 Paper No. 1 Table 1

SPEAKING NOTES

Healthcare Identifiers Bill 2010 - June 25, 2010 - Due to start July 1

In early June NEHTA, the National E-health Transition Authority, had finally managed to get itself sufficiently sorted out to invite medical software companies to tender and to get involved in the process of providing the software. On 6 June they had signed up three companies out of a potential 200.

Had the trials happened? No. We kept being told that NEHTA had trialled the identifier systems with Medicare in a practice environment but there had been no real testing. Yet every medical software developer in the country has said, 'You'll need at least six months of live testing to have any confidence that what you are going to do will work.'

"The Hidden Toll: Suicide In Australia" Community Affairs Committee Report - June 24, 2010

As a former journalist, the other recommendation I would particularly like to focus on is recommendation 20, which is about how we go about reporting suicide and how we develop awareness of suicide. It has long been the view in Australia that reporting suicide has the potential to lead to copycat suicides, but the point is made that without strong public awareness campaigns and strong mainstream media reporting of the road toll very little would have happened to reduce the number of deaths on the roads. We have been highly successful in reducing the road toll with strong media awareness campaigns on the topic.

... On that same basis we recommend that, at least biannually, the national figures on suicide should be published. Again, stigma has prevented this from being the case. It needs to be brought out into the open now.

Mental Health - June 23, 2010

Many years ago I realised the issues that affect people with disabilities and the families and others who care for them were very similar to those that affect people with mental health problems—the sense of powerlessness; the sense that you should be grateful for the very few crumbs that drop from the table; and the sense that, if you do not make yourself fit the system, too bad, the system will punish you for not fitting in with what it suggests or offers.

... This year's appointment as the Australian of the Year of Professor Patrick McGorry, an outstanding expert and advocate in the field of mental health, gave further hope that mental health would be at the forefront of the thinking not just of the Labor government but also of politicians in general. How disappointed can everybody be—and bitterly disappointed.

Paid Parental Leave Bill 2010 - June 16, 2010

It was very obvious that this legislation, with amendments, was going to be accepted by all sides of the house. We

had a stunt by the ACTU then turn into a superstunt by the Prime Minister. We had the pusillanimous person standing there and saying: 'It's now down to crunch time. We have a very simple message for the Senate: get out of the road, guys, just get on with it. We can't delay any longer.'

How incredibly bizarre and how incredibly pathetic, given that the work has been done by many others ... over a very long period of time, that the Prime Minister thinks that he can run in just as the game has finished and say, 'Hey, it's my game and if you don't finish it straightaway I'll be really upset and get angry and everything.'

It was the most pathetic and sad little effort I think I have seen in a very long time from anyone claiming to have the ability to lead or to be a leader.

World Down Syndrome Day - March 16, 2010

One other myth about Down syndrome that I would like to talk about now, because it is becoming more and more important for the parents and carers of people with disability, is that people with Down syndrome no longer die young. It was common, 50 years ago, before antibiotics and before the ability to undergo heart surgery, for the vast majority of people with Down syndrome to die before they got to 30, but this is no longer the case. And it is no longer the case that people with Down syndrome primarily live in institutions.

I was delighted to have, as a family guest to our house recently, a woman with Down syndrome who is 64. She lives in supported accommodation. She continues to work part time, three days a week, and she has a busy social life. It certainly does not look, in any way, as if she is going to stop doing any of that at any time soon.

Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 - March 15, 2010

... The outline of this legislation would have meant that privately practising midwives performing home births would to all intents and purposes have become quasi-illegal.

They would not have been able to have professional indemnity, and without professional indemnity they could not have been registered under the proposed National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions and therefore, if they had practised, they would have been practising completely outside the system.

As Senator Adams pointed out, this would have meant that about 200 independent midwives could have been deregistered when this scheme came into play on 1 July 2010 and that if they had continued working they may very well have been fined up to \$30,000 each.

[Health Minister Roxon has implemented a 'moratorium' on home birth midwives until June 2011, but they are operating in a regulatory vacuum]

THE BREAKDOWN OF MENTAL HEALTH

It's inspiring to see the advocacy of the mental health community in the face of abject neglect by the Labor Government, but very depressing that they need to.

On the same day that Julia Gillard became Prime Minister, the Mental Health Council presented a letter signed by 60 top organisations and individuals working in the sector, asking for urgent action. The letter is available at <http://www.mhca.org.au/documents/Ltr%20out%20Kevin%20Rudd%20-%20From%20Members.pdf>

The letter was presented by Australian of the Year, Professor Patrick McGorry, and addressed to Kevin Rudd, but even before the "coup", the Prime Minister was unavailable and had delegated the task not to a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, but to Labor backbencher, Senator Claire Moore.

At least Senator Moore, chair of the Community Affairs Legislative Committee, genuinely cares about the issues raised.

On that same Thursday, the Community Affairs References Committee tabled its report on Suicide Prevention, The Hidden Toll. In a typical year in Australia, mental illness:

- costs the economy an estimated \$30 billion;
- is the single biggest cause of disability;
- creates the third most significant burden on the health system, after cancer and cardio-vascular disease;
- receives just six per cent of healthcare funding while contributing at least 14 per cent to the healthcare burden.

Mental health has especially suffered under the Labor government, with no new funding in this year's budget.

Australian of the Year Professor Patrick McGorry has likened the Rudd government's contribution to health care as a "famine" where mental health has received the scraps from the table.

Even more damaging, the Government's handpicked principal adviser on mental health, Professor John Mendoza, resigned saying: "*The Rudd Government is publicly claiming credit for the increased investment in mental health when almost all of this was a consequence of the work of the Howard Government.*"

STOP PRESS
The Coalition will provide \$1.5 billion to expand frontline services to cut the burden of mental health disorders within Australia. The Coalition's Real Action Plan for Better Mental Health will deliver 20 new Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres, 60 additional youth headspace sites and 800 acute and sub acute early intervention beds.

Professor Mendoza, based at the University of the Sunshine Coast, estimates that an additional investment of \$250 million a year will go a

long way towards fixing many urgent mental health issues.

So, what's stopping the Labor government?

Just after the 2010 Federal Budget Health Minister Nicola Roxon announced that she would defer changes that would have prevented social workers and occupational therapists providing mental health services. The changes cut Medicare rebates for care provided to mental health by social workers and therapists.

Experts warned the change would hurt thousands of Australians with serious mental health conditions who would not be able to afford treatment without the Medicare payment.

Professor Pat McGorry, Australian of the Year, estimated the Rudd Government's actions could close 1,500 doors to early intervention mental health services by the end of June.

Despite spin, the simple fact is that Labor has added nothing to mental health funding. In 2006, with Tony Abbott as Health Minister, the Coalition invested \$1.9 billion over five years directly into mental health.

This was the single biggest investment by any Government into supporting Australian families affected by mental health problems.

MIGRATION TREATMENT OF DISABILITY

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration's report titled *Enabling Australia: Migration Treatment of Disability* has been tabled in Parliament. This is available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/disability/>

I've urged the Government to completely remove the disability criteria for people migrating to Australia.

While the full Committee's main recommendations would lead to real and positive change for immigrants and refugees with a disability and their families, they don't go far enough in my view.

We have plenty of other criteria to ensure that people coming to Australia can make a positive contribution, without trying to second-guess the likely contributions of a family that includes a 6-year-old with an intellectual disability or of a refugee family forced to leave a loved one behind.

The Migration Act 1958 should not be exempted from the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Existing migration laws are an historical relic that treat disability as if it was a disease.

Both Disability Discrimination Commissioner Mr Graeme Innes AM and former Dean of Law at Sydney University Professor Ron McCallum AO made the point that if they had not been born in Australia, they would have been refused entry because of their vision impairment under existing laws.

QUEENSLAND SNAPSHOT



At Goodna's *Giving With Love* community group



With Dean Teasdale and Gil and Patricia Deandra in Redcliffe looking at the many empty shops



With Anne Goody at media campaign for *Women's Insights into Rheumatoid Arthritis* book



With Wyatt Roy and Dr Richard Heath at *Dreaming Festival*, Woodford



With members of the board of Endeavour at Cannon Hill



With Australian of the Year Professor Patrick McGorry at the *Australian of the Year 2011* launch



At Carers Queensland launch with Carer's Australia CEO Joan Hughes and members of the Hookham family



At Higgins Insulation at Virginia with Rod McGarvie and manager Cliff Aldridge



On Boigu Island with Australian Customs and Defence patrols



With Senator Macdonald at Napranum Council (near Weipa) with the Regional and Remote Communities Committee



ANZAC Day service at Esk, with Somerset Mayor Graeme Lehmann and Mr Arthur Butler



With Sally-Anne Atkinson and Margaux Beauchamp at the Family Business Association conference

END NOTES

Scholarships

On July 15 the National Council of Women Queensland will be announcing the successful applicant for the first NCWQ-Senator Boyce Bursary. The scholarship will assist a young woman with a disability with her post-secondary studies. The NCWQ already offer two scholarships for a young rural woman and for a woman from a refugee background.

This is the third scholarship I've established since becoming a senator in 2007.

The second scholarship, established in conjunction with QUT, supports a first-year Indigenous female student from a regional or rural background. The first recipient, Yasmin Smith (pictured) is studying her first year of a double degree in Business and Fine Arts at QUT's Kelvin Grove Campus and the scholarship provides support for her to live on campus at Kelvin Grove.

In 2009, I set up the Morey Scholarship in conjunction with the Torres Strait Regional Authority. The Morey Scholarship acknowledges my late paternal great-grandfather, Frederick E Morey, who owned and operated pearling luggers based at Thursday Island before World War II.

All Torres Strait Regional Authority scholarships require the recipients to undertake tertiary studies and return to the Straits' area to work and live at the end of their degree. The 2010 recipient is Ms Tailisa Yusia, from Bamaga.



Pain Link Helpline

1300 340 357

I'm pleased to support the Australian Pain Management Association (APMA), a health promotion charity providing advocacy, options and support for sufferers of persistent (chronic) pain.

APMA has been set up in response to the growing need for improved and accessible information and services for people living with persistent pain, and to provide community support for all Australians with ongoing pain, their carers and families.

www.painmanagement.org.au

CAN I HELP YOU?

As a Senator for Queensland, I represent people throughout the State. I'm happy to help residents, community organisations and businesses with any query or issue that falls with the Federal Government's responsibility.

I may also be able to assist you with information about:

- Government programs and policies
- Parliament House in Canberra
- Funding rounds
- Federal Parliamentary structure

I can also assist with:

- Letters of support for community organisations
- Congratulations for milestone weddings and birthdays
- Flags for service and community organisations

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