



## THE CHALLENGE AND THE POLITICAL POISON CHALICE

Peter Adamis Abalinx 3 March 2017

**THE FOUR DELTAS.** The four Deltas are used by the political schemers to undermine the President of the Liberal Party in the Victorian Division are: Distraction, Delay, Distort and Destroy. I know of them because I have used the same concept myself during the early years of the 1990s' and during the past two years in successfully removing recalcitrant and sycophants from the Administrative Committee. One could be forgiven for believing that they are about to read an article on political terrorism within Australian society and while it is not true they would not be far off the mark by the similarities.

These same political terrorists are the same group of individuals who brought about the downfall of an Australian Prime Minister and almost dragged the Liberal Party to a near defeat at the last Federal Election in 2016.

Although a political challenge is nothing new in the Liberal Party or in any political Party for that matter, what is certain is that individuals come and go. What is of concern at the moment is that the Victorian Division appears to be following the same path as that of its brethren in New South Wales, with their ever changing leadership at the parliamentary level. Victorians deserve better than this and those political terrorists need to be identified and eradicated from the political scene sooner rather than later. Strong words; maybe, but it goes without saying that something needs to be done before these alleged political terrorists infect the whole Victorian Division with their malicious and errant practices against those who disagree with them .

If one does their research they will find that history is of full of them if they look hard enough. If the reader cannot understand what I mean, visit your local cemetery, read political biographies, political blogs and/or follow the threads of the "Has-beens", "Wannabees", "Sycophants and "Cake Whisperers". They all know who they are and it is not up to me to educate those who are not in the know, other than to state that "if the hat fits, then wear it".

Much has changed since the Menzies era and the Liberal Party has witnessed many reforms and developments which have not been always met with success. I am of the opinion that the Liberal Party in Victoria was on the verge of collapse until Michael Kroger, a past President and power broker was influenced to return to take on the mantle of leadership. His objectives were to stop the rot, revitalize the membership, bring together the "warring factions, introduce productive guidelines, review the Liberal practices and raise the banner of the Liberal Party without favouring one or the other. I would prefer to believe that he has achieved all of that and more.

**MICHAEL KROGER.** If we are to analyse the current structure of leadership in Victoria, one must agree that the Liberal party has indeed been given a breath of fresh air and a return of the passion that was missing in previous management structures. Michael Kroger took a swift, cautious and well thought out approach to introducing any major changes and has been instrumental in bring back the credibility, integrity and certainly the confidence that eluded the previous regime. Michael Kroger brought stability and has laid the foundations for the next generation to build upon without the need of huge reforms that would destabilise the Liberal Party within the Victorian Division .

Under his leadership the Liberal Party won the seat of Chisholm despite the hangers-on and sycophants attempting to gain credit for standing on one polling booth, membership is up and running better than it ever was under the previous leadership, fraud was uncovered, warring parties brought together to discuss differences, mentoring of the youth, changes on the Administrative Committee, challenging and removing the barriers to progress and growth and bringing about a platform upon which the Liberal party in Victoria can rebuild for the future.

By doing all of the above, Kroger has done much to improve Liberals fortunes in Victoria, achieving far more than any other President in the past 25 years. After the Mantach Affair, there was no witch hunt, no recriminations, but Kroger simply got on with the job of providing good governance and leadership. Furthermore, finances are back on track, political fires extinguished, and helped steered the Victorian Decision towards supporting Matthew Guy to take on the Labor Party in 2018. In addition, it is well known that he supports an increase in women representation at the parliamentary level, put in place risk management practices that will identify any potential fraud, removed outdated political paradigms and ushered in a breath of fresh air by traversing the Victorian landscape meeting everyone.

It would appear that on face value, Peter Reith is supportive of the above approaches being undertaken by Michael Kroger and is on record as having said that; "over the years there have been numerous reports on party reform. In various forms, most reports repeat previous proposals, they are kept secret and then ignored." With Kroger back at the helm, much that considered a Gordian knot was cut by Michael Krogers political sabre and ushered in a new era of confidence.

Now if we can all step back in time we will see that Michael Kroger has achieved all of the above and more. But I guess for some it is just not enough to bring a Prime Minister down, they believe that they can go after the scalp of a Liberal Party member who was round when they were in short pants and in some cases wearing nappies.

**PETER REITH.** Peter Reith is 66 years of age who was a former Australian politician and lawyer. He was a Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia and a member of the Howard government. Some call him a "wrecker" and some say his bygone date is well and truly over. Whatever the case may be, Peter Reith is certainly not one to be pushed aside in any leadership tussle that may give him the Golden Liberal Chalice he has always sought throughout his political career. On the other hand, Peter Reith is no stranger to controversy when he had [to bail out his son](#) over the use of a mobile phone.

That is easier said than done for; "once you have the scent of politics, it is hard to get it out of your system. The longer you have been in politics the greater the shock when you announce that you are leaving politics. Literally, from that moment, your political life slowly drains away from you. The ones who best manage the transition are the ones who leave politics voluntarily. The saddest ones are those who lost their seat and don't realise that they will never get it back. They end up in no man's land." These are not my words but those of Peter Reith.

Further to the matter of whether to challenge Michael Kroger, Peter Reith is on record as having said that "In these situations, one issue may trigger leadership speculation but usually it's not one issue that counts." Unfortunately, as the next election gets closer some of members of parliament become more rabid than ever. If the quality of debate is to improve, a better approach needs endorsement at the political level". Peter Reith is correct when he says that "Politics is a messy business not always because the players are incompetent but sometimes because big change can bring forth furious differences of opinion based on different interests. The polls give some indication of public thinking but they have been known to be wrong."

Peter Reith is right on the money when he says that one must “learn from experience, learn how to have differences of opinion, managing colleagues, and therefore “you need a plan”. Many members of Parliament and media commentators have little grasp of Australia’s political past. That’s a pity because knowing the past can sometimes explain current behaviour and provide a glimpse into the culture of today’s politics. Another necessary skill is the one-on-one management of colleagues. This part of politics is as much about personality as anything else. The lesson is that the leader has to be close to his colleagues”. Having said the above, Peter Reith is of the opinion that; “at the least, the party should be setting minimum standards and then turning its mind to better manage the Liberal Party”.

Peter Reith has been wasted on writing articles and being involved with projects that are beneath his character. He is resilient, tough and pragmatic individual, not one to appreciate stupidity and frivolity. Peter Reith knows he is being used, after all he is very experienced and skilled political magician whose knowledge and skills should be in Canberra not in Victoria.

I am of the opinion that Peter Reith with his wealth of knowledge in the political arena will come to the conclusion that he is being offered a poison chalice and cannot afford to have his reputation tarnished. He will also be wrestling with his conscious whether to be seen as the man who brought about the demise of the Liberal Party as we know of it today. His interview with [ANDREW BOLT](#) unfortunately was not a good one and it may have tarnished him somewhat. Still life is full of surprises.

Peter Reith has been given a political poison chalice by Scott Ryan and his co-conspirators, which is so seductive that despite his political experience and wariness, the urge to take the chalice may be too strong even though he knows it to be poisoned. Peter Reith is best advised to avoid the seductive overtures and do what is in the best interests of the Liberal Party for there is no antidote to the political poison chalice.

**MALCOLM TURNBULL.** Simon Benson of the Australian recently wrote that “while Mr Turnbull is refusing to intervene, senior party sources claim his authority is at risk of being undermined with the perception that he is aligned with those behind the push against Mr Kroger as part of a campaign to seize back control of the party”. Methinks that this attack on Kroger is a deception plan by the anti-Kroger forces to deter other from attacking the Prime Minister whose allegiance they owe their jobs to.

Based on current performance and poor polling by Malcolm Turnbull, he as Prime Minister will lose the next Federal election. Those who supported Malcolm Turnbull in his bid for power are the same ones who are now attempting to destabilize the Victorian Division and use the challenge to Michael Kroger to hide their own incompetence and poor performance. In short, Malcolm Turnbull and his team have been firing blanks ever since they scraped through in the last Federal election, thanks mostly to Michael Kroger and his team.

John Ferguson in the Australian wrote that the “Federal ministers — Kelly O’Dwyer, Mitch Fifield and Scott Ryan — yesterday refused to say they would back Mr Kroger. Each is known to be hostile to the Liberal President.” Therefore it should not come as a surprise that while Scott Ryan, Mitch Fifield and Kelly O’Dwyer plot and resource their gang of co-conspirators to topple Michael Kroger; their other colleagues in Canberra are coveting the top job and also plotting for the downfall of Malcolm Turnbull.

The current contenders for the top job are supposed to be Julie Bishop who does not have the credibility after betraying her Prime Minister (Tony Abbott), Peter Dutton may have a chance but is also tied to his loyalties towards Tony Abbott, Scott Morrison is another wannabee leader who lacks the charisma and leadership skills and last but not least we have Tony Abbot who according to some cannot be trusted to have learned from the lessons of the past. Therefore if I was a betting man, the money would be on Peter Dutton who would have a steep learning curve as Prime Minister.

My advice to Malcolm Turnbull is to bring Tony Abbott back onto the front bench, install performers rather than sycophants, pursue policies that are in the interest of all Australians and stand alone if need be as a beacon of inspiration. If Malcolm Turnbull can do that, he has in one swift move healed and united a fragmented Liberal Party and will be sure of remaining leader. Saying it and doing it are two things which can only be achieved if one has the courage and the will to do it.

**ALLIANCE OF THE UNWILLING.** It is believed that a loose coalition of members all associated with Senator Scott Ryan and Matthew Guy have been hitting the phones over the past few months attempting to influence members of the party towards supporting a challenger against Michael Kroger. The likes of Scott Ryan, Mitch Fifield, Kelly O'Dwyer, Caroline Elliott, Frank Greenstein, Simon Wilson Aaron Lane, Gideon Rozner, John Osbourne, Jess Wilson, Noel Pink, Jeanette Milnes, Sean Armistead, Margaret Kirby, Amanda Miller, Michael Poutney, Fran Henderson, Fiona Ogilvey O'Donnell, Jackie Douglas, Mary Aldred and through association Matthew Guy and a number of nameless sycophants. It is of interest to note that James Paterson is quiet and is believed to be neutral on the leadership while his supporters are actively involved in supporting Peter Reith.

It is a great pity to see this occur at a time when everyone should be concentrating on supporting Matthew Guy in his bid for the top job in Victoria. All of the above mentioned individuals are good people each with his or her own faults, but it concerns me that they have taken it upon themselves to take this dastardly action against the current President Michael Kroger. Whether their actions are based on personal reasons, payback, revenge, fear of losing power and influence is another matter, what is important is that they should sit back and reflect upon their actions ask themselves if their actions are in the best interests of Victorians and that of the Liberal Party.

**YOUNG LIBERALS.** It has been mooted that the young liberals are neutral but unfortunately that is not the case. The young Liberals within Victoria having tasted victory on a number of occasions want more and more of the political structure pie and equally divided amongst themselves. There are those who support the Ryan/Guy faction as against the Kroger/Bastiaan faction.

In both cases the numbers are almost even if you attach the hangers-on the wannabees and never forget the sycophants, Melbourne University students (split in two groups) with selected members of the IPA are controlled by the coalition of Kelly O'Dwyer, Mitch Fifield and Scott Ryan. On the other hand Monash University and Deakin Students are in the Kroger/Bastiaan camp. The remainder are a conglomeration of supporters for James Patterson, Tim Wilson, Jess Wilson, Paul Mitchell, Stephanie Ross and Marcus Bastiaan.

**MATTHEW GUY.** It was not that long ago that Matthew Guy was the darling of the Liberal party and he could do no wrong. Still fortunes overnight and one has to work hard in order to maintain credibility and strike a balance between pragmatism and what is best for the Victorian voter. What happened is that under the umbrella of the then Administrative Committee, Mantach unfortunately took advantage of his position and took fraudulently took funds under the very noses of an Administrative committee that included Matthew Guy, Caroline Elliot, Scott Ryan Mitch Fifield, Scott Pierce, Peter McWilliam and Frank Greenstein. With the exception of one, all others have since bit the bullet and made a hasty retreat to the political wilderness where they came from.

To date Matthew Guys performance has not been the best since he moved to Bulleen with the aid of Nicholas Kotsiras and others embedded within the Bullen Electorate. One could say that he has held his ground, but is not shining brightly as he should be and there senior Liberals who are beginning to doubt his ability to lead them to the next State Election. To be fair to Matthew Guy, the reader would have to back track and see just what Matthew Guy has achieved.

**Women in Parliament.** Matthew Guy is on record as having stated that prior to the next election, he would unveil an ambitious target to lift the Liberals' female representation by a further 10 per cent at every poll. Furthermore; Some eleven months ago, Farrah Tomazin, a journalist for the Sydney Morning Herald stated that; Victorian Liberal leader Matthew Guy has warned his party it is time to "get serious" about its lack of women, and has set a clear target to boost female representation in the state parliament by 10 percentage points at every election.

Well so far Victorian Liberals have not seen much of this alleged ambitious project and wondered why in heaven name did he not support two Liberal women who went to pre-selection on a State level. Stephanie Ross for Narracan and Adrienne Fleming for Burwood. This weekend Matthew Guy will have the opportunity to support another women, who is expected to win the pre-selection battle, namely because she supports him. Wonders never cease to surprise the true believers.

Alleged challenge to the Victorian Liberal President. Matthew Guy has been cautious when approached regarding the challenge to Michael Kroger and will not be drawn into the leadership battle saying that he does not wish to be "verballed". This is a new one on me. Never have heard of "verballed" before and I assume that he does not wish to have his statements put out of context. Mind you, it is well known that he is very close to Senator Scott Ryan who was one of the Co-conspirators who brought down a Prime Minister.

**Cormack Foundation blackmail.** It is alleged that the Cormack Foundation is a major fund raiser for the Liberal Party and it is said that they have also funded Family First and the Liberal Democrats. Mr Kroger and the Cormack Foundation are at logger heads with one another and it appears to be blackmailing Michael Kroger who is not the type to be submissive in that face of such adverse and malicious acts of deliberate manipulation of the political process. Michael Kroger has hit back by advising all Liberal Party members of the actions of the Cormack Foundation and what he intend to do as President.

**State Pre-selections.** Matthew Guy has never had to face a pre-selection that tested his political ability; but has relied upon the supporters that he has surrounded himself with. I must admit that he Matthew Guy is a wily politician and good lick to him for surrounding himself with some inspirational staff who endeavour to look after his and their political interests. With the support of the likes of Scott Pierce, Scott Ryan, Frank Greenstein Caroline Elliot, and other like-minded individuals who seek power for powers sake. Maybe Matthew Guy should take a leaf out of Peter Reith's political bag of tricks and emulate him.

Peter Reith is of the opinion that far "too many members of Parliament use their paid electorate office staff as Liberal Party infiltrators by joining the members of Parliament local branches. This practice is wrong and should be outlawed." He goes on to say that "Staffers are paid for by the taxpayer and should not be used to prop up the sitting members of Parliament by having staff hold senior roles in the organisation." Peter Reith even has more advice to Matthew Guy when it comes to chairing a preselection. He states that "electorate staff should not be able to chair a pre-selection convention. A ban on this practice should extend to at least two years after a staffer has left the members of Parliament office. I think that is very sound advice and one would hope that Matthew Guy heeds that voice of political experience.

**Campaign Fighting Fund.** This action has placed Matthew Guy in a difficult situation which bodes ill for his 2018 bid the top job as Premier of Victoria. It is alleged that given the Mantach affair and its devastating influence on the party finances, Matthew Guy and others have opened up another account to assist him in resourcing the campaign in 2018. Although it may not be illegal to open up a campaign fighting fund, one wonders what steps have been taken to ensure that proper financial protocols are in place to ensure that funds are spent on the campaign and not used to fund those ringing around to shore up the Matthew Guys position or to fund those ringing to support Peter Reith against Michael Kroger.

This action is reminiscent of the double dealing and behind the scenes betrayal of the then Senator Helen Kroger who lost to Scott Ryan some years ago. But then again do Victorians care what happened some years ago. Mathew Guy certainly does not think so when he stated that he did not “think Victorians are really interested in internal Liberal Party matters. Now, we find Helen Kroger who has been a past President, Senator and fund raiser is being challenged for the position of Head of the Womens section by none other than Jenny Mulholland. Jenny Mulholland is a staunch supporter of Matthew Guy and of Scott Ryan and such one comes to the conclusion that a conspiracy of sorts is being hatched against the Conservative Right wing of the Liberal Party. Does this mean that Mathew Guy is a misogynist, dull, pragmatic, political predator or merely taking his orders from Scott Ryan?

**Campaign Techniques.** During the last federal election, all eyes were on Michael Sukkar and to see what effect the new campaign techniques could achieve in Michael Sukkar’s electorate. Richard Dalla-Riva a current sitting member was sent to the US to observe, gather and analyse allegedly modern campaign techniques. To cut a long story short, Michael Sukkar increased his personal margin and Richard Dalla-Riva was hailed a hero. Since the election of July 2016, Richard Dalla-Riva has gone onto give lectures on the new Campaign Techniques demonstrating to select groups the concept and the methodologies used to gather information and how best utilise it to the advantage of the member.

However, despite all the new campaign Techniques the audience were never told that one of the main reasons that Michael Sukkar was so successful at increasing his personal margin was because for 12 to a months prior to the election, he was out in the community, meeting people, organisations and communities, press the flesh so to speak and leaving a good impression that he Michael Sukkar was worth voting for. When I had discussions with Michael Sukkar on this very subject and it was put to him that the main reason he increased his margin was because of his personal approach in the electorate, Michael agreed. But to his credit, he praised Richard Dalla-Riva efforts and stated that the new campaign techniques were also instrumental in increasing the margin.

I have mentioned the above background to new campaigning techniques because I am of the belief that Matthew Guy has been convinced that these new campaign techniques is the way to go and that he and his parliamentary colleagues can be rest assured that they will not be required to go out into the community and “press the flesh’ but to rely on technology alone and allow the voter to arrive at the ballot box being informed by technology.

Well I have news for young Matthew Guy, he has until the end of this year to muster his forces and advise his parliamentary colleagues to get out into their electorates and “press the flesh” otherwise expecting technology to do all the work is doomed to fail. Remember the ground is not won by guns alone but you must have the troops on the ground to seize and hold it. Old Infantry saying.

What this means in a nutshell is that they (Scott Ryan and his co-conspirators) will take the Liberal Party back to the wilderness where it will roam for 40 biblical years wondering where they failed. The grass roots will not have a say, the branch structure will disappear, control over pre-selections will be by the parliamentary “Boys Club”, no women in Parliament, a return to the days of Mantach and no financial controls or risk assessments being conducted and finally the alienation of the youth and potentially the demise of the Liberal party as we know it.

The Liberal Party Victorian Division is in the hands of the members and those who have been elected to State Council have a duty of care to their members to do the right thing. My last piece of advice is not to seek honours, acknowledgement or even high office unless you have first learnt to serve those who you wish to lead. We are one nation with one people who want nothing better than good government and the economic security to go with it.

I am not convinced that it is in the interests of Matthew Guy for Peter Reith to lead Victoria because of his hard stance on Work Choices, economic policies and Peter Reith's Lobbying interests which may expose Matthew Guy. Matthew Guy is better off supporting Michael Kroger and uniting members rather than taking the path of fragmentation. Unfortunately Peter Reith has far too many skeletons and political baggage to replace Michael Kroger.

**Conclusion.** The Liberal Party Victorian Division is now at the political abyss. Should Peter Reith decide this weekend to challenge the incumbent President Michael Kroger and the McCormack foundation continues with their alleged manipulation of the political process by withholding funds and again one must add allegedly blackmailing the President, then unfortunately all of the responsibility will fall upon Scott Ryan and his co-conspirators. The labor Party will be more than happy to see Peter Reith replace Michael Kroger who has been a thorn in their side.

**Authors note.** 2015 and 2016 for me were years of reflection, treatment and recovery. Not to dwell on what could have been but to ensure that whatever time we have left is not squander in futile objectives that lead to nowhere. I intend to make life more meaningful and worthwhile, worthy of those who had a hand in making me who I am today. Life as we know it can only be sustained by vigilance and with that vigilance comes responsibility. Let us hope that 2017 is a good one.



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