



Good day to you. With the Council elections looming large 'We The People' narratives are focused on matters to do with Council to assist you in making up your mind as to how you should vote. This is especially true regarding the leader as it is the Mayor who is the lead Councillor. Strong inclusive democratic leadership is essential in any successful organisation and in GC City Council its paramount as much is at stake now and most importantly for the future. The first question is, do we have a current mayor who is a democratic inclusive leader who listens to the people and who carefully helps lay the foundations for a sustainable future where the people and the natural environment are paramount. Personally I think Mayor Tate falls far short of those ideals.

The alarm bells began to ring for me when in November 2014 when the Bulletin reported that the Mayor and his Deputy had gagged tourism leader Peter Doggett who headed up the Connecting Southern Gold Coast group which was funded by Council. Reporter Andrew Potts also mentioned a similar threat to others like Mike Winlaw of the then Surfers Paradise Alliance. Surfers Paradise councillor Lex Bell was the only elected representative to vote against gagging Mr Doggett. He defended the need for public comment to be made by the city's entities. Lex was right then and its still right now that strong inclusive leadership shouldn't gag anyone who represents the people or democracy.

In August 2014 the Bulletin again reported that the then Minister for Local government David Crisafulli, slammed the Mayors decision to gag Gold Coast City Councillors saying elected representatives must be free to speak their minds because an elected official is not Councils representative to the people, rather they are the peoples representative to Council. He was right then and it's still right today. A Bulletin poll revealed 93.7% of the people agreed. Again in 2014 the Mayor Tom Tate came in for public derision and laughter when he told Councillors they would be locked out of the meeting room if they went to the toilet without permission. At the same time, according to the Press, a memo was sent by the acting Council CEO to all Councillors saying they must not speak publically on Council matters or else face disciplinary action and the sack.

In 2013 Cr Jan Grew from Robina was ejected from the chamber after having the audacity to stand up for animal rights when a circus came to town and this was the first time in a decade this had happened. I'm no fan of Jan Grew but she was genuinely trying to take a stand for animal welfare and her ejection from the chamber was unwarranted and dictatorial. She should have been congratulated, not condemned. The GC Rate Payers Association called for Tom Tate to be less autocratic and not to stifle debate. Animal rights protesters later branded Cr Tate a "dictator". Channel nine has felt Tate's inspired manner as well, when he threatened to sue them for defamation in 2013 over a story Nine was about to run regarding allegations by Amanda Duncan-Strelec, former mayor of Albury and business partner with Tom Tate, where she claimed Tate had discussed the details of his attempts to gain control of the Surfers Paradise Bowls Club. Tate denied the allegations and Nine ran the story but gave him the right of reply.

I don't have the time to go through all the examples at hand about Mayor Tate regarding his performance. What I will say is that he appears autocratic if not dictatorial and those values are not the values of a good effective leader in my view. His plans appear to favour unbridled growth without a comprehensive costed infrastructure plan and in any case he appears to equate 'cranes on the skyline' with progress, which is a very poor bench mark and right out of the sixties. Have no doubt that the elections coming up are critical to your future and life style on the Gold Coast. If this Council and Mayor are re-elected then grid lock and social disconnection will be rife and let's ask, where will the children play?

We need a Mayor for the people and we need it fast. Someone who will listen to us and act in the best interests of we the rate payers and a sustainable future. Look to the new mayoral candidates including Jim Wilson and Penny Toland as both have an inclusive style. Look to their policies and make a decision based on the facts, maturity, wisdom and on your own family values and especially democracy. For my part the drovers dog has more common sense than the current Council and Mayor.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley