

Our desperate government

By Marty Still

It seems to me that our governments are desperate. I'm not only talking about at federal level but right across the board from local through to the feds.

Local council.

At local level we have our shire who requested an over and above the CPI increase in rates of 7%, in the end it had to go to arbitration and they were given 6% so an additional charge appeared on our rates notice – rates are a tax, right, and it was for – how much? You guessed it – 1 %. Just before this there was some controversy at the Murwillumbah Council, the council was sacked due to graft, corruption and other less than savoury happenings. Between when they got the boot and a new bunch of bastards getting in we had administrators in place. Almost as soon as they came in there was a shadow over them – yes, the interim administrators. A person was employed as, I believe the official job name was, “Policy adviser” – some bird from Sydney. One cloud was over her head, questions as to how she got the job and why. It also came out that this “Policy adviser” was on a 150K annual salary, (and this was about 4 years ago, about 2007) I assume that was + superannuation + + +. I got to thinking, what does a policy adviser do to justify 150K PA at local council level and what exactly is a policy adviser? The conclusion I came to is that a policy adviser is a marketing person, “we need to do this but it won't be popular so who gets the job to sell it”, the policy adviser of course. They didn't get their 7% but nobody complained about the extra charge on the rates notice. Council are quite happy to squander our rates, taxes, on useless bastards like policy advisers instead of being good money managers, doing the right thing, and living within their means – like the rest of we plebs have to.

Then come the state mob.

Let's face it, Carr, or whatever his name was, was a financial disaster for NSW. It is common knowledge that, at a time of record income, with real estate booming and stamp duties coming out of his ears, he sent the state broke.

Then he just bailed out, retired, walked away. And who was responsible, no, wrong word, we know who was responsible, who was 'accountable' for the wreck he the state of NSW was in – nobody, that's who. Who was the next bloke, Yemmer, he was never going anywhere never mind the mess he came into and then we had the glamour puss Christina Keneally. What the hell did she know about running anything never mind a state government? One debacle after the other and her loyal supporters, alias, 'the rats', started leaving the ship one after the other like Lemmings long before it sank, the writing was on the wall in big clear letters, they could see it but apparently she could not. The NSW government really stuffed up with the railway and what was their answer to it – raise everyone in NSW car registration \$50.00, let's face it, car rego is a just another tax. Now we have another bloke in from the blue side. I love this one. The solar payments were set at 60c per Kw and they are going to reduce it to 40c. Hang one, we are on a contract, myself and 1000's of people like myself are on a contract for them to pay us 60c per Kw for 5 years. Now they just want to break the contract, reduce it to 40c per Kw and legislate so that they cannot be sued for breach of contract. Just for the record, I never agreed with anyone being paid 60c per Kw, I never thought it was a good idea, I never thought it was workable, I believe it should have been one for one – end of story. But government wanted to big note themselves, as they always do, they created a fabulous income for a select few doing grid connect installs where installers could hold people to ransom on price, you could not buy a discounted panel from these guys and they would not install a system they did not supply. These guys were, and still are, making 3 to \$5000.00 a day, (yes, a day) installing systems courtesy of a heap of government sponsored rebates, marketing and legislation. And then a short time ago I had one particularly prolific installer complaining to me that the possible changes in government policy 'might' take away his income, poop poop, poor thing, he's been riding the gravy train courtesy of the government for years and now the big bad government might take it away so now, perhaps, he'll have to go back to being an ordinary electrician again, so sad. Whatever happened to being happy to have been making \$million a year for years and walk away with a huge grin on your face? I would do that.

And what about the feds.

Oh dear, what a mess, but what do they care. Our PM is on about 350k a year, the opposition leader about 250k, all plus expenses of course, not a bad screw in anyone's language. Even a back bencher is on about 140k. (He should get a job as policy adviser at Murwillumbah council, the pay's better). Even then, years ago we had a polly claiming \$400.00 a day living away expenses while living at his mother's place in Melbourne. That is theft, that is criminal, did he get charged, no way. "I'll pay it back", he said. More recently we had one take a cab from Wollongong to Melbourne. Can you imagine what that would have cost? He said "I don't do public transport". Poop poop, how pompous is this bloke, he can't bear the thought of mixing with us lower life forms on public transport. In my very humble opinion that is theft, that is criminal, did he get charged, no way. "I'll pay it back", he said. Then we had the one who was going to clamp down on the "tax cheats". Yes, Paul Keating". Didn't he have a pig farm that gave him a heap of deductions as a primary producer? Didn't he collect antique clocks that attract no capital gains? Fair enough. Didn't he also not put in a tax return for three consecutive years? That is illegal if you or I do it but did he get charged, no way. When GST came in it was meant to eliminate all peripheral taxes, like stamp duty, did it? No way, it just became an add on. Now we have the carbon tax looming, it won't do any good, it is only an attempt to bring in yet another tax for a government who cannot live within its means. Problem with this one is that government won't be seen as taxing us. The tax is on manufacturers so their prices will go up. A ton of ore comes out of the ground and BHP is taxed on the carbon they produce. They sell it to GMH at the new, higher, carbon taxed price and they build a car out of it. GMH are carbon taxed so the price of their car goes up. I waltz along to buy a Holden and I not only have to pay the extra due to the carbon tax on BHP and GMH but I have to pay GST to the government on that extra. So it is actually a tax on the tax. That's the way I see it anyway. And once it's in, don't think it will ever disappear – it won't. Right now we have the police looking for a pay rise and they have to argue and fight with the government all the way for it – the proposed amount to give them is 2.6%, I note the government, even prior to getting elected, if you can call being in place by the grace of Bob Brown,

'elected', gave themselves a 4% rise. Who in government argued against that one?

Being as I have been in business for 30 years (plus GST) I cannot help but compare government with private enterprise. If I make a financial decision and it goes pear shaped I cannot just say "Okay, I will increase my prices, I will increase registration fees, I will add a new tax, I will add a new charge to my service to cover my blunder". I live in the real world and have to wear it if I cock up and if I have put my house on the line for the finance, I may have to wear losing that too. And if the bank or any other creditors want to come and take my house or possessions from me because I have defaulted, I cannot change the legislation to stop them doing it. In short, I have to be responsible. That key word, "responsible", is what it seems to me that 'all' governments lack. Not only our lot, look at Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, they are all the same. These things that government do are simply wrong and are exclusive to government. I agree that the 60c per Kw is wrong, I agree that is not sustainable but it never was sustainable but government gave it anyway, government entered into the 'contract' and now they just want to walk away from it. Had it been a private enterprise company trying to re-neg on the deal, government would have been supporting the people and condemning the company but because it's government, it's alright. Government will never take a step back and say "we have to pare back, we have to sacrifice something, the public service can be reduced in these tougher times to relieve the burden on the taxpayer". Oh no, it seems to me that the public service grows each time the economy booms, then it stays at that level until the next boom when it expands again. Sort of how a constrictor kills its prey, it doesn't kill by exerting pressure, it merely stops the prey breathing in again after each exhale. Government needs to think more before acting, they need money people in there not talkers and policy advisers, let's have a good, well paid, accountant run government spending, local, state and federal and let's have this accountant be accountable – (scuse the pun) just as the rest of us have to be. Let's have someone really pencil out the costs before acting just as they have to do in the real make or break world of private enterprise. Is that really such a silly idea?

So why are they desperate? Easy. They are playing with someone else's money, they didn't have to earn the money they squander and the people who manage the money have no idea how to manage money they are only thinking about staying in power.

Believe me, after 33 successful years in business, I could do a better job than these stupid bastards.

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