

We The People

Program 153

The Bad News



The Gold Coast Bulletin has been around for about 100 years and in that time has delivered the news to the Gold Coast through peace and war and local and national events. Today's world brings new challenges though and most news papers are suffering with declining circulation and readership, especially with younger generations. The same loss of audience is true of commercial television and commercial radio but to a lesser extent than the Press. The internet delivers the news and entertainment faster and with the ability for the average person to speak back. Letters to the editor are now obsolete.

Recently I attended a public rally where ordinary people expressed their feelings about the proposed mosque at Currumbin. It was held outside the council Chambers at Bundall although ultimately moved out toward the road as apparently an international business group were visiting and the Council didn't want them to see democracy in action. There may have been 150 people present with placards and signs and the sweet sound of democracy. The peaceful meeting ran about an hour with a few speeches including local larrikin, Larry Pickering. The major media were there and so it was a successful affirmation of freedom in action. I attended because I believe in free speech and to offer support as I don't warm to Islam in general.

Now the next day, Thursday September 11, the Bulletin reported the anti mosque rally and what I read was an embellished inaccurate version of what actually happened. The rally and the people were vilified to such an extent the uninformed reader would have thought the grand mufti of evil was holding the meeting. This is not the way news papers earned their place in Australian history and the Bulletin plumbed new depths of exaggeration to gain a shock headline. It's simply not fair to readers to embellish the truth, rewrite history and to actually judge those present as rednecks and radicals.

On the front page below a story on cocktail mixing the headline read **"Hometown Terror"** referring to a police raid where people were arrested for alleged financing of foreign fighters in Syria. Later a near full page story regarding the public rally declared the folk at the meeting to be **"Messengers of Hate"** and within the article hot heads and a general warning from un-named Gold Coast leaders that the rally could seriously threaten tourism. Really!!!. Above that article was another reference to the unrelated Syrian fighter's story but strategically placed with the local rally of mums and dads. Later again in the Paper another reporter declared the protestors had **"crossed the line"**. That insightful if not arrogant judgmental statement made from the Bulletins aging pulpit of righteousness is not appropriate when reporting the news. Again later in the Paper the Bulletin printed a cartoon of a Chinese sweatshop and I quote...**making little rooms for Chinese to inhabit Southport**. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black as the Bulletin railed against its own people who it relies on to buy and read the paper let alone the negative effect on tourism. In fact the Bulletin must take responsibility for many negative comments on page one over the years. Finally at the back of the paper are pages of ads for prostitution which would definitely offend any Muslim or Christian for that matter. So The Bulletin it seems has declared a holy jihad on ordinary Gold Coast citizens simply exercising their democratic rights and bravo for those people.

It astonishes me that this tiny group of locals conducting a peaceful legal demonstration on the lawns of the Gold Coast City Council are so vilified by the Paper and their view point dismissed as extreme. It was none of those things and they are not the red necks claimed. In fact they were no more dangerous than a tuck shop meeting at a school and the 12 armed uniformed Police present must have felt it a waste of their time and I wonder who called them. I applaud the group of ordinary folk for gathering and making their views known as that's what lacking in society today with lethargy and bureaucracy our nation's greatest adversaries. After all that, the Council rightly voted against the Mosque on camouflaged lines because like it or not the vast majority of Australians are worried by Islam. The news last week that 800 police foiled a Muslim plan to behead innocent Australians in NSW and Queensland is proof positive that the people at the rally were justified in their concerns. So in future the Bulletin should take the time to report important news without the frenetic bias and to respect and hear the voice of the ordinary Australian. I hope they listen.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley