



DID THE VICTORIAN LIBERAL PARTY DIVISION ENGINEER MALCOLM TURNBULLS DOWNFALL

Abalinx 25 August 2018 Peter Adamis

Background. Political media commentators and Liberal politicians are in the habit of labelling the Australian Liberal Party as a broad church and that within the church the congregation made up of disciples with different views and ideologies that reflect their own environment. Peter Costello must therefore be considered of the high Priests in Victoria.

It should therefore not come as a surprise to the uninitiated public to see the rise of false messiahs all preaching their own brand of Liberal Party values. Ever since the erosion and final severing of the Peter Costello and Michael Kroger friendship, the Victorian Division has been involved in melees' of one kind or another. This vacuum of unity held by Peter Costello and Michael Kroger was filled in by the likes of David Kemp and his reforms, aided and abetted by Tony Snell, Damien Mantach and their crew of sycophants. History has exposed their poor policies, reforms and over regulated practices and procedures that added more woes to a diminishing membership base.



Marcus Bastiaan



Michael Kroger



Paul Mitchell

It was only since the emergence of a whole new generation of Liberals under the leadership of Michael Kroger that the Liberal Party became more attractive to Liberal minded investors in Victoria. This coincided with events that occurred some four years when two young men decided to challenge the status quo and worked silently towards rebuilding the Liberal Party in Victoria. Marcus Bastiaan and Paul Mitchell are credited with revitalizing the Liberal Party, encouraging a new generation to become involved. Meetings were conducted, alliances renewed and factional war lords seduced or isolated were made, culminating in controlling the Liberal party in Victoria in 2018.



Peter Costello did not take up the subtle olive branches that were sent forth by heralds and other likeminded cupid's communication and embarked on building his own congregation of disciples. Mitch Fifield and Scott Ryan were the vanguard followed up by Kelly O'Dwyer on the wings and a vanguard being filled with dissident factions, disenfranchised and disillusioned Liberal Party members. A brilliant pincer movement by Peter Costello, reminiscent of the Zulu wars plan of action. The plan to wrest control of Victoria almost succeed had it not been for the timely arrival of Michael Kroger. On reflection both members, Peter Costello and Michael Kroger were no different in their ideologies and their vision for Victoria and Australia, but used different strategies and political vehicles of persuasion to attract disciples to their cause.

Canberra Drama. Thus today given the recent political drama being played out in Canberra I have come to the conclusion that it was not an ad hoc coup, nor a guerrilla type of warfare designed to destabilise the government; but a well-planned and orchestrated strategic hit against Malcolm Turnbull. It may have appeared on face value to have been hatched by Tony Abbott using Peter Dutton as the forward scout; followed by a strike force led by Mitch Fifield, Michaelia Cash and Mathias Cormann and finally the spoils being distributed by Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg. But this scenario does not go down well with those avid watchers of Canberra.

It is true that there was no love between Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull, but there is no hard evidence that Tony Abbott actively worked against Malcolm Turnbull. It is true that Tony Abbott disagreed with the Prime Minister on the Paris Agreement and the National Energy Agreement, and is on record as saying that his views were never about personalities but merely about good policies being sold to the public. In this Tony Abbott was proven correct, whether the public liked it or not

An alternative point of view. What if other external and unknown forces were controlling the political environment using psychological and political stealth to achieve their aims? Did Malcolm Turnbull find out who was involved in the in the first spill and was going to exact revenge on those responsible. If this is one scenario then it is possible, Ministers and others involved had no choice but to support the motion for the second spill.

When Malcolm Turnbull began to realise that his position was becoming untenable, he attempted a strategic withdrawal to give him time to find the high moral ground. He used delaying tactics, blaming others for being undermined regarding the National Energy Guarantee, appealing to the public, denying access to minister's portfolios, seeking the Solicitors General's advice on the eligibility of his alleged nemesis, Peter Dutton; and finally speaking with the Governor General, which failed to impress those seeking to resolve the situation.

Therefore given this scenario, it is within the realms of reality to assume that Malcolm Turnbull was going to review the front bench and drag the Liberal Party further to the left, mirroring that of Labor. It must be remembered that it is no secret that he (Malcolm Turnbull) had approached the Labor Party for a seat, prior to joining the Liberals. In fact his dalliance with the Republican movement was more aligned with the Labor than with the Liberal party. Actions which did not endear him to the conservative right of the Liberal Party. Neither were his appalling actions of threats and intimidation against Brendon Nelson, forgotten.

Peter Costello Disciples. Given the above environment, what if the real plotters seeking to maintain their hold on Federal politics decided to construct a plan of action to remove Malcolm Turnbull by influencing others that it was time for change. What if the disciples of Peter Costello seeing that their support base in Victoria was being slowly eroded, decided to throw their support behind Scott Morrison in an attempt to revitalise their defences and enhance their political longevity.

These same plotters may have wanted to match the NSW-Victoria partnership using Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg as the leadership couple, thus mirroring the successes of the John Howard and Peter Costello years? This is not so farfetched if we review the drama recently played out in Canberra. To give support to this theory let the facts below speak for themselves and let readers decide for themselves.



Mitch Fifield. A Peter Costello disciple who voted for Scott Morrison. What is of interest is that at no stage did Mitch Fifield state that he was going to support Peter Dutton, but threw his hat in the ring to ensure that a spill occurred a second time. We must remember that Mitch Fifield was also responsible for the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and was found wanting. Had it not been for the support of Kevin Andrews, Mitch Fifield would have failed miserably as it was a poison chalice that was handed to him. As for his political future, I predict that Mitch Fifield will be challenged next time round, given the volatility within the Victorian Division and the need to introduce a new generation of Victorian representatives.



Scott Ryan. A Peter Costello disciple who voted for Scott Morrison. A known power broker in his own right finally realised his dream and was concerned about losing his position joined the fray. Scott Ryan is a wily operator whom some called the little General because of his marshalling of the troops during the Tony Snell and Mantach years. However to his credit he doing a good job in his current role as President of the Senate and I predict that he will retire when his time as Senator is at a close. A good operator if you want to go into a political battle and don't mind the bloodshed that accompanies such forays.



Kelly O'Dwyer. A Peter Costello disciple who voted for Scott Morrison. A member who become unpopular within her own electorate and failed to sell the policies she was entrusted with, was concerned about her future given the dynamic changes occurring in the Victorian Division.

Her responsibilities of Minister for women, Revenue and Financial Services are keeping her busy, but she is under threat at being challenged by a new generation in the Victorian Division. A good person who tries hard to please her electorate despite the difficult roles she has been given.



Tony Smith. A Peter Costello disciple who voted for Scott Morrison. Tony smith has done an admirable job as Speaker, will go down in history as one of the few members who despite no real life experiences other than politics has in fact done a good job.

A hard worker whose role often goes unacknowledged given the difficulties that come with the speaker. Tony Smith will be challenged in due course and it will be a matter for Tony Smith to decide his manner of departure.



Julia Banks. A Peter Costello disciple who voted for Scott Morrison. An Australian with a Greek background, who has failed to impress the electorate of Chisolm and won her pre-selection by much support from the Australian Chinese and Greek communities who some believe she did not acknowledge their hard work in getting her over the line. A poor substitute for the electorate given the outstanding job of her predecessor and much loved Anna Burke. She has been criticised for her remarks on living expenses. It is rumoured that Julia Banks will not be remaining the member and will be challenged in due course.



Josh Frydenberg. A new disciple of Peter Costello who voted for Scott Morrison. Judging by his behaviour and actions, Josh Frydenberg is a Peter Costello Supporter, seeing him as a mentor. He has made it no secret that he wants to become Prime Minister in due course. His recent comments of "I will be turning to Peter for advice, as I begin my role as treasurer in the Morrison government" are interesting to say the least. His reach out to the Menzies family is another strategic move on his part to win over the Liberal Party elite. He is considered a hard worker, diligent, intelligent, well liked in his electorate and somewhat disappointing that his portfolio suffered a blow under Malcolm Turnbull.



Russell Broadbent. Russell Broadbent supported Scott Morrison but not a Peter Costello disciple. Well-liked by his electorate, much was expected from him when he was re-elected some many years ago but failed to shine which is very disappointing given his talents were never utilised fully.

He is expected to step down and allow a new generation to take the helm. Was once the darling of Victorians years ago during the Joy Howley and Jeff Kennett Victoria political arena!



Dan Tehan. *Dan Tehan supported Scott Morrison but not a Peter Costello disciple.* Is one of those rare individuals who listens to his electorate, well liked even though some of his actions have not always been welcomed by Victorian Liberals?

As Minister for Social Services he is doing a reasonable job given that he has not been in the role for very long. A promising future should the next generation.



Chris Crewther. *Chris Crewther supported Scott Morrison but not a Peter Costello disciple.* An interesting individual who has not been long in the political game. As a newcomer (2016) to the Federal scene, he has been relatively quiet and unassuming.

However despite his youthful entry into the Federal political scene, much is expected of him and time will assist him into developing further his natural talents.



Sarah Henderson. *Sarah Henderson supported Scott Morrison but not a Peter Costello disciple.* A very loyal supporter of Malcolm Turnbull was left in a difficult position once the second spill became evident that Malcolm Turnbull no longer had the confidence of most of the members. She is stepping down and will soon will be retiring giving way to another Victorian.

Considered a good performer who believes in her electorate and supports Victorians no matter their political ideology.



Tim Wilson. *Tim Wilson supported Scott Morrison but not a Peter Costello disciple.* The member for Goldstein has been coy about his support for either contestant, but given his behaviour over the past week, it is safely assumed that he voted for Scott Morrison even though he knew that Scott Morrison did not support the poorly conducted and much criticised Marriage equality survey. He has been categorised as supporting Scott Morrison merely by the absence of his name being raised publicly. Not afraid to tackle the challenges that all politicians face on a daily basis.

What does the above all mean to the Victorian Public? Probably nothing by now. After being glued to the drama being played out in Canberra, information was being controlled by a predator media adding moment by moment the intense drama being played out in the political arena. Those who felt it was business as usual came out of the party room with a glum look on their faces, the public saw and heard the various views of commentators, political representatives and were fed a constant reel of information from Twitter, Instagram, face book, WhatsApp, WeChat and a host of other mobile applications.

Never in the history of Australia has the drama in Canberra captivated the public attention. But it was not an audience that welcomed the information, but rather an angry, disgusted and fed up with political instability. In fact in hindsight one could say that the public if given the opportunity would not vote for any of the political parties involved. The Labor Party, the Greens One Nation, Deryn Hinch, the Nationals and the Independents all stuck their deadly barbs into the Liberal party brawl, leaving a public bewildered with it all. Mind you, this is nothing new as it is technology that enables the public to be better informed than at any time in the distant past.



Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg have a difficult if not impossible job of healing a fractured party not seen the days of Black Jack Mc Ewen, Billy McMahon, and John Gorton and Harold years. John Howard a former Australian Prime Minister has come out in support of his protégé, Tony Abbott stating that he should be considered for the front bench and thus healing a divisive Liberal party. On the other hand we have Scott Morrison stating a “New generation of Liberal leadership, is to be on your (Australians) side”.

Is this a subtle code that Kevin Andrews, Malcolm Turnbull and Tony Abbott will not be considered for the front bench? If it is then I fear that the Liberals will certainly lose the next election and split the Party into two camps, ideologically, structurally and culturally which could lead to a separation similar to the Labor and Democratic Labor Party split many years ago.

With a \$551 billion in debt, a National Energy Guarantee scrapped, high utility bills, one of Australia's worst drought in history, a divided party room, a possible by-election by the expected resignation by a vindictive former Prime Minister, poor polls, a disgusted and fed up public, a right wing conservative revolt, a budget before the next election, healing open wounds are but a few of the issues facing Australia's 30th Australian Prime Minister. A Prime Minister who on the surface appears calm, consultative, jovial and embracing, does have his alter ego where he known for his aggression and forceful manner should something displease him. Still, he now is in the box seat and he has the political maturity to target and prioritise the problems facing Australia and that of his Liberal/National coalition team.

In my humble opinion Scott Morrison was voted Prime Minister because he was seen as the least disruptive figure in the party room and thus became Australian accident Prime Minister. A new generation of leaders is a good slogan that will be welcomed by a public fed up with the dramas being acted out in Canberra. But will it be enough to retain government is the question. I therefore believe that when all has been said and done, Scott Morrison will surprise everyone by his consultative leadership, direct approach, and work hard to reduce the burdens on Australian families and heal wounds within the party. With Julie Bishop resigning as Foreign Minister it paves the way for opportunities to Tony Abbott and Kevin Andrews.

Therefore this new generation that Scott Morrison speaks of will involve new blood with an injection of young men and women to be on the front bench that will include Peter Dutton who is a seasoned and good performer. Scott Morrison has less than six months to achieve the impossible. Being a tolerant and forgiving lot, the public in general prefers a Liberal/National coalition government to the alternative Union controlled Labor Party under the leadership of Bill Shorten.

Question remains! Did the Victorian Liberal Party Division engineer Malcolm Turnbull's downfall? This is one question readers will have to come to their own conclusions.



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UNFORTUNATE QUOTES OF THE WEEK



THIS IS MY PRIME MINISTER. The moment when Scott Morrison put his arm around Malcolm Turnbull as if to reassure him reminded many of Brutus when he stabbed Caesar in the back. Scott Morrison saying publicly "This is my Prime Minister" brought a chuckle to many who know of Scott Morrison. "Thank you Schomo" said an unconvincing, and dishevelled Malcolm Turnbull. Some 48 hours later Scott Morrison would emerge as Australia's Prime Minister. But it is my opinion that Scott Morrison to his credit was considering his options as far back as the downfall of Tony Abbot who he stabbed in the back. What doe this tell us of Scott Morrison's behaviour? Policies must change if he is to be different to Malcolm Turnbull that?



JULIE BISHOP WILL DEFINITELY BE PRIME MINISTER. Bishop's partner likes her chances. Julie Bishop's partner David Panton attended the Myer runway show tonight and told the *Herald Sun* she would claim the leadership. "You've heard it straight from the horse's mouth – by tomorrow at lunchtime, Julie Bishop will definitely be prime minister," he said.

David Panton arrives at the Myer Spring/Summer 2018 runway show tonight. When the *Herald Sun* asked what he would be called as the "first man" he replied: "Just call me David." This is an embarrassing moment in the life of Julie bishop as no one from her homes state voted for her in the leadership battle and as such wish she consider a life outside the political environment.