

We The People

Program 66

Green Delegation or Red Abdication



It was in England in the 16th century when King Henry the 8th besieged Pope Clement 7th with around 80 petitions for the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. The Pope declined and the King ultimately started his own Kirk being the Church of England to dissolve the marriage. Now all that voluminous paper work in scrolls sent to the Pope was sealed and bound with the obligatory red cloth tape and the rest is history. The world has adopted the term Red Tape to describe the collection or sequence of forms and procedures required to gain bureaucratic approval for something, especially when oppressively complex and time-consuming. Red tape these days is no less onerous and often stifles a good project or is used to protect a bureaucracy from review. Let's go further and propose that as our global environment is being so seriously threatened that green tape exists which is really good red tape designed to save forests and animals.

Federal Labor has apparently had an epiphany that counter to the unions wishes and high level civil servants, green tape must be reduced. Now this is a tricky subject because it's a bit like having the fox in charge of the hen house where no matter what seems to be a good decision will ultimately result in less chickens and more foxes. I have a good example at hand which works against the country and the environment and yet the Federal government will claim it's all in the name of making things run smoothly and reduces green tape which they say incorrectly is red tape. In this case it means our national environmental laws will be made very much weaker than they are now. Very soon the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, will be handed over to the State Governments and there will be no appeal to the Federal Government from State Government decisions. That doesn't sound smart or green to me.

The reason is simple and it's the abdication of a clear federal responsibility to the advantage of the fragmented states and their absolute focus on development at any cost. You see the federal sphere sees the big green picture while the states see only their patch of red ground. Surely the nations environment and ecology is a national issue but apparently not so although the reasons escape me at present. State Governments have a poor record of environmental protection and the numbers and species of native plants and animals continue to disappear at an alarming rate. In Queensland the koala and cassowary are in dire trouble while the Government is promoting tourism resorts to be built in our national parks as well as allowing access to four wheel drive vehicles/ trail bikes and horses and huge open cut coal mines are permitted in conservation reserves. Our coasts are under siege from development and the Cape York wilderness is the next development frontier. Our iconic Great Barrier Reef is becoming a highway for coal and gas shipping.

Both political parties are trying to make it easier for destructive development projects to go ahead. If it was up to the States they would have dammed the Franklin River, put oil rigs in the Great Barrier Reef and let Traveston Dam go ahead, supported whaling and continued sand mining on World Heritage listed Fraser Island. An impressive list of United Nations environmental laureates and experts including Sir David Attenborough have personally written to the Prime Minister asking her not to hand over this important federal responsibility to the States as it's not in the national interest. When you get a letter like that surely you would take notice.....but then again who knows and with Abbott and Gillard in bed together it's terrifying and a difficult nasty picture to conjure up.

Listeners, you can join in the chorus to Canberra and stop this cowardly abdication of federal responsibility by contacting the PM direct or through Gecko at Currumbin. Time is very short so please do this without delay as this is a black and white issue of green and red tape proportions.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley