

Opinion

TODAY IN HISTORY

10 years ago



MARCH 27, 2002: WHILE the number of police officers on sick leave across the state is mounting into the hundreds, the Coffs-Clarence Local Area Command has bucked the alarming trend to record a drop in the rate of officers staying at home.

Five years ago



MARCH 28, 2007: A NEW industrial release for Yamba featuring ultra-modern, strata-titled factory units has received the go-ahead from Clarence Valley Council. Construction is expected to start soon on the Yamba Business Park, on a 15 acre block in Deering St.

One year ago



MARCH 28, 2011: Incumbent Clarence MP Steve Cansdell has secured his third term as local member and his first in government with a resounding victory in Saturday's election. With more than 60% of the primary vote, he routed his rivals and relegated Labor to third.

Viewed from ivory tower

WHAT is it about these bloody civil libertarians – and some journalists?

Listening to the news while driving to work this morning, I heard an interview with NSW Civil Liberties president Cameron Murphy who was being interviewed about the police actions resulting in the fatal shooting of a man at a Sydney shopping centre on Sunday (some journos can't help but go to these people for a grab).

The first thing Mr Murphy should remember is that it wasn't the police that caused the end result here.



COMMENT
GRAHAM ORAMS

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The man who was shot by police had allegedly committed an armed robbery, then fled in a stolen car.

He then allegedly stole another vehicle at knife point and continued to flee from police.

It appears that this man's alleged criminal actions caused the end result here – his death.

People such as Mr Murphy should remember that for every

action we take, there is a consequence – and sometimes those consequences are deadly.

Cameron Murphy is typical of those who don't have the guts to get off their tailor-suited backside and put their life on the line to defend us.

It's far easier to shelter behind the protection of your high-rise office with views of the harbour and throw criticisms at the very people out there protecting you – at times dying in the process.

In a television interview yesterday, Mr Murphy called for police to stop using Tasers, but

then suggested that the police involved in Sunday's shooting should have used a Taser instead of a firearm.

Perhaps Mr Murphy should put on a Batman suit and go out unarmed and save the world.

“It's far easier to shelter behind the protection of your high-rise office

A relaxed attitude is not apathy

I WOULD like to say thank you to Janelle Saffin for responding to my open letter.

Malcolm Turnbull, Tony Abbott and Senator Bob Brown have responded.

Both Malcolm Turnbull and Tony Abbott expressed disquiet and concern about the report.

Senator Bob Brown's office defended the report, and has not yet responded to further questions.

Ms Saffin's response is certainly in line with the "civility" she speaks of – unlike the displays of arrogance, a patronising attitude and social ineptitude displayed by her leader, Julia Gillard.

But Ms Saffin's failure to answer my questions, dismissing them as "nonsense" and "political attack", a la Tony Abbott, are a true indicator that Ms Saffin's government has every intention of restricting our freedom of speech and the freedom to read, and write what we want.

This Government does not want a questioning media writing articles that are critical of it and its actions.

Many of the political commentators and academics who are supportive of the present government are publicly expressing unease about this report.

This is despite Ms Saffin claiming to stand by "having freedom".

Just so you know, Ms Saffin, I intend to fight your government's legislation and I will encourage others to do the same.

Do not mistake a relaxed attitude for apathy.

I would also respectfully remind you, Ms Saffin that you are paid by taxpayers to represent the people of Page, including me.

It is your job to deal with questions of the type I have asked and to answer them, not to refer to them as "nonsense".

My concerns, like those of all your constituents, are your concern and they deserve respect and a direct answer.

ANNE HUNTER,
Grafton.

Bimblebox tells tale all should hear

I REFER to The Hon Thomas George MP's affirmation of his support for the mining and coal seam gas industry.

During the recent Byron Bay Film Festival a new documentary was sadly given little prominence.

The film Bimblebox is one which all Australians should



PROTECTION CALL: Bimblebox Nature Reserve is a picture of the unspoilt Australian bush. What will become of it when mining ravages the landscape?

view, so they understand these contentious mining issues.

It is about a group of families who purchased 8000ha (20,000 acres) near Alpha in central Queensland, assisted by a government grant of \$300,000.

Progressively they turned their land into Bimblebox Nature Refuge.

The property had not been subjected to broadscale land clearing, so comprises pristine native vegetation, including the bimblebox tree, which is a type of poplar box.

The CSIRO has carried out studies and research there.

Birds Australia has identified a rare and vulnerable Blackthroated Finch.

The property, 600km west of Rockhampton, depicts the real bush of outback Australia.

It is somewhere these families have proudly put 12 years of their lives into and spent all their savings.

Then along comes China First and Australia's Living Treasure, Mr Clive Palmer, billionaire extraordinaire, who holds the mining rights to the Bimblebox Nature Refuge's 8000 ha through Waratah Coal.

The mining rights to the adjacent property are held by Hancock Prospecting.

Mr Palmer claims the Blackthroated Finch has wings and can fly, but where to, Mr Palmer?

The China First development project in the Galilee Basin has

been widely advertised and is acclaimed by politicians as being a very significant future open cut coal mine and a good export earner for Australia.

Under China First, much of the 8000ha Bimblebox Nature Refuge, plus the property next door, will be open cut mined for thermal coal and will be sent in wagons on a specially constructed railway line to Abbots Point shipping terminal 25km north of Bowen.

Yes, the coal in the ground at Bimblebox Nature Refuge will be exported to China, leaving the owners with a blight and useless scar on the landscape.

The beautiful property, which they have put years of their lives into with such passion, will be gone – sold to China.

I recommend you view the documentary Bimblebox.

It also shows open cut mines near Newcastle and the intrusive NSW and Qld coal seam gas wells on rural properties, which are people's homes and livelihood.

See for yourself how no revegetation has taken place on those open cut coal mines where the very ground of Australia has been exported to China.

Put the names into your search engine and read all about it in the comfort of your own home – the comfort which is there today, but may be gone tomorrow if the politicians have their way.

So, here I ask The Hon Thomas George MP: How would you like this to happen to you?

Would you like to see all you have strived for in your life, your home and assets damaged, destroyed, taken from you?

I think you had better get used to being called plain Mr George after the next election.

Because you are there to represent the people, not your own views and interests.

There are other ways to balance the books of the nation than to sell the very ground from underneath us.

MARGARET HOWES,
Empire Vale.



YOUR SAY

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Standard SMS rates apply.