



Alan Eggleston
Senator for Western Australia



The Eggleston Report

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Riding the Boom - but Rudd's left no one behind the wheel

The Pilbara Area Consultative Committee recently held an interesting conference in Karratha designed to find solutions to the local problems created by the so called "China boom" in the resources industry .

Some stimulating discussion occurred and innovative ideas were put forward by the guest speakers such as the Mayor of Ipswich and Tom Senti from the Tweed in NSW and it is obvious an overall plan is needed for this region which clearly has a prosperous future for many years ahead of it.

Regrettably the Rudd Government representative at the meeting, Gary Gray MP, who is the Parliamentary Secretary for the Northern Australia, was anything but encouraging when he described the call for funding for community amenities and infrastructure as "whingeing" . A bad call by Mr Gray who showed nothing but his lack of understanding of the very real issues facing the communities in the Pilbara in their sincere efforts to develop the region on a long term sustainable basis . Even funding programs such as Growing Regions, which was announced by the previous Coalition Government and which would have provided infrastructure funding for regional communities such as the ones in the Pilbara, have been scrapped by the Labor Government. Clearly, Kevin Rudd and the Labor party have no clue as to the difficulties facing these regional communities.

The problems highlighted included:

The high price of housing: With rentals reaching \$2000

per week and purchase prices of \$1 million plus, small businesses cannot afford housing for their employees, or match the terms and conditions offered by the mining companies. As a consequence, many are closing down and leaving the area. In part the housing crisis is typical of the construction phase of projects but there is a need for more land to be released and some lateral thinking such as constructing high rise apartments and using less expensive materials in buildings.

Fly in, fly out: FIFO, as it is known, is destroying the sense of community in Pilbara towns . This is because FIFO workers do not regard them as their home . As a result, local clubs and organisations such as Rotary, and organisations which depend on volunteers are collapsing. It was suggested that the mining companies might consider reviewing the overall cost effectiveness of FIFO operations versus returning to a residential workforce.

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Local designers showcased

The Designedge Innovation Festival 2008 has begun, and will run until the 28th May. The festival brings together the products of local hardwork from talented local businesses, designers, inventors and innovators, and showcases them at 41 events over four weeks. I was on hand to help launch the festival at Belmont City Council, and see some of the local creations first-hand including poetry, indigenous fashion, and handy household inventions.



Alan with inventor John Grima at the launch of the Designedge Festival in Perth

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Community amenities: Local Government in the Pilbara is chronically short of funding to service the communities largely because big mining companies are exempt from paying rates. However there was a view that contributions in lieu of rates should be made to local Councils. In addition there was a strong sentiment that the State and Federal government's should return a small percentage of the billions of dollars in royalties and taxes drawn from the Pilbara for infrastructure, services and amenities.

Indigenous issues: The Indigenous people of the Pilbara are largely bystanders amidst the wealth of the area and deserve better housing, health and education services. It is encouraging that the Mining Industry is now committed to employing Indigenous people, led by Rio Tinto in its various operations, but there is still a long way to go.

The "new Pilbara" towns and ports were established 50 years ago but are still regarded by some as transient; perhaps now a psychological shift is required to regard them as a permanent part of regional Australia where increasingly people who grew up there are happy to remain.

Eyre Highway gets a makeover



Alan with Senator Judith Adams and Senator David Johnston cutting the ribbon to open the Eyre Highway upgrade

Road safety has been improved for drivers travelling west from Kalgoorlie on the Eyre Highway, following the completion of a \$45 million upgrade, made possible thanks to the previous Coalition Government.

Alan, along with Fellow Western Australian Liberal Senators Judith Adams and David Johnston were on hand to help cut the ribbon at the official opening of the road, which provides the only direct road link from the south of Western Australia to the Eastern States.

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To China and back

I have had an evolving interest in the importance of China to Australia, both politically and economically, over many years, but have never been to China, thus saw the opportunity of joining the West Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Trade Mission to China as a means of gaining some firsthand impressions of contemporary China.

During my time there I visited three cities; Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing. As a delegation we attended the 103rd Canton Trade Fair which has been held biannually for 51 years. The fair was immense with hundreds of stalls displaying products under the headings of Industrial Products, Textiles and Garments, Consumer Goods and Gifts.

The fair was attended by several thousand delegates from all over the world. I met delegates from Ethiopia, Trinidad, and Iceland, as well as people from Europe, North and South America and Africa.

I personally concentrated my attention on the IT and electronics displays for the first day, and the medicines, health care and hospital equipment for the second day I attended the fair.

In more general terms, I was deeply impressed with the massive size and sophistication of the three cities I visited, which equated to that of Australian, North American and European cities. I look forward to returning in the near future.

Webby 1941 - 2008



Robert Webb, the third President of the Kalgoorlie North Division (after Narran Moore), passed away recently in South Australia.

"Webby" was a person with a strong commitment to the principles he believed in both in his church and in the Liberal Party. He was particularly committed to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.

Robert had a few careers. He was trained as a butcher however in the North West he managed hostels in the Carnarvan Port and South Hedland, was an AMP rep then served as the School Chaplain at John Curtin College in Fremantle for ten years, and later as Chaplain of the Victor Harbor High School.

Robert was Deputy Mayor of Hedland and later served in the Subiaco City and Victor Harbour Councils.

Webby was a great raconteur and delightful host ; Pauline, his wife, said of him "Robert's passion was always to help and encourage young people, but also to see justice in the community via local Government. He was never afraid to speak out at injustice. He tried always to live out his faith in God and was not afraid of what other people might say or at times even threaten."

Both as old friend and on behalf of the liberal party, sincere condolences to Pauline and their children.

Anzac Day



Alan with HMAS Sydney Crewman Tom Fisher, Member for Swan Steve Irons and Mick Lee at an Anzac service at the Hawthorn Community Centre

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Labor jumps the gun on Ningaloo Reef heritage listing

Once again the State Labor Government has acted without the community's best interests in mind. The WA State Government's proposal for the Ningaloo Reef to be included on the World Heritage list has met local opposition; and for good reason.

After a two day visit with three other Federal MPs to consult with local community groups about the impact the listing would have, a clear message has been heard from the local residents. Everyone agrees that the Ningaloo Reef must be protected, but it is apparent that there is a considerable lack of understanding of the local implications the listing would have on future developments. It is also clear that more genuine consultation with the local community is urgently needed.

There are genuine questions as to whether a World or National Heritage listing will protect the reef without compromising the interests and autonomy of the local community. This is a question that needs to be addressed by the State and Federal Governments before any further action is taken.

I have called on the State Government, which proposed the World Heritage listing in the last election,

to consider other options to protect the reef under existing environmental law rather than proceeding with Heritage Listing.

While Labor Governments continue to ignore the best interests of local communities to pursue their own agenda, the local people are the ones that are left behind.



Alan recently toured the Ningaloo area with other WA Senators, above, to discuss the effects of the proposed Heritage Listing of the reef

Rudd under pressure to deliver Next G



Following the cancellation of the Opel broadband contract, the pressure is now on the Rudd Government to deliver a broadband service that will provide fast and reliable broadband to every Australian, a commitment the previous Coalition had already begun to deliver before the last election. I will be putting the challenge to the Rudd Government to deliver their broadband service as promised, and on time. If you would like to know more information about broadband services in your area, contact my office.