

HOW JULIA BANKS WON CHISOLM

Abalinx 8 July 2016 Peter Adamis



Political campaigning. Political campaigning at their best are always fraught with danger if the information being disseminated is not distributed amicably and in a timely fashion to the voter being the recipient. Modern campaign methodologies rely heavily on the use of new technologies such as telephone canvassing and the distribution of personal messages to households. While this nothing new, the volume and the vastness of the exercise is and it appears that voters in the future will be subjected to these new American style techniques.

Future campaign techniques. Voters will be subjected to receiving message via email, mobile phones, recorded landline messages, and landline telephone canvassing, blogs, websites, social media, bill boards, vehicles, Television, radio interviews, targeted audiences using demographics and diverse cultural identification. These new techniques are supposed to replace the postal votes, face to face communication, letter drops, meet and greet the candidate at shopping centres, train stations, bus stops, tram stops, community centres, and sporting venues and strip shopping malls and in some cases a reduction in pre-poll centres.

A case for human and electronic interface. Given the above past and new campaigning techniques, one could say with some degree of safety that neither on its own are bound to be effective. What has always been effective is human interaction with voters distributing positive messages that are in line with local issues and voters' concerns. The only two Victoria electorates known to the author that successfully fused the human and electronic media were in Deakin, whilst on a minor scale by the campaign team in Scullin which is a dead red seat. Michael Sukkar was magnificent in meeting the challenge in Deakin by increasing the margin and credit must also go to the campaign manager Richard Dalla Riva. While on the other hand the candidate campaigning in a dead red seat (Labor) Scullin held the thin blue line given the meagre resources at the campaign team's disposal.

The opal returns to the Liberal crown. Chisolm being one of the gemstones of the Liberal heartland crown was returned recently with the win by Julia Banks who initially struggled in the early stages but through hard work, grit and strong personality won the day for the Liberal Party. Given that Julia had to bridge the personal following of Anna Burke of 4.5 %, she worked hard to surpass the milestone and this achieve victory. Drawing upon hidden resources deep within her own ranks, Julia was able to attract diverse communities as well as supporters who would normally vote for the opposition. To truly understand the structure we need to unpackaged the threads of support that made up the Chisolm campaign fabric and altered its colour to that of blue.

Campaign structure.

To be fair to the campaign team, many flocked to Julia Banks throughout the campaign and while some came and went, much support was provided by Head Office coordinated by the State Director Simon Frost and his hard working campaign team. On the ground full marks and credit must go to the campaign manager, James Radford who with due diligence, hard work and patience coordinated the many aspects of the campaign, being supported by a close group of volunteers such as: Kelly Brecko, Caitlin Hardy, Toby Woolridge, Luke Corcoran, Jiannis Tsaousis, Noel Pink and a host of other too numerous to mention at this point in time. It was a great team effort. Other volunteers jumped on the band wagon and became embedded into the campaign providing a welcome relief to James Radford and his campaign team. I have to say that as an observer, no one can state that they alone ran the campaign on their own and to state otherwise is a gross miscarriage of credit.

President and Administrative Committee.

It is true that Head Office sent a number of volunteers to support the Chisolm campaign and they were utilised as required. The other side of the coin that few are aware of is the involvement of the President Michael Kroger who worked behind the scenes arranging local opportunities such as the CFA, Taxi Association, Sky Rail in Oakleigh and the East west Link that shed light upon Chisolm and the candidate Julia Banks. All five local issues played their part as it affected many households and as a result was sufficient to change voter's minds. Michael Krogers personal interest in Chisolm was in bringing back one of the gemstones that made a part of the Liberal heartland that was lost some time ago.

Due to their locations, the other individuals of the Administrative Committee to be heavily involved were Greg Hannan the Male Metro Vice President and Caroline Elliot the female Metro vice President. One could say that Greg Hannan was seen to be encouraging volunteers and staffers alike throughout the whole campaign and was accredited to the Administrative Committee. I foresee a bright future for Greg Hannan and one hopes that he is given a State seat sometime in the future.

Local Greek Community.

Although I have stated on public record that I do not believe that there is an Ethnic vote of any sort, it is clear the Australian Greek vote played a minor role in support of Julia Banks. Without sounding racists, the selection of a female Australian of Greek heritage rather than that of an Asian also played a minor role in Chisolm. Julia Banks Hellenic connections coupled with the Loladzis and Malios extended families were helpful in that letters of support were distributed to Australians of Greek origins.

Religious factor.

It is well known that Oakleigh has fast become one of the centres of Hellenism in Victoria and it is of no surprise to hear of the Church becoming involved. Furthermore the support provided by Iakovos (Tsigounis) of Militoupolis, who alleged preached from the pulpit at the churches of Oakleigh and Clayton advising the congregation to vote against Labor and to support Julia Banks. It is alleged that he based his support to Julia banks on the premises that the Greens and Labor would be supporting Gay marriage and that he was against such a concept as if it reduced the sanction of marriage. Furthermore it is alleged that he would be voting Liberal and expected everyone else to do the same.

Local Businessman Stathis Robotis was instrumental in providing and instigating door knocking Australians of Hellenic origins, raising funds, donation and speaking on radio on behalf of Julia Banks. John Paganis from 3 XY was instrumental in interviewing John Howard, Scott Morison, Julia Bishop and Julia Banks on his radio show all of which went to spread the message that a vote for Julia Banks was a vote for the Liberal Party. What was of interest was the absence of Steve Dimopoulos local member for Oakleigh who was overseas visiting relatives in Greece and this without his knowledge contributed to Julia Banks win.

Labor Scare campaign. The reason that the Labor scare campaign failed is because of the personal messages distributed by Julia banks and her team reached their intended target and audience early and thus watered down any political poison being injected into the Chisolm electorate by Labor. It would appear that far more resources were placed into dead red seats with the Medicare scare rather than on marginal seats. The tactics of Michael Kroger in setting the Green cat amongst the red pigeon's worked like a charm causing havoc and confusion amongst Labour electorates.

The Crown is complete. I am of the understanding that Michael Kroger the President of the Liberal party in Victoria stated that the most significant factor in winning the seat of Chisolm was the departure of Anna Burke whose personal following made it difficult to wrest the seat from Labor. According to labor insiders, Anna was a much loved member by all sides of the political fence and it was with great regret that she had decided to call it a day. It remains to be see what effect if any social media, websites and other electronic forms of campaign methodologies had on winning Chisolm. In any case, when all is said and done, Labor's loss is the Liberals gain and another notch in Malcolm Turnbull gun belt in edging closer to forming a coalition Government.

As always, my apologies for the poor grammar, punctuation and savagery of the Aussie English language. All that I can say is that it is great to be alive and one does not give up in the face of adversity.



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