

3 October 2007

Four year terms essential

The current cat and mouse game between the PM and the electorate over an election date is ridiculous. The election date should be fixed, on the same day every four years preferably.

Then we could prevent some of the shameful abuse of taxpayers funds where governments, especially this one with \$200M of propaganda dressed up as “government advertising”, have an enormous advantage over all other parties and candidates in the lead up to an election.

If the term was fixed, there should be no use of taxpayers’ money for party benefit from 6 weeks before Election Day.

Principle over Pork?

There was debate last week about whether voters in Calare will vote according to pork barrelling or principle. I believe they’ll vote for principle every time, as they’ve done since 1996.

Voters want their interests represented in the parliament and that’s why they have consistently re-elected me as their independent MP despite the promise of funding favours from the parties.

They didn’t buy it when the Nationals promised to fund Mount Panorama’s upgrade only if their candidate was elected in 2001, and they didn’t buy it when the Regional Partnerships fund was used as a private party pork barrel in 2004. Any grant should come according to need and not political favour.

Remember – there is only one representative who can work for their constituents whoever is in government – and that is an independent.

Telstra and Labor

I note the love-in between Telstra and the ALP at the moment as the telco strongly supports Labor’s plans to use the Future Fund to build a proper broadband network. I strongly support this use of public money, especially as it will restore a degree of government ownership of vital telecommunications infrastructure for the bush.

Telstra is also trying to convince its shareholders to reject the Government’s insistence that the CDMA network not be switched off until the new ‘Next G’ replacement proves it can do the same job.

Anyone remembering the ‘black holes’ when this government allowed Telstra to switch off the excellent analogue mobile system in the bush knows Telstra will always claim far more coverage than it delivers.

Helen Coonan hasn't forgotten, and I wonder if Labor ever really cared until I stirred the issue along with telco activists like Boyd Munro in the late 1990s and during 2000.

How am I

I'm on the mend again after a bout of pneumonia and some other complications over the past week or so. I still feel strong and confident and intend heading to the south coast for some salt air and sand in the next couple of weeks.

Thanks to everyone for their continuing best wishes, especially the schools that have sent special messages and artwork.