

The Big Picture

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“News to use & bemuse”

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Across the news

Another week where speculation has been repeatedly characterised as 'news'. What will the 3 amigos do? Who will form government? At last, the question is resolved leading to new speculation about what will happen and why.

I have reported previously that the constant focus on perceptions management by the political parties has diverted their attention away from being able to get real results – infrastructures, education, health – that sort of thing.

It now appears that has damaged them in the goal most important to them – getting into power.

(Labor's) degenerative thinking that has led us to adopt increasingly presidential-style campaign methods. Leaders as brands; endless repetition of vacuous slogans; craven dependence on the dreaded focus groups; more sizzle than sausage. It devalues the real electoral process, and diminishes the significance of each elected representative. [SMH](#)

The Parliament has dissolved into a house of hot air whose Ministers generally appear totally incapable of producing what they promise.

It's not that they don't mean their promises – they just cannot deliver.

Australia's system of government has 3 tiers, with no real mechanisms to co-ordinate their actions, or to focus them on achieving outcomes that the taxpayers might value. This week sees Peter Beattie take up the cudgels for reform describing the States as 'mere debating societies and a waste of time and money'. And a huge waste of money they are too.

This is one of my problems with the Greens party, they want to increase taxes instead of fixing the structural problems that are causing so much waste and creating real savings.

Neither the Greens, nor anyone else it seems, reports on the total costs of government to Australians. Government is such a large part of Australia that every inefficiency and error ripples through the country and affects many people. Politicians and parties hide behind mammoth bureaucratic apparatus that add more costs by operating at geologic rates.

Each 'tier' of government is happy with their costs as long as they can keep growing themselves by passing the costs onto the public.

But now, as was easily predicted, many people cannot afford to pay these extra costs.

In Launceston, Tasmania, the Council has suddenly decided to charge rates to retirees in retirement villages. Where does this Council think these retirees will find the money to cover these extra charges?

All levels of government should have to show cause why charges should be put up before finding internal efficiencies that reduce costs.

Catastrophist Dmitry Orlov's piece on why Peak Oil is History is worth a read too.

Enjoy.

That Was The Week That Was

Governance + spin

The system won the election: MacKay [SMH](#)

Whole system needs reform: Beattie [Australian](#)

Labor is no tea party [TheAge](#)

Food/forestry

Theatre - Gunns surrenders over logs [Mercury](#) [TheAge](#)

Huge locust plague looms [TheAge](#)

Compo to Gunns to end forest logging [Mercury](#)

Forestry compo claim [Mercury](#)

Climate/water/energy/resources/environment

Peak oil is history: Orlov [CultureChange](#)

Tas power prices a threat to business [Mercury](#)

Health & education revolutions/communication/defence

Literacy tests filled with flaws [TheAge](#)

Internet making us stupider [TheAge](#)

DODGY BUY - T-Hub a dud [SMH](#)

Hospital overcrowding increases death risks by 30% [TheWest](#)

\$36 bn submarine build plan may be scrapped [SMH](#)

Hooked on painkillers [HeraldSun](#)

Defence bidders got inside help to win bids [TheAge](#)

Tas ambulance services in disarray [Mercury](#)

Economy/social/shelter/transport/free speech/World

The rural divide in Australia [SMH](#)

DODGY BUY - Banks set overdraft trap [Telegraph](#)

Time to rethink drug laws: Davidson [TheAge](#)

Australian banks at risk to property markets [Telegraph.UK](#)

Tas economy most sluggish [Mercury](#)

Vic fire refuges might take years [TheAge](#)