

## We The People

Program 67

Self Serving Government



As listeners will be aware my preoccupation is to live in a truly free, truly democratic country and I guess by simplistic world standards we have a crude version of that. At the heart of democratic utopia exists freedom of speech and an efficient dynamic government which has the task of properly governing and funding the country and courts where affordable timely justice is dispensed. In terms of a fair, efficient and affordable judicial system we do not have that. In terms of efficient and dynamic government we do not have that and in terms of freedom of speech our own Australian Constitution does not provide that.

At some point probably through a people's revolution the clock will have to be restarted in Australia and the way we are governed be simplified and redefined so the people are really free and well served. If that can happen in business then why not for democracy. For those who think a peoples revolution will never happen in Australia think again because it will happen when government and bureaucratic grid lock and the loss of freedom of speech create an untenable life for the average Australian. When government bureaucracy becomes so rigidly complex and simply exists for itself and doesn't listen to or serve the people then things must change. So, are we moving toward better government or measurably away from it and the answer rests with we the people and our participation in this democracy.

In 2011 the federal government created a committee to look at formal recognition for local government by amending section 96 of the Constitution. The Australian Constitution only recognises Federal and State governments while so called local government only exists at the pleasure of the State and in fact we only have two formal tiers of government and one illegitimate third. By any measure it's an unhappy marriage of governance and challenges a somewhat antediluvian constitution. Now the federal government is considering a referendum to change the constitution to recognise local government but that change must attract a majority of votes in the majority of states. So here is the question....why does the government want the change. The answer is complex unfortunately but in brief the feds want to be able to fund local government direct from Canberra and bypass the states. The states don't want that because it diminishes their power and influence. What you can be sure of is that it's all about what's best for government and what will make government even more unassailable.

Locally the GCCC wants the constitutional change to gain direct funding from the federal government and therefore more power but the problem is the recent dreadful, wasteful record of our local members who vote on matters they don't understand and lack that capacity. Council's misguided local bureaucracy runs an impenetrable closeted system where even freedom of information is deliberately stifled. I am sure that the capacity is not in our local government at present to be awarded more authority and what we should be voting on is the termination of State Government and replacing it with large local democratic government connected directly to we the people. This country can no longer afford the various layers of inefficient complex self serving government and let's hope a real leader emerges to take this country down a new path for the good of all. That leader is not yet present.

The referendum may well happen in 2013 and you should think long and hard about your vote and whether of not you think GCCC is capable of handling more power and more money. For me I will take a leaf from a letter written by Lord Acton to the church in 1887 where he wrote....."Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely". Always vote no if the government wants you to vote yes. **Until next time this is Kent Bayley**