

your say

Election letters policy

The *Mercury* is committed to publishing a fair and balanced selection of letters during the federal election campaign. Those letters that are brief (200 words or less) will receive priority and the *Mercury* reserves the right to edit any letter for space, legal or other reasons. Personal vilification of candidates is not acceptable. The letters page is the "people's forum" and in general letters from election candidates will not be accepted.

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War a forgotten election issue

This is the most boring election I have ever seen, and I have seen a few.

My first vote was in the election held after World War II, the famous "khaki election" in 1945, named after the colour of the uniforms of the soldiers who caused the biggest, unexpected electoral swing in history.

It was against the Tories led by Winston Churchill whose inspiring leadership had led us to victory. But there was a landslide against him resulting in victory for the (British) Labour Party. The soldiers returning to civvy street voted in their thousands for Labour.

We had trusted Churchill to win the war but could not trust him and the Tories to win the peace. We voted Labour to win the peace and for their program of reforms needed to restore



Unwinnable: Most Australians want the troops out of Afghanistan.

Britain's infrastructure that had been devastated by the war.

The bitter experience of war has taught us to question all wars. The polls show that more than 60 per cent of us are doing just that.

The Liberals ignored us when they sent young men to die in

Vietnam. The Australian Labor Party opposed that war and the one that followed in Iraq. Why then is the war in Afghan a non-issue in this election?

Polling shows that more than 60 per cent of us are against this war. Military analysts are questioning war and the

strategy being followed. They are warning that the war is becoming another Vietnam, another unwinnable war.

This has been recognised by Holland who has pulled out its troops only to be replaced by ours.

We should do the same. How many lives must be lost before it is placed on the agenda? Only the Greens have made it an issue; they are calling for the troops to be recalled. They, unlike the two main parties, have placed it on the agenda.

The polls show there is strong support for them. They could hold the balance of power in the Senate. This means that there will be an anti-war voice in Canberra. That is another reason why they will be getting my vote.

Reg Wilding, Wollongong.

Dick Smith makes sense

There have been many articles about Australia's population aired in the media lately.

It seems that if you use the "s" word (sustainability) that makes everything right.

Both (Prime Minister) Julia Gillard and Katie Lahey of the Business Council of Australia were quoted as using the word in relation to Australia's population.

What neither seems to understand is that using "sustainable" and "population" in the one sentence is a complete contradiction in terms.

Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.

Sooner or later the patient dies. Without a healthy environment nothing and no-one survives.

In another article, we had Peter Anderson from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry bringing up the old furphy of the need to replace Australia's ageing population, which only delays the inevitable, making the problem worse into the future.

How great was it then to read a contribution by Dick Smith in the Sun Herald and to finally read words full of good sense.

I hope every person with an interest in the future of this country and the planet will be watching his documentary on the ABC on Thursday.

Corel Garling, Mount Pleasant.

Licences to pollute

Liberal proposals to partially close Hazelwood power station using billions of taxpayer dollars while at the same time allowing the NSW Government to build two new coal power stations highlight the climate change policy incoherence coming from both major parties.

Hazelwood Power station is Australia's most polluting power station.

In 2005, Hazelwood's licence to pollute was nearing its expiry date.

The Victorian Government had the opportunity to close Hazelwood. Cost at the time would have been incurred replacing the dirty power with renewable energy and energy efficiency.

As a nation, we chose the "cheap" option, and the Victorian Government renewed Hazelwood's right to pollute until 2031.

Since then, Mr Abbott, like many people, has quietly acknowledged that the science of climate change is not "crap" after all - hence, his Hazelwood buy-out proposal.

The same money still needs to be spent to replace Hazelwood's dirty power.

The moral from the Hazelwood story is that it is best for the taxpayer if cheap new rights to pollute are not issued in the first place.

But, while this debate about Hazelwood is happening, the NSW Government is planning to build two new power stations with licences to pollute for 50 years.

The emissions from these power stations would more than cancel the reductions from closing Hazelwood, causing an increase in emissions in spite of the billions spent on the Hazelwood buy-out.

And, in future, Australian taxpayers will be forced to pay again to buy out the NSW pollution licences.

And neither Mr Abbott nor Ms Gillard are proposing to do anything to stop these NSW coal power stations.

Making this type of mistake repeatedly is not affordable and stupid.

Both major parties need to commit to preventing the NSW Government building new coal power stations.

Rowan Huxtable, Mangerton.

Put major parties last

Federal Labor has had three years to do something about closing the gap in the funding of public schools in comparison to private schools.

They have had three years to reverse the previous Liberal government's disastrous decision to not enforce nursing homes to spend a proportion of their incomes on staffing so our elderly are not adequately looked after.

It has been said that these elderly people now often receive packaged food which they are unable to open because of their frail condition and don't receive attention when they need it leaving them in bed in soiled nappies.

Also Labor has not removed the GST but instead has continued with the Liberals' tax cuts which have pandered to the wealthy.

It's time to put Labor and the Liberals last.

Bob Patrech, Figtree.

IN A WORD

Playing blame game

We are ignoring the fact that as the Coalition did before, they will do again.

That is, they will throw their hands in the air in horror and say, "We have inherited an enormous debt [umpteen billions] and the only way we can fulfil our promises to those who elected us, is to raise the GST to 15 per cent."

No mining corporations tax, just a tax that hits the poorest people worst.

Gina Behrens, Wollongong.

Assume nothing

Assumptions, assumptions.

Teaching global warming as a fact - it's not. Teaching evolution and long-age earth - questionable.

"Everyone loves Julia" - which one? "Kevin's here" - Kevin who? Pigs might fly - now, that's more like it!

And don't believe anyone who looks like a little green man, either.

Barbara Witte, Barrack Heights.

Live and let live

Why is it that religious people think they are better than everyone else?

I don't care what others believe in. I was raised to be tolerant towards others and I think that people need to remember that none of us are perfect, so live and let live.

We all have something to offer to enhance all our lives.

Brian George, Berkeley.

Nurturing tolerance

You never know, Bob Harrison ("Same sex adoption 'a worry'", *Mercury*, July 28) and Ron Graham (Letters, August 5), children brought up by same-sex parents might be more understanding of others, less judgmental and probably less homophobic.

Paul Norwell, Albion Park Rail.

Well done, Bulli Show

Congratulations to the Bulli Show organisers for inviting Governor of NSW Marie Bashir to open the show on