

We The People

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Good day to you. This is the last narrative on the Council elections before March 19 when we vote. It's unquestionably the most important election the Gold Coast has ever had and it's essential we all vote wisely especially for the mayor's position. So today I thought a short overview of the current Council's compromised performance and the mayor's idiosyncrasies would be enlightening. Underpinning all this is the fiction that they work for us and yet it's a Council driven by the twin evils of greed and avarice, in my view.

Let's start with the so called Culture Centre. It's reportedly going to cost \$400 million but from past experience, you can probably double that. Stage one has commenced at \$37 million but there is no business case available. They tell us to trust them it's in draft form so it's "fluid", whatever that means and of course the CEO marks it confidential from 'we the rate payers' who must foot the bill. This little gem, akin to Disneyland, includes selling off a heap of public land at Evandale never to be available to the public again. It has a silly misshapen foot bridge across to Chevron Island and the residents there are simply chuffed about that and the tram driven high rise now imminent and timed to destroy their quiet and peaceful lives. There is apparently no environmental impact statement, no cost benefit analyses, no transport infrastructure plan and no public consultation of any worth. Just pretty pictures of a concrete landscape with a tall multicoloured fruit tingle tower complete with bungy jump. We are told by the spin doctors it will rival the Guggenheim.....oh dear. I recently asked the Council a series of questions about the Culture Centre and at the time of broadcast I haven't received a reply.

The Cruise liner terminal has surfaced again and of course with no due diligence or those pesky business or environmental plans let alone a funding source. The public will love it, so goes the mantra and surprise, surprise it comes out adjacent to Sunland's Twin Towers, proposed for the Spit where the height limit is 3 storeys. Between the two of these inappropriate projects there will be massive traffic problems yet common sense is not part of the brief. But don't worry, the Council's head of governance, Cr William Owen Jones will look after the public interest when he votes on the development even after he has declared openly he received donations from Sunland. Let's not forget about the infamous ERP computer software exercise which has been running for years and is now up to \$250 million rate payer dollars and no end in sight. Remember, the original budget was \$22 million but don't you worry about that.

Let's not forget the recent announcement by the mayor that outdoor Gyms will be built everywhere as he has a donation from business for \$200,000 dollars. This announcement was inappropriately made during the caretaker period with his close colleague and ex media advisor Herman Vorster and now candidate for Division 11 in Robina. There is no Council approval, no Council funding and no real cash yet and the current Councillor Jan Grew was not even advised, so it's all just a cynical election stunt. Mr Vorster won't return my calls. In contrast his opponent Nic Rone responded quickly and met with me and listens as a true independent. What has happened to Tom Tate's 'red dot' as the new innovative logo for the Gold Coast as it now owes us about \$1 million dollars. Where has all the money gone from the green space levy which is supposed to buy back open space for the environment and the people? In 4 years, with one minor exception, Mayor Tate has not met with our pre-eminent environmental group GECKO based at Currumbin which provide advocacy for our voiceless flora and fauna. The mayor has denigrated the Save our Spit group and ignored the surfing fraternity at times. Then there's the four women Councillors who are not recontesting, in part, because of bullying and gender bias at a high level and that's a disgrace. The Weekend Bulletin quotes Mr Tate when responding to mayoral candidate's comments about the costs of the cruise liner terminal as saying, "he is pulling that out of his \*\*\*\*". Again about a fellow mayoral candidate Tate refers to them as "\*\*\*\*\* who just bring up \*\*\*\*\*". That's not the language of a leader or a statesman. He seems to dismiss any voice which has an alternate view and he is leading the Gold Coast into so called affordable housing slums which are now emerging on Hope Island and elsewhere. There is so much spin it's a wonder that migrating whales can pass the Gold Coast without getting dizzy while my old mate, the drover's dog, is off his tucker with worry. There is hope however, as we are blessed to have two good candidates for mayor in Ms Penny Toland and Mr Jim Wilson as either of them would do a great job as the peoples mayor. So, It's now up to you the rate payer to sign off on a new fresh, invigorated and inclusive local government or continue with more of the same. You be the judge but vote wisely my friends as our future hangs in the balance.

**Until next time this is Kent Bayley**