

YOUR SAY

The best reader comments from print and online

This is why Canberra can't wait on media reform

OUR SAY
FRAZER PEARCE
EDITOR

IT was one of the most meaningful pieces of journalism this newspaper has been involved with in recent years.

The findings from our Fair Go for Regional Australia campaign surprised even us.

The statistics were confronting. If you don't live in Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne, you will likely be less wealthy, die earlier, have more health issues and less access to key services and education opportunities. We live here because we love it; but we are disadvantaged on so many measures by that choice – in comparison to the metros.

During last year's Federal election, we campaigned hard. There were some wins – and even in the most recent Budget, Canberra confirmed it was looking at shifting jobs to the regions by moving some Government departments out of the cities. But real change is going to take time. So many things happen in Canberra that have massive impact here. Often, the repercussions are overlooked.

Case in point is the debate over media law reform. It has focussed on whether moves by the Turnbull Government to redo the rules – last seriously tinkered with before the Internet became all powerful – will just make the rich get richer, and reduce diversity.

The point not made often enough is that mainstream media is struggling, and when it does, the regions suffer the most.

If people like our owner, News Corp, can't properly compete with the social media channels hoovering up our content and advertising dollars, the news, literally, will be dire in the regions.

This newsroom has downsized in recent years. Thankfully we have been smart enough to rethink how we put out our products, and the effects on front-line journalist numbers have been minimised. But how long can that continue?

It is no secret the numbers of community (free) newspapers have diminished as the advertising squeeze has gone on. Unless media companies can offer the same scale and reach as global tech giants, the range of products we offer will come under further scrutiny.

We live to tell the stories of real regional Australians. And anything that could impact that should be fought, tooth and nail.

Standing still on media reform cannot be an option, for the good of Central Queensland.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What about jobs for Rookwood and GKI?

AFTER reading about the loss of 200 jobs from the closure of the Aurizon rail yards in Rockhampton I feel compelled to raise the lack of serious commitment to long-term job creation in Central Queensland by the current State Government.

During Anastacia Palaszczuk's recent visit to Rockhampton she announced numerous State Government initiatives.

Top of the list was an extension to the maximum security prison so that Rockhampton could take more of the state's dangerous prisoners.

While I acknowledge the importance of the prison to Rockhampton, I hardly think we need to be bringing more criminals and their families to the region.

Next on the list was a joint initiative with the

Rockhampton Regional Council to build low cost or backpacker accommodation in the city.

Is it really sensible for councils and the State Government to spend taxpayer money on backpacker accommodation?

I wonder how the struggling motels and developers in the city feel about this. Presumably, they are looking for places to house the inmates' visiting families.

Notably absent from the announcements was her commitment to the Rookwood Weir or to assisting to get the Great Keppel Island development off the ground.

Both of which would add long-term jobs and much-needed flow-on benefits to the the region.

— Matthew McCauley
Yeppoon



STANDING UNITED: Aurizon workers protest after the company revealed plans to shut Rockhampton workshops.
PHOTO: MATTY HOLDSWORTH

Keep locals in mind

AFTER the decision by Fair Work to phase in the cuts to penalty rates over three-four years, it is now up to our local businesses to decide whether they will make the call to support local business, to support our community, to support their own businesses.

How? By committing to continue paying penalty rates at their current levels.

We've all seen local campaigns and we understand the concept.

The sales staff, the manager, the admin assistant, the owner. All those individuals can then spend their hard-earned with confidence in other local stores and our local

“Buy local, and keep paying current penalty rates.”

— Chris McJannett

community thrives.

The same applies to penalty rates. If cuts to penalty rates get passed on, there will be less money in the pockets of local workers.

That means less spending in local businesses and shops. Some business owners already see this and are committing to look after their staff, and our community. It's their own version of “buy local” and it means more jobs for our

community. More jobs than would ever be created by a slow, phased-in reduction in penalty rates. Do the right thing by our community – buy local, and keep paying current penalty rates.

— Chris McJannett
Yeppoon

Time to save jobs

AURIZON'S announced closure of Rockhampton railway workshops could result in the loss of over 100 local jobs, with potentially more still to come. If it goes ahead, these losses will be felt across our community.

The railway workshops have been the lifeblood for generations of working families in Rockhampton, and as a local I know that this news will be incredibly

tough for many who were reliant on this work to support their families.

While the recent news that Adani will be taking out a contract to supply concrete sleepers from Rockhampton is welcome, we must not forget that there are still many workers impacted by Aurizon's closure decision who need our support.

There is still time to save the railway workshops, and I know many will be working hard in the coming months to ensure these jobs remain in Rockhampton.

— Melissa Meyers
Maurice Blackburn
Lawyers

Healthy defence

THE article ‘Health funds

out to make you sick’ by Karina Barrymore (Morning Bulletin, June 6) contains errors and a right of reply is necessary to avoid causing needless alarm to readers.

The claim there is a ‘bottomless pit of money’... ‘spent on lobbying the government to allow them to increase their premiums’, is nonsense.

The price setting process for health funds is defined by Federal Government regulation. Premiums are determined by an exchange of actuarial data based on the cost of claims of the past year, and predicted claims costs and health inflation over the coming years.

As the main representative for health funds in Canberra, I can

FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS IN DAYS LIKE THESE WITH HAIDEE JENKINS

Decline doesn't need help



THE FRENCH LESSON
DAVID FRENCH

MY wife loves reading, and it's a disappointment to me that with Kindle, we now have fewer opportunities to randomly discuss what it is she's reading at any particular time. But last weekend, we did have such an opportunity over dinner at Headricks Lane. The general topic was entropy. It's not a word I have ever

used either in speech or in writing, but one which I now understand is critical for our times.

Entropy captures the idea that left to their natural state, things gradually decline into disorder. It's a somewhat jarring idea to those of us who think to be organised is natural, and indeed, to the civilised West in general. Regardless of what we might think, it is obviously true.

Unmaintained, buildings, roads, gardens, forests – like rusting iron – all gravitate back to their natural state.

I tried in our discussion to explore the notion that our

“There is a fight, a striving for life, but there is no order.”

idea of order might be simply a special case, that there might be some underlying order in a rainforest for example. But if you think about it there patently is not. There is a fight, a striving for life, but there is no order. Survival matters, not order.

And what dawned on me was the idea that the thing that separates order from entropy is energy. You have to apply energy to create order. More than that, once order is created you have to invest energy just to maintain order. Mowing the lawn, dredging shipping channels, maintaining roads and painting bridges – all require energy just to keep in their existing state.

And so it is with our society and culture, loosely called “the West”. Built first on the teachings of the New Testament, and then on the scientific and cultural revolution known as The

Enlightenment, we only maintain our way of life by investing; by exerting energy. We invest in our legal and health systems and our system of government, in education, security and transport. In our families and our relationships, in tolerance and as in the reformation, in critiquing our own systems and then rebuilding them.

The effort we put into these things is immense but often taken for granted. It builds on top of the energy put into moving beyond the tribal ways of the Old Testament, into a paradigm that we will be freer and