

We The People

Program 125

Rearranging the Deck Chairs



I like to draw analogies as it can bring clarity and today is no exception. Let's start with a question, who are these men and why are they famous.....Edward Smith, Charles Bartlett and Francesco Schettino. Well they are all ship captains of vessels which sank. Captain Smith went down with the Titanic, Captain Bartlett descended with the improved Britannic and Captain Schettino in more recent times decided to disembark before the super liner Costa Concordia went to Davy Jones locker. Never the less, all the ships were seen as unsinkable.

Now to build the analogy lets reflect on Fredrick Fleet and he is a seaman I doubt you have heard of. Fred Fleet was the lookout on that fateful moonlit night of April 14, 1912 as the Titanic was steaming through the North Atlantic Ocean when around midnight Fred Fleet spotted an ice field. He notified the bridge by speaking tube and yet they took little notice as the moonlight obscured their view on a brightly lit ocean so the ice bergs weren't apparent. They could not readily see the danger and when they did it was too late and the rest is maritime history. So Fredrick Fleet was a pretty important man with a vital duty and yet the ships bridge did not share his concern.

Now we can learn a lot from this story and the events are well recorded in history. The first is that the only thing man learns from history, is that he doesn't learn from history. The second is that there is always a Fred Fleet giving a warning and often we dismiss that call because we don't see what he sees because our vantage point is different and through self importance, our view takes precedent. We also learn unsinkable ships are perfectly able to sink and in that much is lost at great cost. Mans efforts are often small in the scale of things and yet we do not see the folly of our ways and time and time again we sink into a sea of hubris. Now finally we dock at the point being the latest news were our cash strapped Council may conduct a survey, plebiscite or referendum on peoples attitude toward the Broadwater cruise liner terminal proposal for the princely sum of up to \$1 million dollars. Once again the rate payers cough up for one man's awkward vision that despite being rejected twice before we still must have a big boats in the Broadwater and give away public land to boot. In my view, Mayor Tate has found the people do have a voice despite his posturing and so far has apparently ignored the metaphoric voice of Fredrick Fleet. Now after all this time he wants our opinion as well as our money and the risk is all ours.

Let's just be different for a moment and apply common sense to this maritime disaster in the making. Bringing a cruise liner into the Broadwater through the Seaway is like taking a building taller than the Q1 tower and floating it on its side through the Seaway then making a sharp turn to port and docking. Once finished in port the HMAS Q1 does a u-turn and simply cruises out to the sea trying hard to miss the migrating whales. The Q1 tower is 230 meters tall while many cruise liners are over 300 meters in length. Mind you it's not all that bad because if one of the ships sinks it won't matter because the Broadwater is so shallow people could just call a water taxi. It would take vast amounts of money to float this titanic proposal and guess who will undoubtedly pay again in the long run, yes it's we the rate paying crew. Mayor Tate, if you must stay the course then put the thing out off the coast somewhere because right minded people don't want the inevitable pain of hitting a financial ice berg after you've gone back to barracks. The Councilors are on the bridge too while Fred Fleets voice is largely ignored and his is the voice of reason and common sense. Councilors are paid handsomely to be aware of and understand all issues they vote on yet they don't. The Queensland local Government Act says in section 4 that the principles of local government include, transparent and effective and decision making, sustainable development, democratic representation, social inclusion, good governance and ethical behavior. So how do we stack up with the way Council is handling our finances and planning. Are they transparent and ethical. Well all I can say is that Fredrick Fleet would be calling the bridge right about now and sounding the alarm of an ice berg dead ahead.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley