



Good Day to you. I would like to share few thoughts on a particular word, a powerful word with a double meaning. The word is **redacted**. Now to redact something in common language means to cover or to hide. So a document may have some of the contents redacted and often this means lines and words are blacked out so they cannot be read. The word redact has been in the English language for about 600 years and originally meant to **'bring together or unite'**. Now this is quite the opposite of the common meaning today where it can mean **'reduce to the point of destruction'**.

When you contemplate the redaction of a document then the first question must be who authorised the selective editing. In a free society we must be informed and without freedom of knowledge, democracy and free speech suffer. I can accept that where national security is involved there may be a need for redaction but otherwise I see no reason to hide anything and especially so where government is involved. Good governance is about transparency even though releasing information may at times disadvantage some. The greater good is paramount. A relevant example is the report to the Gold Coast City Council on the cruise liner terminal on the ocean side of the Spit. The Council promised to release it but the CEO declined and an odious public discourse occurred where the public were robbed of the opportunity to critique the document. Finally the report was released but over 25 pages were redacted because it might and I quote, **"cause a public interest harm"**. How is it credible to 'protect' the public from the findings of a report that we paid for to the tune of \$800,000 dollars. Why was it the redacted sections were indeed the parts we the people should have read regarding risk factors such as the possibility of an ocean liner being blown against the shore. There were many risks including the unpredictable cruising market, massive ongoing costs and the design. I believe it was redacted because it is such a deeply divisive political matter. It appears to have simply been redacted for the gain of the political engine of the Council. This is not acceptable conduct and potentially in breach of the Principles of the Local Government Act.

The art of redaction in Council is well honed and matters are hidden from citizens on a regular basis including the **investigation into housing and development** across the Gold Coast. The entire document has been redacted on the basis the Council doesn't want land speculation. However surely the greater view would be to make the report public so we the people can comment before it's cast in stone. Regarding land speculation, is the Council asking us to believe that developers don't already know what's in the plan. In my view the development industry will already know exactly where plans will be for more urban development. One gets the feeling 'duplicity' is alive and well in Council and the State is either stupid or complicit. The truth is they act like our keepers and trainers but I tell you this, the end is nigh for them lock, stock and barrel. The matter of redaction and secrecy is best summed up by a recent comment from Gecko and I quote.... **"Isn't this typical of the current council. Its citizens are apparently incapable of being trusted with a report on the future of the city they live and work in and contribute to in so many ways. Is there some rule that says we must take everyone that wants to live here? It is Gecko's understanding that some councils in SEQ have refused to have a completely open door policy and have set some limits on population growth. This is a debate that Gold Coast should have, and not have our future decided by the development industry. Gecko recognises that there must be protection against land speculation, but residents are still entitled to have access to reports they have paid for and which will substantially impact on their lifestyle and amenity."** end quote. I agree wholeheartedly and all this from a level headed community group which the mayor Tom Tate never sees. Personally I would like to redact the whole council.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley