



We have a new Mayor!

Description

It is timely to have a word about tonight's vote for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

I witnessed some truly awful behaviour from the gallery in Council, so this is where I stand.

The Liberal Councillors are four among twelve. We collaborate as best we can. But in this term, having no majority, our lot is limited to choosing the least worst from options put before us by others.

We all know the pendulum will swing back some day. My job is to ensure that the Liberals *deserve* a majority at the next election, and never merely assume it as a right. We accept our accountability.

Tonight, knowing no Liberal could secure the role, I made a choice between the two candidates.

Mary: Vivacious. A great grass-roots networker. Broad minded. Compassionate. Mary has brought a flair and energy to the office of Mayor that had been missing for a long time.

Barry. Quietly spoken, deliberative, policy-and-outcome focused. I've witnessed Barry to have a depth of experience borne of 19 years in local government which has earned my respect.

I have nothing to bad to say about Barry *or* Mary. I enjoy a friendly relationship with both, and I accord them (as I do all my colleagues) the courtesy of believing they are honourably motivated to serve the community.

So I chose Barry. I didn't choose on the basis of Party. Indeed, it was in the face of enmities others assumed we should hold against each other.

I didn't choose on the basis of some "deal". There wasn't one. Those present observed unanimous support for an open vote and not a secret ballot. There was no "quid pro quo" as some said — everything was out in the open.

Sadly, we got to witness another Labor Councillor and now state candidate, presumably bound by his party's constitution to vote for his leader, betray that for all to see.

Here's some unwelcome free advice: You do nothing to advance the case for your party's ascendancy to State government by joining their team and then knifing your colleagues before you even hear the starter's pistol.

If you want to know what a return to State Labor would look like—there it is.

Anyway, the Liberals made the choice that seemed least-worst for our community for the next two years. No vendetta. No Machiavellian intrigues. Just an opportunity to tweak the team and knuckle down and make the best out of the remainder of this term.

I congratulate our new Mayor Barry, and I thank our outgoing Mayor Mary for her service.

I have few illusions, of course. Labor supported the rate restructure that made our rating system less fair. And Labor supported the Special Rate Variation that will hike all our rates by nearly a third, because left-leaning governments will always raise taxes. Tonight's vote does nothing for those who are rightly aggrieved by a system that has doubled or tripled their Council rates over the last two years. If you want the system to be fairer again, vote Liberal.

A spread of views in an elected chamber is what makes democracy work. We may contend passionately over differences of policy, but tonight some people got very angry, and personal, and cruel when they were displeased at the result. This has spilled over into social media, and in addition to juvenile tit-for-tat, some serial pests have infringed on the personal safety of Councillors, including women and children, and have made unfounded allegations about the conduct of Councillors for vexatious intent.

Let me be clear: This crosses a bright line, and it must stop. The twelve Councillors met specially to discuss this last week and we all agreed unanimously that the conduct of some trolls has gone too far.

Regardless of whether you support or oppose one side or another – argue passionately about ideas and values, but don't be an asshole to another human being. I won't tolerate it on any forum I moderate, and my challenge should sound familiar: you endorse any behaviour you walk past.

Please, be kind.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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