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Asylum Seeker Joy Rides (2 Feb 2012)

Bill King's tongue in cheek Qantas-led solution (MNW 1 Feb) for asylum seekers is a touch late.

In 2010-11 4700 asylum seekers arrived in our waters by boat. This less than 100 per week. However for such a small number they generate a huge amount of rancorous political debate. Like live cattle exports - both the Government and Opposition are in violent agreement with regard to the need for off-shore processing.

Why then do we never hear about the huge illegal elephant in the room? There are almost 60,000 illegal immigrants who arrived here by air.

In a recent Sun Herald article by Peter Mickelborough, he reveals that illegal arrivals by air are ten times that of boat people. Documents released to the Herald Sun under Freedom of Information reveal the biggest groups of illegals are Chinese, Americans, Malaysians, Britons and South Koreans.

More than half have been here for five or more years; 20,000 for a decade or more; and two in three have evaded authorities for more than two years.

I wonder how many illegal Britons are languishing in Detention Centres either here or offshore?

Maybe as well as tongue in cheek, turning a blind eye also comes into play?

Mitt Romney's Planet (19 Feb 2012)

The front-running Republican Presidential Candidate, Mitt Romney, is a Mormon. The Mormons have a Third Testament, apparently dug out of the ground by Mormon founder Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon was written on sheets of gold but God told Mr Smith not to show the gold leaves to anyone.

The Mormons believe that Jesus lived in America.

They also believe that when you die, you become the God of a Planet of your own.

Maybe he sees becoming President of the USA would be a good training ground for his afterlife?

A Season of Change (24 Feb 2012)

Two concepts which Buddhists believe in are impermanence and interdependence. That is, everything in the universe, from the flowers in your garden to the galaxies at the outer ends of the known universe have a beginning, a middle and an end. Secondly every single thing cannot exist on its own - everything is dependent on other things.

And so we see the oldest political party in the world, the ALP convulsing into a black hole far bigger than the so-called fiscal black holes we hear about.

Events over the last few weeks are reaching their inevitable conclusion condemning the ALP to years in Opposition.

One can only hope that the Coalition accept the concept of change in their own ranks and confer their Leadership on someone who shows compassion and moral responsibility.

The Ooh Aah Bird (1 Mar 2012)

I've worked out why political parties need a left and right wing, or in the case of the Liberals, a wet and dry faction.

If the ALP had only one wing it would (and may well yet) suffer the fate of the Oooh Ahhh Bird, which, upon being pursued by an enemy, flies with great rapidity in ever-decreasing circles until he disappears up his own fundamental orifice, from which vantage point he looks out upon his foe with scorn and derision.

There seem to be many parallels between this narrative and the current state of politics.

Queensland Visa requirements (26 Mar 2012)

Since the events of last weekend, the entry requirements for visitors to Queensland have now changed. You must now be a Member of each of:

- The Liberal/National Party;
- The Clive Palmer Fan Club; and
- The White Shoe Brigade

Let the good times roll.

Shark Attacks (2 Apr 2012)

The recent spate of shark attacks is unlikely to be an indication of increasing shark numbers given that most species are on the endangered list due to over-fishing.

No I think other environmental factors are at work. When I first swam at Sydney's eastern suburb beaches in the 1960s - most were regularly polluted due to untreated human effluent being pumped into the ocean off South Head.

It got to the stage where I told people I no longer swam at Bondi as I simply found myself going through the motions!.

Now of course, the beaches are pretty clear and nicer for us, and the sharks, to swim in.

Perhaps Robert Hughes book would have been better titled "Faecal Shores"?

Heaven for All (10 Apr 2012)

Last night on the ABC TV program Q and A (Mon9 April) in a debate with Atheist Richard Dawkins, the Head of the Roman Catholic Church in Australia Cardinal George Pell said that you don't have to be a Christian to go to Heaven.

Indeed you don't have to be human he said. All that is necessary is that you lead a good life on earth.

This will be good news to ants, elephants, Calithumpians and Atheists who having lead good lives unknowingly find themselves in Heaven.

If only non-believers were told of these rules earlier in life.

Christians might be unhappy, thinking they had the place to themselves. Indeed many of them might not even make the cut.

Pandora's Box (23 Apr 2012)

So, the media vultures of News Ltd are demanding to know why Peter Slipper was in a taxi between Pascoe Vale and Carlton at four o'clock in the morning.

Apart from wondering a) how News Ltd got this information, and b) what business is it of theirs, I fear this will remove the lid from Pandora's Box.

I for one would like to know what every other Member of Parliament was doing at 4 am on the day in question.

Who will win this race to the bottom - certainly News Ltd have the track record.

Slipper versus Slippery (27 Apr 2012)

So we are now told that Peter Slipper is an ordained Minister in the Anglican Church. He was described by the Head of the Anglican Church Archbishop Hepworth as a "complex man of faith". In the Christian tradition of "let he who is without guilt cast the first stone" it will be interesting to see what fallout occurs from the flurry of rocks being thrown at him.

Let us not forget that Tony Abbott won the leadership battle against Malcolm Turnbull by one vote - Slipper has said he delivered the vote that put Abbott into the leadership.

I doubt there will be any "turning the other cheek" in this dispute. Never get between two committed Christians when there's a falling out.

Is a broken promise a lie? (4 May 2012)

Julia Gillard's decision to reverse her "There will be no carbon tax under a Government I lead" seems destined to be the issue which eventually brings her down. The fact that her earlier statement was made under circumstances in which she assumed a majority Government rather than the rag tag coalition she cobbled together post election is overlooked.

John Howard managed to abandon his promises even when he commanded a majority in both Houses by conveniently packaging them as "core" and "non-core" promises.

The fact is that "promises" are often abandoned when circumstances change - even Tony Abbott is guilty of this. Indeed under some circumstances - a Government can be reprimanded for keeping its promise - Wayne Swan's commitment to a budget surplus being the current example.

So - is a broken promise a lie - as the Coalition choruses? On the other hand can a lie be seen as a promise?

One thing I would predict is that promises will wither on the vine as Parties seek to avoid subsequent criticism for breaking them.

Codeifying Bad Behaviour (14 May 2012)

For once I am on the Coalition's side. A Code of Ethics cannot go further than the Law in regulating behaviour.

It has been shown not to work in the case of the Media Code of Ethics.

There are already measures in place in Federal Parliament to deal with law breakers.

However a Code could give rise to a plethora of vexatious accusations, especially in a hinged Parliament.

We get the Government we deserve. The Government reflects the values of the community. The community values are in free fall.

It will be up to the electorate to impose good conduct through the Ballot Box.