



## **Liberal Party without Michael Kroger**

Abalinx 4 July 2018 Peter Adamis

Is it not fair to ask, where would the Victorian Liberal Party be without Michael Kroger at this point in time?

To answer this one would have to look to the past to find the cause and effects and the answer that can be deduced.

For example, when Michael Kroger became President, he found the Liberal party in a poor state of affairs. Despite being questioned and challenged, Michael Kroger came with a mission back into the political fray. And what did he find one may ask.

An ineffective and poorly led Administrative Committee under the leadership of Tony Snell. A President supported by the likes of Peter McWilliams, Frank Greenstein, Caroline Elliott and other likeminded individuals who failed to take corrective action and oversaw what occurred. The State Director Damien Mantach was found wanting and funds missing.

Sandra Mercer Moore was the only member of the administrative to bring to the attention of members the shenanigans going on behind the organisations Administrative wing and voicing her concerns about funds missing. Sad to say Sandra Mercer was unceremoniously removed and replaced by Caroline Elliott who failed to be of any value or contribute to intelligent debates and solutions. Later when the State Director was jailed for fraud, Sandra Mercer Moore was vindicated.

The membership was down, funds wasted needlessly on campaign that could not be won, Preselection's being conducted unconstitutionally, jobs for the boys, a Parliamentary "boys" club, the Victorian Liberal party Headquarters building in need of repair, morale was down and personal agendas being given priority. Michael Kroger therefore became so alarmed that he came back into the role of the President with the aim of restoring confidence of the members and with declining membership, the maintenance of the Liberal party as a credible force and a credible organisation to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century political system.

Michael Kroger represents stability, commitment, dedication, continuity, understanding of the history of the Liberal Party, its pitfalls plus also its strengths, overseeing a renewal of membership in the sense that he is attracting and bringing in young people to take on the positions of authority in due course when they are ready to do so. The next generation of leaders such as Asher Judah, Nick McGowan, Greg Hannan, James Patterson, Marcus Bastiaan, Brad Roswell, Paul Mitchell, Karina Okotel, Nick Demiris, Jane Hume, Matthew Guy, Tim Smith, Michael Sukkar and others of their ilk.

Michael in my opinion and the opinion of many others represents the best interests of the Liberal party in its current state and has also provided a base for stability and a working partnership between the parliamentary party in Canberra and the parliamentary party in Victoria with the state organisation something which did not exist during the Jeff Kennett and Ted Baillieu years previously. It is of interest to note that both of these two former Premiers oversaw the slow decline of Liberal party fortunes and credibility during their tenure, something which is conveniently forgotten by those now trying to destabilise the liberal Party in Victoria.

Michael Kroger seeking to raise funds through other means has also floated the concept of the sale of Liberal party Headquarters otherwise known as "104" being a historic building which is not in doubt. However the other side of the argument is that it is an edifice that is crumbling, costly to maintain and issues which that Michael Kroger has addressed. He has made it clear that it is far cheaper and wiser to rent a premises than to own a premises.

Meaning that if 104 can be sold then that is money that can be returned to the organisation for its use in future years both investing in personnel plus investing in premises that they can have a viable long term lease. In the end one could say in all honesty that its economies of scale, something which Michael Kroger understands. He would say that are we in the business of buying and selling real estate or fighting and winning elections. It is very imperative that the Liberal Party speaks with one voice in an election year and any type of past acrimonies are put aside because it is most important to remember that the Liberal party is most effective when it is in government and not in opposition.

Michael Kroger recognises that and that is why there has been a very good relationship worked out with the parliamentary party and its leadership team and for once in the history of the party the parliamentary party is walking hand in hand with the administration of the Party in Victoria something which Liberals have not seen in recent years. Where in the past we have seen the Parliamentary Party doing its own thing and the political organisation doing its own thing. Now there is a unison of that and Michael Kroger understands that there must be one party, one purpose and that is government which is being demonstrated by his relationship with Matthew Guy the Leader of the opposition in Victoria and with Malcolm Turnbull the Prime Minister of Australia in Canberra.

**Cormack Corporation.** The issue with the Cormack corporation was that Michael Kroger was trying to relieve a certain amount of money which he believes is owing to the Liberal party was because that organisation was established in the seventies with the sale of 3 XY and the funds used as a vehicle for monies to be channelled to support Liberal party causes and the Liberal party perse and he thought that the liberal party was entitled to part of the monies, If not all the monies.

The decision of the court was that the Liberal party was entitled to a sum of which Michael Kroger successfully argued for approximately \$19,000,000 out of a total of \$70,000,000 which is an amount of money which the Liberal party is need of and money the Liberal party never had. I am of the belief that it was a courageous decision by a State President who would place his principles and his money where his beliefs were. Something which has never happened in the past. This is something that he firmly believed in and paid a \$1,000,000 out of his own money without the prospect of ever getting it back, but the Liberal party is the winner for it.

It is of no surprise to me and many other long term Liberal supporters to be appalled at the destructive behaviour of members wishing to see Michael Kroger humbled. Their attempts using the media as a third party is not only damaging the Party, but also causing unwarranted divisions at a time when Victoria is less than five months out of an election, an election which will bring in a Liberal Government under the leadership of Matthew Guy and his Parliamentary leadership team.

Senior Liberals wishing to remain anonymous for obvious reasons have advised me that they are of the belief that Senator Scott Ryan, Ted Baillieu, Tom Harley, Jeff Kennett, Kelly O'Dwyer, Ian Quick, Mulholland family, Greg Mirabella and supporters of the disgraced State Director have all a hand in trying to remove Michael Kroger. However I have heard these names all before in other political discussions and I often wonder whether they are same people who criticize their own when it suits them. Politics is like swimming in a stream of piranhas, you either a piranha, become one and/or become the prey. Whatever the case maybe, I find it odd that such individuals still exist and that they will do whatever it takes to remove one of their own who as a President received 721 out of 1150 votes, to be the highest vote by any President during my time.

One could say that these same detractors could be the same individuals within Victoria who had a hand in the removal of Tony Abbot the former Prime Minister, when they realised that Andrew Hastie in West Australia was about to win his seat. A win which would have bolstered Tony Abbots political fortunes and out a stick to the political knives in the Michael Kroger's back. Are these same individuals creating an environment of disunity, disloyalty in their efforts to emulate their successful "ETU BRUTUS" concept because they are afraid of a Liberal party win in Victoria which will put a stop once and for all on those who are attacking Michael Kroger leadership. I say that an attack on Michael Kroger is a direct attack on Matthew Guy and his Parliamentary team.

The Liberal Party is on the cusp of winning the 2018 Victorian Election and with that win, will be the demise of those who had a hand in the decline of the Liberal Party in the past twenty eight years. They had the opportunity to bring about change, they had the opportunity to cleanse the Party, the opportunity to fill the coffers of the organisation, attract new members and above all remove archaic practices and processes that stifled debate, eroded the confidence of party members and almost placed the Liberal party into bankruptcy. Those days in my view are gone and only with a Matthew Guy and Michael Kroger team can the Liberal party win government in Victoria.

In closing, one must sit back, reflect and ponder, where would the Liberal Party be without the leadership of Michael Kroger? He was significant in the nineties with the Guilty party under Cain/Kirner Labor governments, sadly he also found the guilty Party within his own party with regards to the former State Director which he rectified and has placed the Liberal party on an even keel to be a worthy challenger for power in the state of Victoria and also Federally.



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