

We The People  
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We the People 249 Ethics and Morality of a Car Park



Good day to you. Today's offering is called the **Ethics and Morality of a Car Park**. First up however, let's consider the principles and ethics which ultimately form the standards by which 'we the people' live in Australia. Societies standards vary between cultures and countries and unfortunately Australia's so called multicultural society is becoming a fetid mix of different standards and morality as division breaks down our once homogenous society. Because we don't demand integration the ethics and cultural standards of Australian society are racked by division and different views of morality and conduct. A house divided cannot stand. So to establish a proper foundation for ethical behaviour let's look to the very foundations of our society and the Anglo Saxon Christian history which has served us so well. The principles Australians' have adopted including our laws, should represent non negotiable core values. The golden rule stands clear in that we must treat others as we expect to be treated....turn the other cheek in the renunciation of violence....forgiving those who would harm us...love your enemies as yourself....fidelity in marriage and not worshipping money. Of course we must not kill, steal or cheat and we must honour our father and our mother. Finally and most importantly, rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesars and unto God that which is Gods. I must confess when compiling these few examples I felt the harsh sting of reality in my own life. Whether Christian or not these examples offer a great way to live. So now having established a basic frame work of core principles let's look at the car park sale issue in Surfers Paradise and test them out with Council.

Recently the Mayor Tom Tate announced with great occasion that the Bruce Bishop car park and land in Surfers Paradise would be sold and the money used to build a new bridge across to Chevron Island and pay the costs of stage one of the new arts precinct. He bragged that it wouldn't cost the rate payer a dollar extra and congratulated the council for its wisdom in voting for it. However things are sometimes not what they first appear with Tom Tate. When he says it won't cost the rate payers a thing that's not true because we own the car park and land and now we lose that asset. Apparently Mr Tate remained at the special budget meeting when voting for the sale even though he admitted to a real or perceived conflict of interest with his stake in the Bowls Club site opposite. I have reason to believe that the redevelopment of that site mentions the car park as a parking asset. In my view, broadly speaking, good ethics outweigh any technicality in the law and anyone with a real or perceived conflict, stated or not, should not be present during discussions and especially not during voting on any issue. Good ethics demand this and simply saying it's **not illegal** doesn't cut it in my view. How many times have we heard this flawed ethical rational from Councillors recently.

In 1938 Surfers Paradise resident Charles Hicks in a deed arrangement with council, instructed the land he gifted would be preserved as a recreational reserve. It was never intended to be a car park. When the Council attempted to sell the site in 2004 it backed off after a public protest and legal stoush about whether it was free to offload the prime Surfers Paradise land for more concrete high rise. Father Neal Shannon in an article in the Bulletin in 1966 recalled Mr Hicks wanted his land to be preserved as a playground for children. A mayor's report from 1938 gave the instruction that and I quote....**"this property would be a recreation reserve and could not be sold or disposed of by the council"**. Now that seems clear to me and so we should question the ethics of this Council but noting that Councillors Crichlow, Young and Baildon opposed the sale and at least appear to have a moral back bone and ethical base regarding this matter. Why on earth would anyone in the future generously provide property in trust to the Gold Coast City Council for the good of the community again. My advice is... don't... as they clearly can't be trusted in circumventing this generous donation by using the law to force the sale. What it does prove is there can be a chasm between ethics, morality and the law which proves again to be an ass to allow this. Surely life isn't made up of this kind a of decision making in subjugating the wish of a public benefactor. Lets also consider the other nearby high rise developments which have been approved on the basis of access to the car park and open space. Previous Councillor Eddy Sarroff knows a lot about this and has promised to vigorously oppose this unethical decision in the public interest and good for him. Why have our standards and public morality evaporated, how is real progress measured and what do **'we the people'** do about this type of decision making. I truly hope a strong purposeful ethical leader emerges when the next Council elections are held..... lest we forget.

**Until next time this Kent Bayley**