



Finally, hospital car park looks likely in Rocky

I DON'T particularly care who funds or builds the Rockhampton Hospital car park. I just want it done after more than a decade of talk about how important it is for this community

Now that Capricornia MP Michelle Landry has promised \$7 million in federal infrastructure funding towards the project, I am confident it will be achieved, no matter who is in government.

Labor candidate Leisa Neaton has come on board and is prepared to lobby to match those funds but has adopted a wait and see approach as she waits to see the size of the state contribution which is expected to be announced in the Queensland Budget.

Ms Neaton also said she was aware of a private bid that could see a carpark built at no net cost to the taxpayer.

"...if that were to turn out to be true one wonders what would happen with Ms Landry's hastily scraped together \$7 million," she said this week.

If that privately funded solution came to pass perhaps the \$7m could be diverted towards council's Mt Archer adventure park project? That would provide a much needed tourist boon for the region.

What a shame that type of keep-it-local initiative wasn't activated when the Yeppen South bridge project came in almost \$130m under budget.

Back to the hospital car park. Whatever happens, the cost of parking has to be kept at an affordable level for the people who will be using it to either attend hospital or visit patients.

It's no good hitting these already stressed people with \$10 an hour charge or else it will end up being another Clem 7 disaster.

This car park is not a profit making venture, it is a much-needed community facility for the benefit of the people.

Anyone who thinks otherwise is missing the point.

So let's say, 300 car parks 24/7 brings in about \$5000 a day based on an average usage rate of 200 cars paying an average of \$1 an hour for about \$1.75m a year in revenue.

That's not such a bad return on a \$20m outlay.

But if it only cost a private company \$7m as a contribution – thanks to taxpayer money – then that return seems even more viable.

Again, the government should be focused on providing an essential service to the community - not treating it as a breach of funding precedent.

If this triggers a handful of requests for regional hospital car parks across Australia based on various community needs, then so be it - times have changed and so have community expectations.

Letters



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The Manly Sea Eagles are being investigated for alleged match fixing in two games in last year's NRL season.

PHOTO: DEAN LEWINS

RUGBY LEAGUE

Manly plagued by 2015 match fixing allegations

AS everyone is aware, I am a passionate Manly Sea Eagles fan and have been since 1968.

I, along with many other supporters have experienced the many highs and lows over the years in our support of this great club.

But these allegations of match fixing have been a low blow to Manly fans and something that we never expected would ever happen.

If these players, and any officials, are found guilty, they should, and will, get life bans.

But the biggest disappointment

to me when you play a team sport is the faith and confidence that you have in your team mates.

To run dead for a few dollars more would be the end of any friendship that you may have had before with these individuals.

To say I am disappointed is an understatement.

If these Manly players are found guilty then I will be applying for a license to have the biggest bonfire at my place of residence to rid myself of all my Manly support gear.

**Jack Lewis
Berserker**

A federal politician who heard and helped

THE weeks leading to an election can be long and frustrating.

Who should we vote for? What will this candidate do for my community?

What has this candidate already accomplished?

These are just a few of the questions that many of us will be contemplating before we decide which box to tick on July 2.

For me, the decision isn't difficult.

When Michelle Landry was elected in 2013 I wondered whether we might finally see some positive changes to my small rural community.

To be honest, I didn't hold too much hope.

“Imagine my surprise when Michelle Landry actually answered our community's emails and letters.”

After all, we have few residents and I thought that politicians only looked after places with lots of people.

We had tried in the past to be heard by the previous Labour federal member, but to no avail.

Imagine my surprise when Michelle Landry actually answered our

community's emails and letters.

Imagine my surprise when Michelle Landry actually asked to visit our community and listen to the concerns of residents.

Imagine my surprise when Michelle Landry organised a visit by the Assistant Minister for Communications to witness first hand the impact of inadequate telecommunications access to our school and broader community.

Michelle Landry genuinely cared that we had no mobile telephones access.

She was genuinely concerned that our children could not utilise the internet to access curriculum links at school.

And so she fought for us to be included in the first round of mobile black spot funding.

And she won.

My community was heard. Thanks to Michelle.

Finally we have a federal member who genuinely cares for those in her electorate.

I sincerely hope that voters will take the time to reflect on Michelle's many other achievements since being elected to Capricornia.

Already she has secured \$550 million for infrastructure and jobs. I am not convinced that such an admirable and worthwhile list of achievements will be matched by anyone else.

Michelle Landry has my vote.

**Lynise Conaghan
Clarke Creek**

How can corporations pay low or no tax?

WE are now past the half way mark



Find out what's happening in Days Like These with

The future is in our hands

The French Lesson

with
David French



WHEN I first returned to Rockhampton 17 years ago, the Friday night plane home was a veritable party.

There were lots of people connecting with the outside world and each Friday night they brought home what they had seen had learned elsewhere. Many of those people put ideas into practice and our community was better for it.

Years later I see few familiar faces on the plane.

It's the result of a decline in the

influence of regional areas and with that, attrition in the knowledge and decision making capacity so necessary for vibrancy and growth. It's a massive problem that needs to be recognised.

One person worth listening to who remains in our region is the crusty, yet talented, Dr Hilary Mercer (pictured).

Unless you have a child with disability, or some other paediatric ailment, you'll probably never know the combination of straight-shooting assessment, kindness and professional interest that lies within his Beerholme suites (for a Scandinavian word, it sure sounds Aussie).

In a recent letter to the editor

(TMB May 3) Hilary notes that regional areas are indeed more prone to "obesity, alcoholism, diabetes and suicide", but that the answer is not in throwing money at more hospitals and health services.

Unpopular as it may be, his point is that "the individual himself has to make life-changing decisions" and that getting people into employment (perhaps against their inclination) is a big factor.

I'd add that our own regional professionals have the means and duty to help force policy measures that support these sorts of goals and should use it.

What strikes me most about Hilary's observations however is that that they are not just

medical.

They are observations that cut to the core of what we must do if we want to reinvigorate our region.

What are you doing to build a better economy and social environment? Valuable as they might be, are you waiting to ride the economic wave of the next dam?

The next hospital car-park? A casino at Great Keppel? A new mine?

Or are you recognising the vast opportunities that already exist and actually doing something about it.

Some people are. The recent Lifestyle expo was a big success and Brahman Week also went well.