



Alan Eggleston
Senator for Western Australia



The Eggleston Report

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A great Liberal victory in State election!!!

Congratulations to the new Liberal/National Government and incoming Premier Colin Barnett on their successful election campaign that brought an end to Labor's coast to coast stronghold on Australian politics.

Against all odds, Colin Barnett and Norman Moore led a strong team in the early election, winning 10 Lower House seats from the Labor party. A 4% swing sent a message that the people of Western Australia were ready for change, and that Colin Barnett was the man to do it. This stunning victory will be long remembered in the history of the Liberal Party.

Special recognition should be given to our North West Team of Rod Sweetman, Rosie Vrancic and Ruth Webb-Smith. Despite not winning, they each ran a strong campaign that delivered the Liberal message right across the North West.

The outgoing Labor Government made progress difficult on critical projects, particularly those in the North West such as the Ord River expansion project, and the location of the INPEX

gas project facility. They also ignored pleas over the years for improved community infrastructure and amenities.

The new Liberal/National Government has answered the call of regional West Australians with a commitment to new policies on providing better infrastructure, creating new jobs and attracting new industry right across the state, not just in Perth. Now that Labor's coast to coast stranglehold on state governments has come to an end, so too will Kevin Rudd's unopposed delivery of metro centric policies.

The people of Western Australia now have a Premier who won't be afraid to stand up to Kevin Rudd and his barrage of damaging new taxes, schemes and regulations that have put the prosperity of our rural and regional communities at risk.

I look forward to working closely with the new Government in achieving better outcomes for Western Australia, particularly in the communities of the North West.



*New Premier for Western Australia
Colin Barnett*



Alan signs the register for a third term with newly elected WA Senator Michaelia Cash as both are sworn in.

Inside:

- Ord River project needs our support
- Rudd's threat to WA's gas industry
- New State Government Ministry
- Fuelwatch misfires

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VISION NEEDED FOR NORTH KIMBERLEY

I was reminded of the enormous potential of the North Kimberley in two recent visits to Kununarra. During my first visit I attended the annual Kimberley economic forum and in the subsequent visit toured the Ord River area as a member of the Coalition's Environment and Water Policy Committee.



The Coalition Water and Environment Committee was able to see first hand the Ord River's potential to grow as a region

Tourism around the Ord is also ripe for expansion as most of the real tourist icons of the Kimberley such as the Bungles, are in the North Kimberley region.

Expansion of the tourism industry is principally limited by the short length of the Kununarra airport. Lengthening of the runway at Kununarra would not only boost tourism but also enable Ord agricultural produce to be air freighted to nearby Asian Markets.



Tourism in the region would boom if better facilities were provided



Stage 2 could greatly expand horticultural production in the region

The enormous potential for irrigated agriculture on the Ord remains largely unrealised and regrettably will remain so while the Northern Territory Government continues to ignore the Ord Stage 2 project, which would expand the area under irrigation to 30,000 hectares.

At present Sandalwood is proving to be a great success in the Ord together with horticulture. Sugar cane farming was producing good yields but ceased last year because of poor returns. Vision is needed from Government to progress Stage 2 to ensure the Ord realises its agricultural potential.



The potential for irrigated agriculture remains unrealised

The one cloud over the future of the Kimberley is the Rudd Government's proposal to impose National Heritage listing over most of the West Kimberley region, which would inevitably slow down development in the area.

The advent of the new Liberal Government should mean that no more disasters such as the loss of the INPEX gas project to Darwin will occur and that instead a visionary long term plan for the Kimberley will be put in place.

FUELWATCH MISFIRES AS HEARING REVEALS REAL COST

The Senate Economics Committee, of which I am the deputy chair, has held hearings around the country, including all capital cities and Rockhampton in Regional Queensland, on the proposed national Fuelwatch scheme.

In Perth and Karratha we discovered WA's Fuelwatch scheme has put added pressure on local business owners. The Committee also heard that the scheme has provided no price relief to motorists in the North West.

The hearing not only confirmed that Fuelwatch doesn't work, but that small local service station owners are being left at a disadvantage.

A local service station owner gave a submission during the hearing, claiming the only reason fuel prices have lowered in WA was due to the shop-a-docket scheme introduced by Coles and Woolworths, consistent with the views of the independent think tank, the IPA. They claimed it was the entry of Coles and Woolworths into the retail petrol market a year prior to Fuelwatch being established in WA which had stabilized WA petrol prices, and that Fuelwatch had played no part in keeping prices down.

Another witness from the Pilbara Regional Council expressed concern that Pilbara fuel prices are significantly higher than those in Perth, when fuel in the north of WA is actually imported from Singapore where production costs are lower. The Committee heard the same story in regional Queensland and Darwin.



The Senate Economics Committee held a hearing in Karratha to gauge the reaction to the federal Fuelwatch scheme

DAMPIER GAS INDUSTRY THREATENED BY RUDD'S TAXES

Gas prices have nowhere to go but up under Kevin Rudd's Labor Government, as the first signs of a looming gas price hike begin to show. Woodside LNG has already announced that the cost of Kevin Rudd's Emissions Trading Scheme will be directly passed onto consumers through higher gas prices, and have recently indicated that they will also be passing on the \$2.5 billion excise tax bill to their customers.

The excise tax was announced by Kevin Rudd as a budget measure earlier this year and passed through both Houses last month, and is expected to put even greater pressure on an already straining gas industry in Western Australia. No company could absorb \$2.5 billion in additional taxes without passing this cost onto its customers, and it is inevitable that this huge additional tax will have to be passed onto Woodside's consumers, both locally and overseas.

The cost of power in WA will rise, with inevitable flow on in many areas from domestic and industrial consumption, to public services such as hospitals. Australia's reputation for being a reliable 'sovereign risk' nation where agreements with the government would be respected has been compromised by the Rudd Government changing arrangements with the North West Shelf Joint Venture. This means Australia's reputation and competitive advantage in attracting large resource investment will be undermined. As a result, resource companies such as Northwest Shelf Joint Venture partners and Woodside are more likely to take future investments offshore to competitors such as Qatar, Indonesia and Nigeria.

The effect this excise tax will have on Australian industry and the price of consumer goods could be serious.



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