

## RESEARCH PAPER 27

### MOBILISING DISSIDENCE - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LABOR, LABOUR AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY IN THE 2015 QUEENSLAND STATE ELECTION <sup>1</sup>

Roger Scott

#### INTRODUCTION

Alexander Macdonald died in 1969, eight years before I moved to Queensland, so I was unaware of the connections he had forged between the labour movement and the students at the University of Queensland whose radicalism I came to admire. I only learned of this connection when helping to run a student summer school in 2012 while I was working on an oral history project with Peter Spearritt.<sup>2</sup> Peter Cross was a student in that group who chose to work on this aspect of Alex's career and steered me to the work of Greg Mallory and others.<sup>3</sup>

Cross's paper made clear that the Trades and Labour Council (TLC) was led by Alex to establish common cause and a formal organizational link with the student radicals because of a common commitment to civil liberties. Alex created the 'FOCO Club' which took its name from the Spanish word for 'camp', alluding to Che Guevara's training camps. Energy from this group led to the TLC adopting a stronger attitude than the ALP of the time on issues such as the Vietnam War and the South African Springbok tour. In doing this, Alex was breaking new ground for the TLC in an era when most unionists had little time for 'effete intellectuals' but the relationship proved difficult to maintain after his death.

My lecture tonight deals with another initiative where the labour movement, through some major individual unions and the Queensland Council of Unions (QCU), moved outside what had become a traditional exclusive identification with the policies and values of the Australian Labor Party (ALP). These organisations forged their own links with wider community groups and participated independently in the 2015 election campaign as a result of events dating back to the era of Anna Bligh

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<sup>1</sup> This is the text of the 2015 Aex Macdonald Lecture, given to the Brisbane Labour History Association, 7 May 2015. An abridged version will appear in the Queensland Journal of Labour History.

<sup>2</sup> 'Queensland Speaks': [www.queenslandspeaks.com.au](http://www.queenslandspeaks.com.au)

<sup>3</sup> Peter Cross, "A Pillar of Support from Beginning to End" Alexander Macdonald, FOCO, and the Student-Worker Solidarity' *Centre for the Government of Queensland Summer Scholar Journal*, 3, 2012-13. [http://www.queenslandspeaks.com.au/sites/default/files/Alexander\\_Macdonald.pdf](http://www.queenslandspeaks.com.au/sites/default/files/Alexander_Macdonald.pdf).

Several explanations have been offered for the defeat of the Bligh government in 2012 but all agree on the significance of the hostility among union leaders towards the sale of public assets by that government. This includes Bligh herself in her recently-published biography.<sup>4</sup> After Bligh's successor disowned this policy, unions made common cause against privatization with the tiny numbers on the Palaszczuk opposition benches. They did however disagree on issues of tactics and relationship with dissident groups supporting minor parties and independents.

The 2015 election campaign was notable for the emergence of community-based non-party organisations sponsored or assisted by elements in the trade union movement. It will be seen that the final election result was shaped by the key divergence between the ALP on the one hand, and the various union-supported organisations which offered contradictory advice on "how-to-vote" under the prevailing optional preference electoral mechanism

While the ALP urged the party faithful to express a single preference, these organisations urged voters to 'fill in all squares and put the LNP last'. This resulted in a range of non-ALP dissidents expressing a broader preference in favour of a change of government rather than wasting ('exhausting') their votes after making a symbolic gesture.

The lecture discusses in more detail than is currently in the public arena the origins and operation of these non-party non-union organisations. I will concentrate my remarks on just one of them - 'Working for Queenslanders' (W4Q), created by the Together Union, including its relationship with the national non-partisan organisation GetUp.<sup>5</sup> I will also discuss briefly 'Stand for Queensland' (SfQ) sponsored by the QCU and "Not4Sale" linked to the Electrical Trades Union (ETU). I have not sought to analyse the effect of other non-party organisations unconnected with the labour movement, such as those which campaigned to influence voter behavior on environmental issues as coal seam gas and the Great Barrier Reef or on issues surrounding public accountability.

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<sup>4</sup> Anna Bligh, *Through the Wall, Reflections on Leadership, Love and Survival*, Harper Row, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> 'GetUp! is an independent movement to build a progressive Australia and bring participation back into our democracy', <https://www.getup.org.au>.

## SKIRMISH BETWEEN UNIONS AND ALP GOVERNMENT

The starting point for this narrative is the election of Anna Bligh in 2009 to succeed Peter Beattie's as Premier. This was a somewhat surprising result because it sustained in office an ALP regime whose longevity was, in the eyes of many observers, making it an impediment to progress.

In the soul-searching which followed on both sides, the conservative opposition recognised the need for a unified approach to replace the old National and Liberal parties. Changing demographics meant that the newly-minted LNP needed to select a leader with urban appeal rather than someone like Lawrence Springborg<sup>6</sup> who was strongly identified with the rural heartland he had represented since the age of 21. This led at first to the appointment of John Paul Langbroek from the Gold Coast and then, in the light of unfavourable opinion polls, to Campbell Newman, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, who was 'parachuted' into the seat of Ashgrove.<sup>7</sup>

Before the 2006 election Anna Bligh had been cornered by Springborg's embrace of an economic rationalist agenda of "small government" into making an unequivocal commitment to resist any pressure to privatise public assets. Under the stress of the global financial crisis of 2007-8, Premier Bligh broke this electoral promise, fully aware that the unions would feel betrayed, particularly unions with large public service membership otherwise sympathetic to her general "leftist" orientation. As a result, the union movement as a whole sat on its hands in the 2012 campaign and adopted a studiously non-partisan posture towards Newman who made well-publicised promises that the public service had nothing to fear from a Newman-led LNP government.<sup>8</sup> In retrospect, Bligh believes that her asset decision caused an ongoing 'terrible, heartbreaking wrench that tore an irreparable hole in the fragile relationship between the labour movement and the Labor Party in Queensland' and the relationship now needed to be "rethought and remade".<sup>9</sup>

To exploit this alienation, Newman encouraged the public sector unions to remain quiescent during the election campaign by reinforcing statements made by the LNP in Parliament. Before the election, the Public Sector Union, rechristened 'Together', invited each of the party leaders to tell

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<sup>6</sup> As Leader of the Queensland branch of the National Party, Springborg had led the National-Liberal coalition to defeats in both 2004 and 2006. He resigned as leader of the Nationals after his second election defeat, and was replaced by his former deputy, Jeff Seeney. However, after only 16 months as leader and facing poor opinion polling Seeney was replaced by Springborg. Following the 2006 defeat Springborg played a leading role in the creation of a unified Liberal National Party (LNP) becoming the party's first leader but resigning again after he led it to defeat in 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Roger Scott and John Ford [Queensland parties: the right in turmoil 1987-2007](#). St. Lucia, QLD, Australia: Centre for the Government of Queensland, The University of Queensland, 2014. (iBook)

<sup>8</sup> Anna Bligh, op cit.

<sup>9</sup> Madonna King, 'Annastacia Palaszczuk must tread carefully with unions', *Brisbane Times*, 26 March 2015: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/comment/that-thinking-feeling/annastacia-palaszczuk-must-tread-carefully-with-unions-20150325-1m7uf2.html>.

members what to expect from a government each might lead. Their responses were recorded and posted on the union website. It was in this interview that Newman reassured the union movement that public servants had 'nothing to fear' from a change of government, and that there would be no further privatisation of assets without the Government seeking a new electoral mandate specifically for this purpose.



After the Newman Government was elected it appointed a Commission chaired by former federal Liberal Treasurer Peter Costello to conduct an audit into the state's finances. This report<sup>10</sup> was used to justify imposing massive budget cuts across all government departments. The new Government reversed its pre-election commitment that public sector workers had nothing to fear, by announcing it intended to sack 14,000 public servants.<sup>11</sup>

The anonymous *Brisbane Times* correspondent 'The Watcher' provided contemporary insights into how badly the cuts were handled and the distress within the public service, reminding readers of the human cost when 14,000 people's jobs were under threat, and the flow-on impact on small businesses (particularly noticeable in the Brisbane CBD).<sup>12</sup>

After Newman's pre-election promises, union leaders felt betrayed and were supported by massive protests about the scale of the job cuts.<sup>13</sup> Conflict over the cuts dominated state political media

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<sup>10</sup> See Commission of Audit: <http://www.commissionofaudit.qld.gov>.

<sup>11</sup> Newman claimed there were no 'sackings': <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-09-14/no-qld-public-servants-sacked-newman-says/4261346>.

<sup>12</sup> See Ann Scott, 'The wisdom of "The Watcher": Lest we forget', TJRyan Foundation, [http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au/\\_dbase\\_upl/Wisdom\\_of\\_the\\_Watcher.pdf](http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au/_dbase_upl/Wisdom_of_the_Watcher.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> John Spreckley, 'Industrial law changes enacted by the Queensland LNP government', *The Queensland Journal of Labour History*, 20, March 2015, pp 54-65.

coverage for months. The day after the first Newman budget, in September 2012, a crowd of between 8,000 and 10,000 people marched to Queensland Parliament to voice their anger.<sup>14</sup>

After this, the Newman government started to take punitive action against the unions. First of all, the government rushed through a new law to strip away employment security and limit outsourcing protections from existing public service pay deals. The measure, passed in the name of reforming the public service, stirred controversy but a union challenge against the law was thrown out by the Court of Appeal.

Then the government passed a series of Bills designed to prevent workers from speaking out against government decisions. The axing of public service positions was matched by cuts to services. When the Government started putting these services out to tender, it also required community organisations to agree, through a clause in their contracts, that they would not speak publicly against these government decisions.<sup>15</sup>

On Wednesday 5 June 2013, the government went further, to stop any union activity defined as 'political'. Legislation was introduced into Parliament which overrode existing agreements and imposed significant and costly red tape on union operations, including requirements to disclose the material interests and remuneration of officials and amounts of money spent on 'political' campaigning. Unions lost the right to use payroll deductions for fund raising; delegates were no longer allowed to use work time and facilities for union activities; and members were prevented from talking to union officials during work time.

The government's transparency laws prohibited unions from running political campaigns costing more than \$10,000 without first balloting their members. Under the law, for the ballot to be valid, at least half of the union's total membership must vote yes.

Many unions were deterred from continuing publicity campaigns by the threat and reality of the visit of government auditors to check the uses to which members funds were being used. The Ryan Foundation was directly affected by this threat when one major union offered generous administrative support for our band of academic volunteers trying to establish a website. It was given legal advice that our purposes were defined as 'political' in the meaning of the Act. The offer was withdrawn. Universities were similarly intimidated by unprecedented cuts to government funding, generating fears about particular research areas being regarded as "politically incorrect".

(The Foundation continued on undaunted, relying on direct assistance instead from the QCU and the initial seed funding provided by the ALP. It continues to offer a framework which recruits academic researchers to contribute to policy debates, with a strong commitment in its first two years of existence to concerns over public accountability and parliamentary processes.)

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<sup>14</sup> See *Brisbane Times* coverage at: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/thousands-march-against-newman-budget-20120911-25qd8.html>.

<sup>15</sup> See Daniel Hurst, *The Brisbane Times*, 21 August, 2012: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/ngos-told-they-are-right-to-remain-silent-to-keep-funding-20120820-24ilb.html>.

## TOGETHER STARTS 'WORKING FOR QUEENSLANDERS' (W4Q)

One union was quicker on its feet than others in response to the punitive legislation. There is a time lapse between the introduction of legislation into Parliament and its passing into law, even under the super-streamlined processes used by the LNP to exploit its overwhelming numerical superiority and a compliant Speaker. There is always a gap of a few days between the First Reading of a bill in Parliament and its passing into legislation by being signed by the Governor. The union leadership acted to take advantage of this window of opportunity..

The *Brisbane Times* reported that, in a widely publicised move and in order to circumvent the June legislation, the Together Union, after talking with members, transferred \$7.5 million it had raised from a public sector defence fund to the Working for Queenslanders trust corporation,.

Together Union secretary Alex Scott stated to the *Brisbane Times* that his organisation had done nothing wrong and each step along the way had been made public.

The union was looking at the best way to protect the public sector defence fund to continue to operate the way that members had determined it should and the company was established as a result of that...

We've completely cooperated with the industrial inspectors who have asked questions about the expenditure and we will continue to abide by the disclosure laws for both state and federal activity and we will continue to abide by the legislation. ...

There is nothing secret in the process, the company is registered and it abides by the corporations laws and clearly we will make sure we abide by both state and federal legislation..<sup>16</sup>

The Newman Government acted swiftly with additional legislation to close the perceived loophole after the Together horse had bolted through the rapidly closing stable door. Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie amended the transparency laws in August to include 'anti-avoidance' provisions 'to cover entities associated with an industrial organisation' so that any corporations or companies established by the unions will be subject to the same rules and laws as the union itself. The QCU advised its members that it was now illegal to seek to imitate the Together union. The QCU and Together joined in challenging the validity of the new legislation on the grounds that it contravened the rights to free association implied in the national constitution.

Mr Bleijie said in Parliament that these amendments applied to both employer and union organisations:

I would have made these same changes if an employer organization tried to skirt around the law, but so far only the Together Union has tried to be sneaky.

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<sup>16</sup> Alex Scott interview with Amy Remeikis, *Brisbane Times*, 17.2.14: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/unions-date-with-destiny-set-within-next-fortnight-20140217-32wa6.html>



The response of the Newman government to the High Court challenge was to seek to maximise delay, to prolong the operation of the restrictions for as long as possible, given that general legal opinion suggested they would lose. The rational basis for this wasteful strategy crumbled in December 2013 when the High Court gave a ruling favourable to unions facing a similar situation in New South Wales.<sup>17</sup>

Before then, W4Q had made its presence felt throughout Queensland with general meetings in regional centres and intense door-knocking campaigns in carefully selected constituencies seen 'to be in play' in the forthcoming election still a year away. The two major themes in their advice to constituents were the potential reductions in services as a result of cut-backs in the public service, and the lack of public accountability caused by the range of policies pursued by the Newman government. The protection of the environment was identified as one of these policies, with conservative governments at both levels cutting back on protection.

Before moving on to give details about the nature of this election campaign, recognition must be given to other 'players in the field' also linked to the Labour movement.

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<sup>17</sup> 18 December, 2013; [http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/publications.nsf/key/TheHighCourt'sdecisionintheelectoralfundinglawcase/\\$File/The+High+Court's+decision+in+the+electoral+funding+law+case.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/publications.nsf/key/TheHighCourt'sdecisionintheelectoralfundinglawcase/$File/The+High+Court's+decision+in+the+electoral+funding+law+case.pdf)

## ETU, “NOT4SALE”, BILLBOARDS AND BY-ELECTIONS



One strategy which remained available to other unions was to use connections with a national body as a basis for campaigning against the state government.<sup>18</sup> The Electrical Trades Union (ETU) has a proud history of activism and adopted a more confrontational approach by responding to government publicity campaigns with bill-boards critical of government. This also became a running sore for the government, particularly during the by-elections that occurred in February and July 2014. The ETU successfully pursued the strategy of inviting its national body to act on its behalf as a political campaigner through a national interest group registered as ‘Not4Sale’.

Writing in the Brisbane Times on March 1 2014, Cameron Atfield reported

Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie is pulling out all stops to have a series of anti-government billboards across Brisbane taken down.

Fairfax Media has seen legal letters sent from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to an outdoor advertising agency threatening it with prosecution should it not comply with requests to hand over correspondence between it and the company that booked the billboards, Not 4 Sale Limited. Not 4 Sale was set up by the national Communications Electrical Plumbing Union (CEPU), which is affiliated with the Queensland-based Electrical Trades Union (ETU).

ETU state secretary Peter Simpson said that while his union supported the billboards, they were paid for by the CEPU and therefore the requirement to ballot members was not applicable.

Still, Mr Simpson said, the legal letters to outdoor advertising companies continued. ‘It’s intimidation, pure and simple, from the state government and if they can’t intimidate us, they go after our suppliers, he said. ‘It’s a disgraceful set of circumstances.’

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Newman government ratchets up ‘war’ on unions’, Amy Remeikis *The Brisbane Times*, 8.8.13: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/newman-government-ratchets-up-war-on-unions-20130807-2rgw7.html>



Fairfax Media has contacted the advertising company that received the letters, but no response was forthcoming. But Mr Simpson said the company was 'nervous' about the government attention.

'They're not used to getting intimidating letters from governments, they're not used to being threatened with fines if they don't produce documents,' he said. 'Put yourself in their boat. They're pretty upset about it, pretty nervous and pretty scared that if they don't comply, they'll have the full wrath of the law come down on them.'

Mr Bleijie was unrepentant about the government's pursuit of the unions behind the campaign and said the ETU needed to 'explain to Queenslanders who's funding the campaign and really pulling the strings'. The unions are going to a lot of effort to prevent their hardworking, grassroots members from having a say on how their membership fees are spent,' he said. 'Some unions appear to be weaving a tangled web and my department is currently making inquiries into companies that have been created and who authorised billboards. 'If they have nothing to hide, they have nothing to worry about.' Mr Simpson was equally unrepentant about the unions' campaign, saying they would 'fight to the death' to ensure jobs were protected and assets were not sold.

The ETU ran a similar campaign against the former Bligh Labor government, but Simpson said the Newman government had proved a harder nut to crack. 'I've never, ever, ever come across a government that was this fascist and this right wing and this ideologically driven in my entire life,' he said. 'This government will prove to be the worst government that this country has ever had, as far as that sort of stuff goes.'<sup>19</sup>

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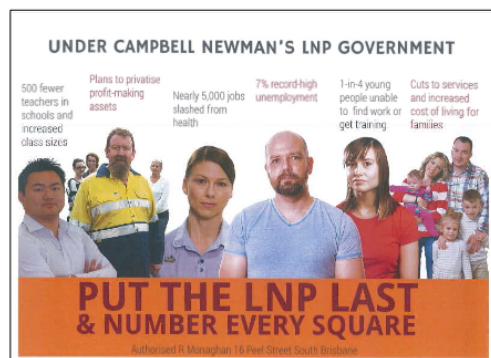
<sup>19</sup> Anti-government billboards in the sights of Bleijie', Cameron Atfield, *The Brisbane Times*, 1.3.14: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/antigovernment-billboards-in-the-sights-of-bleijie-20140301-33soe.html>

## THE QCU AND 'STAND FOR QUEENSLAND'

The QCU was also able to operate outside the restrictions of the legislation because it is technically not a trade union but a community organisation consisting of affiliated unions. The QCU leadership recognised that it had a problem in reaching a wider range of voters than its declining total membership and recognised that the union movement itself was subject to hostile media and public distrust.

To emphasise that it had concerns about issues that affected the wider community, as well as to mobilise unionists who had lost faith in the ALP or were historically unaffiliated, it embraced the same strategy as W4Q in creating an organisation which could be supported by members of the wider community.

It sponsored rallies and a sustained program of election commercials focused on asset sales and promoted a common position among the labour movement (advocated strongly by W4Q) advising all those who opposed the Newman government for whatever reason to register their opposition by filling in all the squares on the ballot paper and putting the LNP last. The incidence of these advertisements and media coverage of rallies increased throughout the election campaign.



QCU how to vote card  
Election day handout  
January 31  
(Produced by the Queensland Council of Unions)

## WHAT W4Q ACTUALLY DID TO MOBILISE DISSIDENCE

By election time, W4Q had been in the business of mobilising opposition to the Newman government for eighteen months. One of the important characteristics which made it distinctive was its distance from the ALP and thus its willingness to offer sympathy and support for a variety of alternative organisations and ideologies.



Whereas the QCU and its major affiliates had leaders who had continued as ALP figures, the most prominent leaders of the Together Union had broken with the party in protest against what they viewed as Bligh's betrayal over privatisation and had not rejoined. Working through W4Q, they could thus maintain cordial relationships with the leadership of the Greens, the Katter Party, the Palmer party and key independents - for example, when the massive sackings were announced by Newman, his arch-enemy Clive Palmer provided a significant grant to the Together union for the purposes of easing the financial burdens on suddenly-unemployed workers.

There were three stages in the process of mobilisation. The first was to establish a presence in the wider community in the Brisbane area. This involved engaging in debates on issues such as public accountability, environmental protection and wider economic policies. The second stage was to move outside Brisbane and focus on specific local issues. Regional public meetings and campaigns established a presence by providing a focus on issues such as penalty rates relevant to workers in the tourist industries of Cairns and Townsville or the impact of specific service cuts in transport as well as health. The third stage was to seek to build on this recognition as a basis for giving advice to its supporters on how to exercise electoral choices to advance their interests.

Mass media engagement started in August 2014, with Together sponsorship of newspaper advertisements asking 'Are Queenslanders worse off under Campbell Newman?'. This appeared above a photograph of Newman and his \$98,000 pay rise alongside public servant 'Rachel - \$4,690 worse off'.

ADVERTISEMENT

### Are Queenslanders worse off under Campbell Newman?

**Campbell Newman:**  
**\$98,000 a year pay rise.**

**Rachel:**  
**\$4960 worse off.\***

Before the last election Campbell Newman promised,  
"Public servants who work hard are entitled to have their wages  
at least keep pace with inflation."<sup>1</sup> But now public servants like  
those who investigate abuse of children or maintain the grounds  
at our schools are worse off because of Campbell Newman.

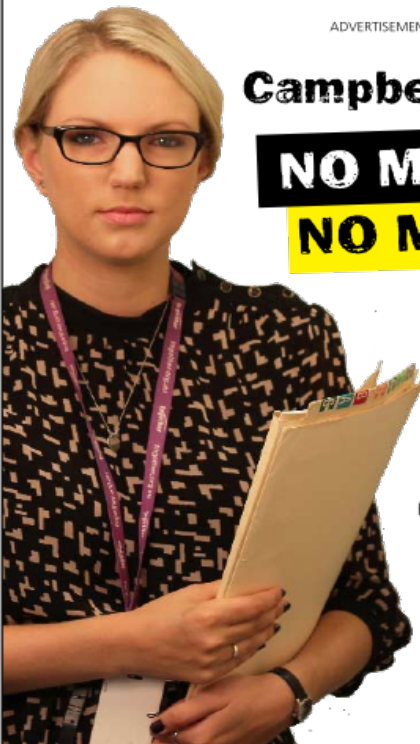
**Tell Campbell Newman to stop  
breaking his promises.**

<sup>1</sup> worse off based on the 50/50 Cost public service wages have not kept pace with inflation since 1 August 2012.  
© 2014/12, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1993, 1992, 1991, 1990, 1989, 1988, 1987, 1986, 1985, 1984, 1983, 1982, 1981, 1980, 1979, 1978, 1977, 1976, 1975, 1974, 1973, 1972, 1971, 1970, 1969, 1968, 1967, 1966, 1965, 1964, 1963, 1962, 1961, 1960, 1959, 1958, 1957, 1956, 1955, 1954, 1953, 1952, 1951, 1950, 1949, 1948, 1947, 1946, 1945, 1944, 1943, 1942, 1941, 1940, 1939, 1938, 1937, 1936, 1935, 1934, 1933, 1932, 1931, 1930, 1929, 1928, 1927, 1926, 1925, 1924, 1923, 1922, 1921, 1920, 1919, 1918, 1917, 1916, 1915, 1914, 1913, 1912, 1911, 1910, 1909, 1908, 1907, 1906, 1905, 1904, 1903, 1902, 1901, 1900, 1899, 1898, 1897, 1896, 1895, 1894, 1893, 1892, 1891, 1890, 1889, 1888, 1887, 1886, 1885, 1884, 1883, 1882, 1881, 1880, 1879, 1878, 1877, 1876, 1875, 1874, 1873, 1872, 1871, 1870, 1869, 1868, 1867, 1866, 1865, 1864, 1863, 1862, 1861, 1860, 1859, 1858, 1857, 1856, 1855, 1854, 1853, 1852, 1851, 1850, 1849, 1848, 1847, 1846, 1845, 1844, 1843, 1842, 1841, 1840, 1839, 1838, 1837, 1836, 1835, 1834, 1833, 1832, 1831, 1830, 1829, 1828, 1827, 1826, 1825, 1824, 1823, 1822, 1821, 1820, 1819, 1818, 1817, 1816, 1815, 1814, 1813, 1812, 1811, 1810, 1809, 1808, 1807, 1806, 1805, 1804, 1803, 1802, 1801, 1800, 1799, 1798, 1797, 1796, 1795, 1794, 1793, 1792, 1791, 1790, 1789, 1788, 1787, 1786, 1785, 1784, 1783, 1782, 1781, 1780, 1779, 1778, 1777, 1776, 1775, 1774, 1773, 1772, 1771, 1770, 1769, 1768, 1767, 1766, 1765, 1764, 1763, 1762, 1761, 1760, 1759, 1758, 1757, 1756, 1755, 1754, 1753, 1752, 1751, 1750, 1749, 1748, 1747, 1746, 1745, 1744, 1743, 1742, 1741, 1740, 1739, 1738, 1737, 1736, 1735, 1734, 1733, 1732, 1731, 1730, 1729, 1728, 1727, 1726, 1725, 1724, 1723, 1722, 1721, 1720, 1719, 1718, 1717, 1716, 1715, 1714, 1713, 1712, 1711, 1710, 1709, 1708, 1707, 1706, 1705, 1704, 1703, 1702, 1701, 1700, 1699, 1698, 1697, 1696, 1695, 1694, 1693, 1692, 1691, 1690, 1689, 1688, 1687, 1686, 1685, 1684, 1683, 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1, 0.

<sup>1</sup> worse off based on the 50/50 Cost public service wages have not kept pace with inflation since 1 August 2012.  
© 2014/12, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1993, 1992, 1991, 1990, 1899, 1898, 1897, 1896, 1895, 1894, 1893, 1892, 1891, 1890, 1889, 1888, 1887, 1886, 1885, 1884, 1883, 1882, 1881, 1880, 1879, 1878, 1877, 1876, 1875, 1874, 1873, 1872, 1871, 1870,

This was followed ten days later with a *Sunday Mail* advertisement on a similar theme headlining “Broken Promises” connected in the text to public service cuts. The same theme continued with a letter drop in October to 20,000 addresses in Ashgrove, backed up by a ‘To the Resident’ mail-out in early November. A month later a similar letter was sent to 28,000 Cairns residents, 17,000 in Mansfield, 21,000 in Mount Cootha, 19,000 in Mundingburra, and 24,000 in Pumicestone. There were candidate-specific material produced for letter-boxing and door-knocking in Mansfield and Mount Cootha and further newspaper advertisements in December 15 in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville. The common theme was ‘No more cuts, no more lies’.


ADVERTISEMENT



**Campbell Newman:**  
**NO MORE LIES**  
**NO MORE CUTS**

In 2012 Campbell Newman started breaking his promises.  
And now, in 2014, Campbell Newman is lying.  
He told Queenslanders he had given public sector workers “proper or higher than inflation pay deals”.<sup>1</sup>  
But in fact he’s offered Health Practitioners only 2.2%<sup>2</sup> when inflation is at 2.6%.<sup>3</sup>  
Campbell Newman is lying to Parliament.  
Campbell Newman is lying to public sector workers.  
Campbell Newman is lying to Queenslanders.

**Tell Campbell Newman to STOP THE LIE.**



<sup>1</sup> Hansard October 30, 2014. See also: ABC Radio Monday 1 December 2014 — “My government has always put pay offers at least CPI on the table to hard-working nurses, doctors, teachers, firefighters, all public sector workers.”  
<sup>2</sup> Government wage offer, 8 October 2014.  
<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. Inflation figures Sept 2013 - Sept 2014.

Find out the facts at:  
[www.nomorelies.com.au](http://www.nomorelies.com.au)

Authorised Alex Scott Together Secretary 27 Peel Street South Brisbane 4101

“Stop the lie” Full page newspaper ad.  
Courier-Mail, Townsville Bulletin and Cairns Post.  
Week of December 15, 2014

From 6 January onwards, during the election campaign itself, the attacks continued to focus primarily on the Newman government's dishonesty, but a second message focussed specifically on cuts in health care and hospital services and the on-going dispute with doctors.

**NO MORE LIES**  
**NO MORE CUTS**

**This election put hospitals FIRST  
by putting the LNP LAST.**

[www.nomorelies.com.au](http://www.nomorelies.com.au)  
 Authorised Alex Scott Together Secretary 27 Peel Street South Brisbane 4101

<p><b>Queensland's health system is worse thanks to Campbell Newman and the LNP.</b></p> <p>In 2012 Campbell Newman and the LNP cut thousands of Queensland health jobs and cut millions of dollars from the health budget.</p> <p>In 2013 the Newman government adopted their "Blueprint" for privatisation and outsourcing of health services.</p> <p>In 2014 Campbell Newman's LNP government <b>declared war on doctors</b>, in an attempt to stop them from speaking out for patients. Now the Newman LNP government is misleading Queenslanders about the fact that thousands of people <b>can't get onto their waiting lists</b>.</p>	<p>According to the Newman government's own figures, less than half of Queensland's public health workers think that their "workplace is adequately resourced to deliver quality services".</p> <p>Campbell Newman's LNP government <b>has diverted vital resources away from hospitals into expensive and unnecessary public advertising campaigns</b>.</p> <p>We need a government that puts resources where they are needed most. We need a government that listens to its health practitioner and medical workforce, instead of attacking them.</p> <p>We need a government that puts patients before profits.</p>
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**This election, vote for our health services by putting the LNP last.**

"Put hospital first/doorknocking" DL  
 Doorknocking flyer  
 Also distributed to activists for letterboxing  
 January 6 - 31  
 Approximately 60,000 printed  
 2 Sided DL Card

A further 175,000 'To the Resident' letters were sent to addresses in Barron River, Pine Rivers, Cairns, Kallangur, Mount Cootha, Sunnybank, Mt Ommaney, Thuringowa and Murrumba. There was also publicity in advertisements and mass media identified with a new web address simply called "nomorelies".

Responses to opinion polls being regularly conducted by ReachTEL for the union were identifying honesty as the main concern across the community in general. Perceived government dishonesty ranked above public service cuts and the ALP scare campaign on privatisation although this had particular salience for unionists.

Meanwhile, the 'Working for Queenslanders' nomenclature was appended to a series of direct mailings of material signed by Dr Chris Davis to specific Brisbane western suburbs electorates.

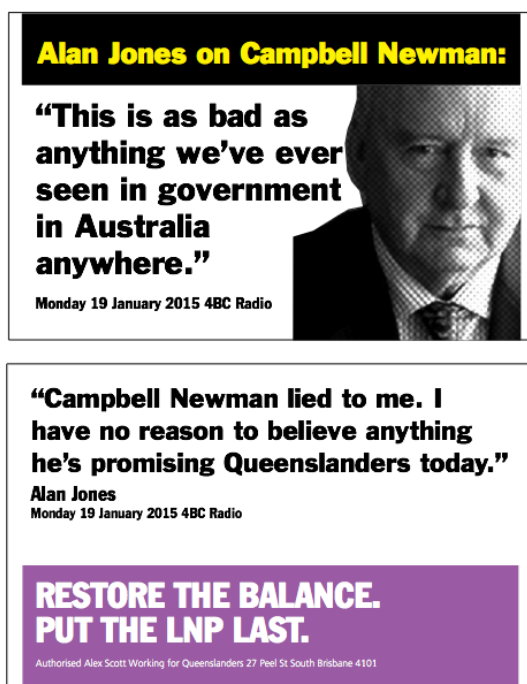


"Chris Davis Letter — standard"  
Direct Mail (priority postage) to Mt Ommaney and Mt Coot-Tha. 28-29 January. Approximately 40,000 addresses

Queensland lawyers and doctors received similar letters (5,000 letters to each group). All of these addressed the single issue of honesty, but the two-page letter to doctors dwelt at length on the contract disputes and the dangers of privatisation of the health service.

During the same period that the western suburbs were hearing from Chris Davis, the 'Alan Jones postcard' was sent to 100,000 addresses in Pine Rivers, Bundaberg, Toowoomba North and Mount Ommaney.

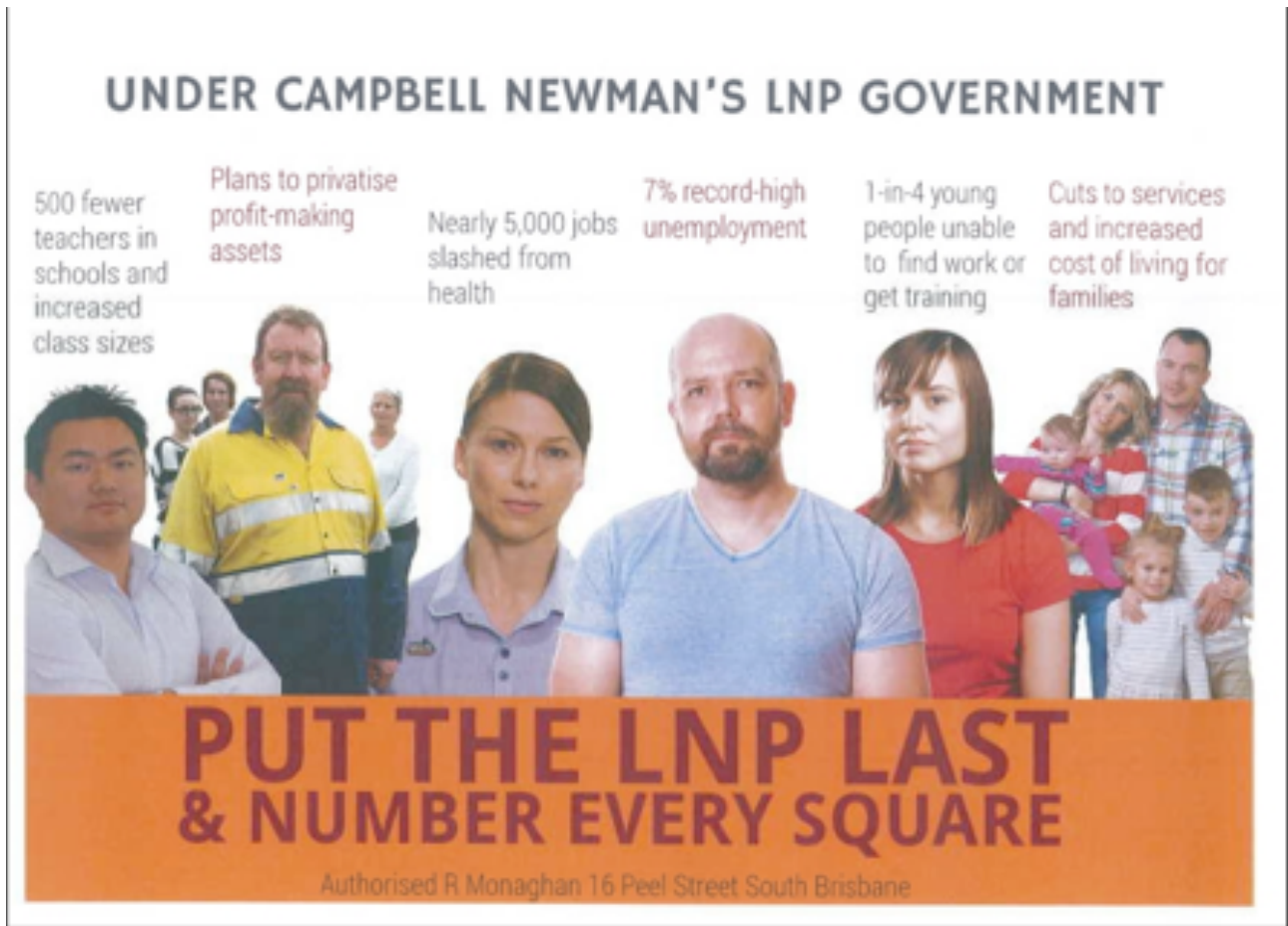




"Alan Jones Postcard"  
Australia Post unaddressed mailout. 27-30 January.  
100,000 addresses in Pine Rivers, Bundaberg, Toowoomba North, Mt Ommaney

This suggests assumptions were made about the demographics of the two groups of constituencies in their relative ranking of the opinions of Jones and Davis.

During this period, the QCU 'Stand for Queensland' campaign was ramping up its television and newspaper advertising and printed election day handouts with the same message of numbering all the squares and putting the LNP last.



The top half of the illustration shown earlier identified key issues relevant to particular unions - in the order illustrated, teachers, electricity workers, nurses - as well as the general issues of unemployment, living costs and cuts to services.

Together's material tended to offer fewer and simpler slogans, returning to the issue of broken promises about job cuts. But it also targeted particular electorates and the demographics within electorates, such as this letter to voters of Ashgrove. Note the new website address: '<http://www.howcanwetrustyou.org.au>'.

Dear Resident,

**Ashgrove deserves a local member who keeps his promises.**

Before the last election Campbell Newman promised that there would be no forced redundancies. Then as soon as he was elected he sacked 14,000 people.

You might be, or know, one of those people and the impacts this has had on your community.

**Campbell Newman broke his promise to thousands of hardworking Queenslanders.**

Campbell Newman also said before he was elected that the wages of public servants should at least keep pace with increases in the cost of living - but instead, he is still standing in the way of a fair pay rise for the people who work tirelessly for all of us.

Now, Ashgrove's public servants – including workers who protect our kids from harm and keep our schools running - are thousands of dollars worse off.

This means less money at the local shops. Less money for the kids' sport. Less money for ever-increasing bills.

**We're asking Campbell Newman to keep his promises to Ashgrove.**

Ashgrove's public servants deserve to be treated fairly and finally given a fair pay rise in line with the increasing cost of living.

If he won't keep his promises, how can we ever trust him again?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alex Scott'.

Alex Scott  
Together Secretary

*P.S. To help us send Campbell Newman a strong message about his broken promises to Ashgrove, please contact us at [ashgrove@together.org.au](mailto:ashgrove@together.org.au) or on 0416 907 962.*

**[www.howcanwetrustyou.org.au](http://www.howcanwetrustyou.org.au)**

Authorised Alex Scott Together Secretary 27 Peel Street South Brisbane 4101

"Newman's Lies Letter" to seat of Ashgrove  
Australia Post Unaddressed Mailout in plain "To the resident" envelope.  
3-7 November 2014. Approximately 20,000 addresses

These messages - reminders of a dark but not distant past - were reinforced by video on YouTube, television and cinemas and emails.

In separate videos, Chris Davis talked on health and privatisation, as did a doctor, a preventive health specialist, and a physiotherapist. There were also videos which adapted the template of a general video on dishonest job cuts to identify Newman meeting specific candidates across a range of constituencies outside Brisbane.



The digital campaign was organised by a specialist firm called 'Gamechanger Media'. The campaign was divided into two types: 'long lead' and 'reactive' (in their jargon). They engaged with a wide variety of social media and, using Facebook and YouTube, targeted localised messages to key electorates identified by the union's polling, electorates which subsequently experienced large swings to the ALP. In a total budget of \$459,518, the agency identified as getting best value from cinema advertising in regional Queensland (\$8,800) and Crikey (\$3,000).



The best performing advertisement, and the one which sticks in most memories, was the spoof of an NLP team in a life boat.



The most interesting use of social media came with the geographical targeting of social media to the audience at a specific event, the leaders debate at the Bronco Leagues Club at Red Hill, which was submitted for a Labour Day Award. The submission, 'Together's strategic use of Twitter during the Queensland Election Leaders Debate' is reproduced as an Appendix 1.

## NON-UNION ORGANISATIONS AND PREFERENCES : GETUP AND THE GREENS

The question needs to be asked about the effectiveness of this campaign by W4Q and the role of other organisations in the 'battleground of ideas' which confronted the various opponents of the LNP. The military metaphor of targets, campaigns and battlegrounds has been developed at length in our monograph, written in late 2014 and published at the start of the 2015 campaign.<sup>20</sup>

The online organisation, GetUp, was the most prominent and wide-ranging of these organisations. It became strongly involved in Queensland politics after the election of the Newman government, particularly campaigning on environmental issues and the government's failures on public accountability and its weakening of anti-corruption bodies inside and outside Parliament. GetUp established and maintained close personal links with the leadership of the Together union, which also provided access to office accommodation when GetUp raised its profile during the election campaign.

GetUp also provided an organizational link with the Greens, one of three minor parties contesting the election (alongside teams led by Palmer, Katter and – an unanticipated late entrant – Pauline Hanson). *Vote Compass Queensland*<sup>21</sup> polling identified environmental issues and public accountability as significant, even though both the LNP and the ALP focussed on asset sales/ leases and general economic management. The ALP trod carefully on environmental issues, particular the impact of mining in the Galilee Basin on the Great Barrier Reef, because of the problems of rising unemployment and the potential for job creation in the coal mining industry.

The Greens had created some disarray for those seeking to maximise opposition to the LNP. This was the outcome of its hyper-democratic mechanism of empowering each constituency branch to offer 'how-to-vote' advice to its members. This brought to the surface the underlying universal tension which challenges Greens and the ALP – should the Greens be regarded as the natural ally of the ALP against conservative forces, or the natural enemy of the ALP in the competition for the same progressive voters not rusted on to the ALP by union or class affiliation?

This tension played out in some personality conflicts at the local level. Sympathisers relying on the how-to-vote card handed out during the election campaign were advised in some key constituencies to only 'Vote 1', rather than follow the advice from the central party structure and from GetUp to number all the preference boxes on the ballot paper and put the LNP last. It has been argued that this affected the outcome in the key constituency of Mt Ommaney and that the loss of this seat to the LNP cost the ALP the chance of a working majority.

Elsewhere during the vote-casting days, GetUp activists were literally singing off the same hymn sheet as both the union-supported community organisations and the Greens with everyone handing out cards advising voters to fill in all the squares and 'put the LNP last'. The ALP also

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<sup>20</sup> Scott R and Scott A, *Queensland 2014: Political Battleground*, TJRFoundation Report No 14: [http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au/\\_dbase\\_upl/Qld\\_2014\\_Political\\_Battleground\\_with\\_Epilogue.pdf](http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au/_dbase_upl/Qld_2014_Political_Battleground_with_Epilogue.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> The Australian Broadcasting Commission ran *Vote Compass Queensland* throughout the election campaign. See the results at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/qld-election-2015/vote-compass/results/>



varied its single-number advice by local negotiation, particularly in those seats in which the preferences of other parties might determine the outcome. Where this occurred, such as in key Brisbane electorates like Mount Cootha and Ashgrove, the uncommitted voter was being handed three or four cards with identical advice about how to exercise their democratic right to the maximum.

This led to the personal highlight for me : as befits a non-partisan progressive think-tank director, I was one of a group wearing GetUp T-Shirts in the Mount Cootha electorate. Mid-morning word came through via text message that we should desist from handing out our pieces of paper under a legal injunction from the LNP campaign director. We continued undeterred. GetUp immediately responded, as is its wont, by summoning high-powered voluntary legal experts who went before a magistrate to assert the guaranteed freedom of speech implied in the national constitution – which had also applied to W4Q in the recent past . A few hours later, the text came back telling us of the decision favourable to GetUp. For a brief glorious moment we all felt like Mahatma himself in our passive resistance.

## ELECTION OUTCOMES - WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN



## 2015 Election Results

	Votes	Vote Percent	Seats Won
Liberal National Party	1,083,688	41.3	42
Australian Labor Party	982,891	37.5	44
The Greens	221,190	8.4	0
Palmer United Party	133,889	5.1	0
Katter's Australian Party	50,506	1.9	2
Family First Party	31,223	1.2	0
One Nation	24,110	0.9	0
Others	95,305	3.6	1

Key evidence suggests that the collective effect of the non-party groups was to materially influence the final result. This shows in the striking change in voter willingness to move beyond expressing a single preference for a minor party unlikely to win ('exhausting' their vote) to expressing a full range of preferences.

The key general statistic is that the number of voters who allowed their preferences to be exhausted without expressing a choice between the winner and the major rival fell dramatically between 2012 and 2015. Being chronically innumerate, I have confined discussion of this issue to an appendix based on information provided by another analyst, more wise than me – like Winnie the Pooh, I am a bear of very small brain when it comes to matters of number - (Pooh by contrast was more worried by very long words. We both like honey, though.) Appendix 2, 'Voting Behaviour: Comments from a W4Q psephologist', is drawn from the files of the Together Union.

In his address to the Together State Conference in February, General Secretary Alex Scott offered a more authoritative analysis of the 'put the LNP last' strategy:

The 'Put the LNP Last' strategy delivered at least four additional seats to the ALP, and assisted the ALP to come from behind and win in a further five seats. In 2012 the ALP did not win a single seat where they were behind in the primary vote but the preference strategy delivered increased margins of between 1% and 3.5% in every seat the ALP gained by reducing the exhaustion rate and increasing preference flows."

He also identified an approach sustained by two years of intensive internal polling by Reachtel which helped to identify seats and regions with local issues of high salience:

Examples include health in North Queensland, public service cuts in the inner city of Brisbane, job uncertainty and employment in other urban areas of Brisbane, all overlaid by the wider concern for the effects of asset sales and privatisation. Being responsive to particular opportunities: 'picking every fight possible with the LNP leadership produced a distrust of Campbell Newman. Using politicians' pay rise as a political weapon further leveraged that distrust.

His summary slide at the conference indicated the significance of early understanding of the potential effect of changing preference flows, then pushing the 'Put the LNP Last' message which ultimately removed the government.<sup>22</sup> What he did not say was that there is also some evidence to suggest that, had the ALP been offering the same advice on its how-to-vote card – fill in all the squares putting the LNP last – they would have secured a working majority rather than be heading a minority government.

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<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 3 for Alex Scott's powerpoint slides

## CONCLUSIONS – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY OUTCOMES

There is an extensive evidence of widespread disengagement and disillusionment with the current political system and the politicians who operate within it.

The Queensland election of 2015 ought to have provided a 'perfect storm' for social disengagement:

- (a) a lop-sided parliamentary minority perceived to be unable to return to government in the short term;
- (b) parliamentary procedures operated to minimise publicity of comments from this minority or any other dissenters;
- (c) media publicity for corrupt or distasteful behavior by members of parliament bringing the institution and all politicians into disrepute;
- (d) accusations against both the Premier and the former Premier of broken electoral promises;
- (e) an electoral system which:
  - allows the incumbent to choose a minimum length of campaign to discuss policies;
  - allows the incumbent to choose to time the election over an extended holiday period;
  - operates under a voting system which combines:
    - compulsory attendance,
    - a new system of voter identification; but
    - no requirement to express a preference beyond marking the ballot paper once.

In a post-election review of 2014 (Ryan Research Report 14) we identified the multiplicity of grievances generated by the behaviour of the Newman government.<sup>23</sup> These affected a disparate range of community groups, from motorcycle riders to high court judges, from farmers affected by coal seam gas to users of public health services, from doctors to prison workers and inmates to fishermen. Left to their own devices, each of these groups might have been content to vote for a party specific to their interests or not to vote meaningfully at all.

In the Australian Senate or in upper houses, preference wranglers might have gained representation for some of these parties. But state elections in Queensland do not provide for proportional representation. The achievement of the labour movement was to develop organisations which acted as a catalyst in the context of its optional reference to ensure that votes which might otherwise have been exhausted counted towards the final result.

'Working for Queenslanders' was created out of the need identified by the Together Union for an organisation to act to represent the interests of its members. It was the monster created by Mr Bleijie's Frankenstein. Because it was given access to funds for in-depth polling and long-term advertising campaigns, it generated community engagement outside the union ranks and mobilised dissent. Voters who were unlikely to support the ALP came to agree that the ALP

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au/\\_dbase\\_upl/Qld\\_2014\\_Political\\_Battleground\\_with\\_Epilogue.pdf](http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au/_dbase_upl/Qld_2014_Political_Battleground_with_Epilogue.pdf)

represented a lesser evil when they were encouraged to choose who should form government W4Q came to life to nullify the original intention of repressive legislation; in 2015 it unexpectedly achieved this objective by ejecting from office the authors of that legislation.

The ALP failed to follow a similar line for maximising preference flows, perhaps driven in part by its fear of the growing appeal of environmental issues, and thus of the Greens. If the ALP had promoted the same policy of W4Q, Not4Sale, SfQ and GetUp, it would almost certainly now hold power with a clear majority. Only time will judge whether this was a lost opportunity or whether its long-term fears were justified about the ALP being undermined by progressive forces inside and outside the labour movement.

The primary reason why the labour movement was able to mould the preferences from so many dissident groups was historical. For my own generation and that of our children, there was perhaps initial tolerance of the idea that twenty years of almost uninterrupted ALP government could be ended by an exercise of electoral will in 2012.

But this tolerance quickly evaporated with the behavior of the Newman regime, exercising power with a ruthless disregard for accountability which alienated a wide range of social groups well beyond the normal orbit of the labour movement. There was widespread concern that Queensland was returning rapidly to excesses of the Bjelke-Petersen era which most Queenslanders, until 2012, regarded as a closed book.<sup>24</sup>

Given that Newman lost his seat, and the most offensive of his policies were rapidly abandoned by the LNP, and there was some tempering of ideology, there is no certainty that this political mobilisation can be repeated in the future.

One local commentator sympathetic to the LNP, Graham Young, provided an electoral analysis which has become part of the rhetoric sustaining the Opposition's morale post-Newman:

As the Queensland election showed, a weaker opponent can do a judo throw, using your strength against you to score an unheralded win... electors were cranky with Newman, and he ran a campaign based not on his achievements and Labor's past performance, but on spending promises funded by a massive privatisation campaign... our qualitative polling of swinging voters showed the loss was due to three factors - dislike of asset sales (14%), dislike of Newman or the style of his government (34%) and a protest vote cast to send the government a message in the 'knowledge' that they were certain to be returned (34%).<sup>25</sup>

However dubious the specific figures, there is bi-partisan recognition here of the "judo throw" but perhaps there is less awareness of the union muscle behind the throw.

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<sup>24</sup> One aged observer who joined the ALP in response to the Newman excesses noted that the surge in new members in her branch comprised people who, as she had, had worked through the implementation of the Fitzgerald reforms, or very young members who were freshly politicised.

<sup>25</sup> <http://whatthepeoplewant.net/polls-blog/march-2115/foley-can-undo-baird.html> .

David Peetz, in an academic article he summarized for The Conversation (February 23 2015) posed the question of whether unions can mobilise outside labour? Are unions capable of engagement in the 'big conversation' about alternatives to status quo thinking? Peetz argues that this would require a change to the movement's 'insider' perspective and anti-environmental image, but he sees hope in recent evidence of change on both dimensions.

Indeed, unions are probably the only group in Australia with the resources, the breadth of membership, and the organising capability to draw together the disparate groups and the individuals concerned with developing an alternative. In that way, they could be central to the solution.

In the end, if unions are to be part of the solution, there is much to be done. It requires action in developing and empowering workplace delegates and members, democratising processes within unions, strengthening articulations between levels, developing better framing capabilities, managing governance properly, becoming learning organisations, deepening links and networks with other organisations and movements in the community and civil society, and using such links to develop and articulate an alternative vision of society that reflects progressive values.

It is a huge task. But if unions do not do this, who will?"<sup>26</sup>

I have presented a case study here of how one union in one election has led the way in mobilising dissent, reinforcing and expanding on an election message controversially adopted by the QCU against the preferences of the ALP.

The General Secretary of Together concluded his address with the following challenge to those at the conference:

We need to examine how the skills and programs we used to change the election can be deployed for other purposes: driving up our membership, supporting the issues they care about, and changing not just the government – but changing Queensland.

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<sup>26</sup>David Peetz, 'Are Australian trade unions part of the solution, or part of the problem?' February 2015 : <http://www.australianreview.net/digest/2015/02/peetz.html>.



## APPENDIX 1

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE LEADERS DEBATE

#### Together's strategic use of Twitter during the Queensland Election Leaders Debate

During the 2015 State Election, Together members and Working For Queenslanders supporters used a number of channels to get their message out about the issues that mattered to them and to engage the public on numbering every square and putting the LNP last. One example of this was our use of twitter to highlight these issues during the leaders debate in Red Hill.

Together adopted a number of geographically targeted tweets on the key hashtags for the debate #qldvotes, #qldforum, and #pplforum.

The key goals for this campaign were to –

- ☒ Own the moment
- ☒ Demonstrate the salience of key issues for Together members in the election context.
- ☒ Drive further engagement in the final week of the campaign.

What worked –

- ☒ Local resonance; speaking with a locally relevant audience
- ☒ Short and concise message
- ☒ Clear, punchy images were used.

Results –

- ☒ Campaigns drove engagement rates almost double the Australian benchmark.
- ☒ Campaign drove 710 video views with 50% completion rate. Above average.
- ☒ Trended on twitter in Brisbane during the debate.

#### Screenshots/links to relevant tweets.

- ☒ @togetherqld Campbell Newman promised "no forced redundancies" then cut 24,000 jobs. You can't trust him. <https://twitter.com/togetherqld/status/560272148271333376/photo/1>
  - Retweets – 253
  - Favourites – 134

- Impressions - 84,428

🗨 @togetherqld The LNP have a plan to cut more public sector jobs. Put the LNP last. <https://twitter.com/togetherqld/status/560272284447813632/photo/1>

- Retweets: 189
- Favourites: 105
- Impressions : 59,841

🗨 @togetherqld How much will LNP donors Ramsay Healthcare profit from @theqldpremier's decision to outsource health services? <https://twitter.com/togetherqld/status/558547429931241472>

- Retweets: 300
- Favourites: 141
- Impressions - 97,244

🗨 @togetherqld Why do politicians deserve a bigger proportional pay increase than the public service @theqldpremier?

- Retweets: 225
- Favourites: 143
- Impressions: 115,087

Video - <https://amp.twimg.com/v/b2f38f80-59ee-4026-8d43-e3eb84e0a947>

## APPENDIX 2

### VOTING BEHAVIOUR: COMMENTS FROM A W4Q PSEPHOLOGIST

The clearest example of changes in the level of “exhausted” votes is the case of the Greens, where the figure dropped from 41.1% in 2012, to 26.7% in 2015. Similar levels were recorded in the case of the Katter and Palmer parties.<sup>27</sup>

In 2015 Labor received around 20% stronger preference flows from the Greens. In 2012 the big first preference gap delivered a boost to the LNP through exhausted preferences, a factor less relevant in 2015. On a Green vote of 8-10% in most urban seats, the change in preferences delivered an extra 2-3% to the swing to Labor after preferences.

There was also a dramatic shift in Katter's Australian Party preferences. In 38 electorates at the 2012 election where Katter candidates were the last excluded, preferences split 20.0% to Labor, 28.3% to the LNP and 51.7% exhausted. In 2015 there were seven contests where Katter candidates were the last exclude. The preference flows were very different, 35.7% to Labor, 23.2% to the LNP and 41.1% exhausted.

Palmer United Party polled 5.1% statewide through its 50 candidates, with Brisbane being the area where the party was generally absent from the ballot paper. The party polled 8.0% in regional Queensland, 8.0% on the Gold Coast and 10.0% on the Sunshine Coast.

There were 22 electorates where Palmer candidates were the last excluded. Palmer United preferences in total split 40.0% to Labor, 19.4% to the LNP and 40.6% exhausted.”)

I agree with the seats Antony Green listed as determined by preferences flows (Maryborough, Bundaberg, Mount Coot-tha, Ferny Grove). I also measure it happening in Springwood and possibly Pumicestone.

As for the seats the LNP came close to losing because of the changing preference flows. Mansfield, Whitsunday, Mount Ommaney and Lockyer (although "Put the LNP Last" ended up benefiting Hanson there, making it a two candidate preferred contest between the LNP and One Nation).

Unfortunately there is no way to prove that the Katter vote from 2012 flowed to the ALP in 2015, though some of it surely did. From our work over the last few years, there was a lot of voter churn in regional seats - where the LNP lost some support to various parties, picked up new voters from other places, and vote swapping went on between the ALP, the Greens and the minor parties as well. But even though we know that both these things were happening (Katter 2012 "protest vote" going to ALP, and voter churn), it's impossible to give both effects proportions.

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<sup>27</sup> The only readily available source of electoral data is the Electoral Commission Queensland site: <http://results.ecq.qld.gov.au/elections/state/State2015/results/summary.html>. On the seats that changed because of bigger preference flows, see Antony Green. <http://blogs.abc.net.au/antony>

In our polling of seats where we asked about the Katter vote and no Katter candidate ended up standing on election day, the ALP primary ended up being higher by about 50% of the value of the polled Katter vote, the LNP primary higher by around 20% of the value of the polled Katter vote, and the other minor party candidates picking up the 30%. But these are pretty small numbers we're working with (usually 6% of the vote or less in any given seat) - so it's only indicative rather than any strong level of evidence.

At the national level, any federal seat where the Katter vote is 30% larger than the primary vote gap between the ALP and LNP makes them highly relevant, because any dedicated preferencing direction by Katter can decide the outcomes in those seats (or at least in those seats where the Greens score single digit rather than double digit primary votes - because those high Green vote seats often provide enough preference flows to the ALP to decide the result by themselves)."

There were some interesting side-effects of this strategy. First, some minority groups ideologically anathema to the ALP and the Greens – neo-nazis for example – were placed ahead of the LNP.

The Katter Party decision to contest far fewer seats than in 2012, ostensibly as an economy measure following its poor showing at the previous national election, meant the ALP effectively became the prime beneficiary of protest votes in some north Queensland and Brisbane seats.

Third, the impact of Palmer United Party (PUP), which had undermined Katter in the national election, effectively evaporated, but party candidates remained on the ballot paper as another beacon for protest as an alternative to the ALP. Putting the LNP last was an attractive option for PUP supporters, given the on-going hostility between the party's leader, Clive Palmer, and Campbell Newman.

Fourth, the QCU (SfQ) campaign was occasionally inconsistent at local level when the ALP seemed likely to run behind not one, but two other parties. Where polling evidence suggested that One Nation, PUP or Katter might be the most significant opponent of the LNP, how-to-vote cards deviated from the standard "Fill in every square" and recommended voting only for the ALP.

Fifth, as mentioned above, the entrenched latent support for Pauline Hanson, especially in the Ipswich area, almost led to her victory over the LNP on the back of ALP preferences. This was one example where the ALP how-to-vote card departed from its single-preference strategy and placed Hanson below the LNP. But many voters ignored this directive. The result was that when the ALP candidate was excluded, ALP preferences did not all flow to the LNP as directed on the local how-to-vote card.

# Polling Overview

- Public polls and internal polling all produced similar primary votes, and were all similar to actual primary vote election results
- Public polls used preference distributions from the 2012 election (as per normal Australian practice), producing a more favourable two party preferred result for the LNP
- Two Party Preferred trends had been static for 6 months, bouncing around 51.6% Two Party Preferred to the LNP (using 2012 preferences) with ReachTEL, Newspoll and Galaxy all having 52% to the LNP (rounded to the nearest point) on their last polls before election

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **TOGETHER'S ANALYSIS OF POLLING<sup>28</sup>**

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<sup>28</sup> In his address to the State Conference, the President of Together included these Powerpoint slides



## 2015 Election Results

	Votes	Vote Percent	Seats Won
Liberal National Party	1,083,688	41.3	42
Australian Labor Party	982,891	37.5	44
The Greens	221,190	8.4	0
Palmer United Party	133,889	5.1	0
Katter's Australian Party	50,506	1.9	2
Family First Party	31,223	1.2	0
One Nation	24,110	0.9	0
Others	95,305	3.6	1

## Preference Strategy – Put the LNP Last

- The *Put the LNP Last* strategy delivered **at least** 4 additional seats to the ALP than would have occurred without it: Bundaberg, Maryborough, Ferny Grove and Springwood
- Assisted the ALP to come from behind and win in a further 5 seats: Barron River, Brisbane Central, Mount Coot-tha, Mundingburra and Pumicestone
- Delivered increased margins of between 1% and 3.5% in every seat the ALP gained by reducing the exhaustion rate and increasing preference flows to ALP
- In 2012, the ALP did not win a single seat where they were behind in the primary vote

## Preference Strategy – Put the LNP Last

	2015 Election Primary Votes	Two Party Preferred-2012 preference flows	Two Party Preferred in 2015
<b>LNP</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>49</b> (+/- 0.3%)
<b>ALP</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>48.2</b>	<b>51</b> (+/- 0.3%)
<b>Greens</b>	<b>8.4</b>		(notional estimate)
<b>Others</b>	<b>12.8</b>		

- *Put the LNP Last* strategy delivered an additional 2.8% of state wide ALP two party preferred compared to 2012 preference flows.
- Without this strategy, we would have an LNP government today

## Preference Strategy – Put the LNP Last

Example: 1000 Minor Party Votes (in 22 electorates where preference data available)				
	ALP votes gained from preferences	LNP votes gained from preferences	Preference Flow	ALP net vote gain
<b>2012 Election</b>	<b>300</b> (58% of flow)	<b>214</b> (42% of flow)	<b>49% Exhausted</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>2015 Election</b>	<b>530</b> (78% of flow)	<b>150</b> (22% of flow)	<b>32% Exhausted</b>	<b>381</b>

- In 2012, every 1000 minor party votes delivered an additional net gain of 86 votes to the ALP after preferences
- In 2015, every 1000 minor party votes delivered an additional net gain of 381 votes to the ALP after preferences

## Political Model – seats identified late 2014

Highly Likely ALP Gains (over 95% probability of ALP winning)			
Inala	Mackay	Lytton	Greenslopes
Woodridge	Redcliffe	Sandgate	Cook
South Brisbane	Stafford	Nudgee	Morayfield
Rockhampton	Bulimba	Ipswich	Capalaba
Bundamba	Yeerongpilly	Logan	Ashgrove
Mulgrave	Waterford	Ipswich West	Townsville
Algester	Barron River		

## Political Model – seats identified late 2014

Seats with 70% Probability of being won by the ALP			
Cairns	Kallangur	Albert	Stretton
Murrumba	Springwood	Mundingburra	Mount Ommaney
Mount Coot-tha	Brisbane Central	Toowoomba North	Keppel
Thuringowa	Pine Rivers		

## Political Model – seats identified late 2014

Less than 25% Probability of seats falling	
Sunnybank	Burleigh
Ferny Grove	Mirani
Whitsunday	Hinchinbrook
Maryborough	

- While the model was highly accurate (in fact, more accurate than any pundit was on the day before election day!), models only provide baseline starting points. Human decisions and human intelligence still matter – models only assist those decisions
- Bundaberg was added as a target after further research
- Maryborough was identified as more winnable than the model suggested because of our long term campaigning in the seat
- Mount Ommaney was identified as being much harder than the model suggested, but still winnable
- Gladstone at this stage was still held by Liz Cunningham who owned the seat
- Pumicestone didn't appear on the model because for 2 years it had bucked the swing trend of the previous 2 years.

## Polling Overview

- Public polls and internal polling all produced similar primary votes, and were all similar to actual primary vote election results
- Public polls used preference distributions from the 2012 election (as per normal Australian practice), producing a more favourable two party preferred result for the LNP
- Two Party Preferred trends had been static for 6 months, bouncing around 51.6% Two Party Preferred to the LNP (using 2012 preferences) with ReachTEL, Newspoll and Galaxy all having 52% to the LNP (rounded to the nearest point) on their last polls before election

## Polling Overview

- Our research since early 2013 had highlighted the potential to dramatically change preference flows at the 2015 election
- Redcliffe and Stafford by-elections demonstrated on the ground how dramatic a change that could be – ultimately mirrored by the 2015 election preference flows
- Knowing that preferences were much better for the ALP than public polling was saying allowed us to understand the electorate better than anyone else. Especially for campaign purposes
- DOWNSIDE: Nearly everyone thought we were mad because we believed the ALP could win the election
- *FUN EXERCISE: Ask Alex about how many eyebrows he had raised at him over the last 2 years*

## Internal Polling

- Using the electoral roll as it stood at January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 for phone numbers, we were able to ring every voter household including mobile phone numbers where available in each of the electorates
- Polling was undertaken State wide, and in the seats of Maryborough, Bundaberg and Mt Ommaney.
- These seats had been previously identified as winnable, were far up the pendulum, weren't expected by the LNP to be in play (until it was too late for them to adapt), and were the types of seats the ALP needed to win to push their seat numbers above that of the LNP

## Internal Polling – State Wide

	ReachTEL	Together
<b>LNP</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>41.1</b>
<b>ALP</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>38.4</b>
<b>Greens</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>PUP</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>ALP TPP*</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>LNP TPP*</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<i>*Using 2012 preferences</i>		

- ReachTEL polled state wide on behalf of Channel 7 on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> January.
- Together polled state wide on the following two nights
- Results were virtually identical – which had been a feature of our internal polling since inception
- When elections are called, some pollsters struggle to adapt to the voting intention dynamics that occur among respondents.
- Our first campaign polling test passed worked perfectly

## Internal Polling Case Study: Maryborough, Bundaberg and Mt Ommaney

### 2015 Election Results

Maryborough	
One Nation	7
LNP	30.6
Green	2.6
PUP	12.4
Foley	21.3
IND	1
ALP	25.3
<b>ALP TPP</b>	<b>51.6</b>
<b>LNP TPP</b>	<b>48.4</b>

Bundaberg	
Green	4.1
IND	2.8
LNP	41.5
PUP	12
ALP	39.7
<b>ALP TPP</b>	<b>51.4</b>
<b>LNP TPP</b>	<b>48.6</b>

Mt Ommaney	
LNP	46.3
Green	11
PUP	3.8
ALP	38.9
<b>ALP TPP</b>	<b>49.7</b>
<b>LNP TPP</b>	<b>50.3</b>



## Maryborough

	Together Polling	Election Results
LNP	30.8	30.6
Foley	25.2	21.3
ALP	21.1	25.3
PUP	11.4	12.4
One Nation	4.4	7
Green	4.6	2.6
Russel Wattie	2.5	1
Undecided %	13%	

- Polling undertaken 3 weeks before election day
- High Undecided vote was apparent, unusual for Maryborough
- Making that undecided vote break to the ALP was the key to winning Maryborough.
- Most uncertain of the seats as it was a competition to come second. With *"Put the LNP Last"* campaign, whoever came second, would win the seat from third place preferences (Foley or ALP)
- Highly likely the long term ground campaign in Maryborough boosted the number of undecided, allowing the seat to be flipped

## Bundaberg

	Together Poll	Election Results
LNP	42	41.5
ALP	37	39.7
PUP	11	12
Green	4	4.1
IND	5	2.8
ALP TPP	48	51.4
LNP TPP	52	48.6
Undecided	15%	

- Polling undertaken on the Saturday before the election
- Undecided vote extremely high at 15%
- As with Maryborough, making that undecided break to Labor in the last week was the key to victory
- *"Put The LNP Last"* campaign pushed preference flows a little higher to the ALP in Bundaberg than we were estimating (and we were estimating them higher than everyone else).

## Mt Ommaney

	Together Poll	Election Result
LNP	49	46.3
Green	8	11
PUP	2	3.8
ALP	40	38.9
ALP TPP	47	49.7
LNP TPP	53	50.3
Undecided	9%	

- Mt Ommaney polled two weeks before election day
- Was the hardest of seats to change – very high population turnover and demographically shifting to LNP over time
- Greens had “Just Vote 1 Green” how to vote card in Mt Ommaney – weakening needed preference flows
- Relatively low undecided rate meant even though breaking votes to the ALP in the last two weeks was successful, there still was not quite enough undecided voters to flip the seat.

## Summary

- Understanding early the potential of changing preference flows allowed us to push for the *Put the LNP Last* campaign, which ultimately removed the LNP government
- Understanding that the swings weren’t homogenous across the state allowed us to target seats way up the pendulum that needed to be brought home eg Pine Rivers, Bundaberg, Maryborough and the Cairns and Townsville regions. Including targeting many of these seats 18 months before the election
- Understanding early, let us campaign early. Tracking the electorate let us adapt to the electorate as we changed it.

## Conclusion

*"You cannot manage what you do not know"*

We knew nearly everything – where swings were happening, why they were happening there, how long they had been happening for.

We knew how many people were undecided, we knew why they were undecided, we knew what those undecided voters cared about and where they lived

We knew what demographics were concerned about which issues, we knew which issues we could use in each seat to maximise the swing against the LNP government.

If it were not for Together, the government of Qld today would be a Liberal National Party one.

## Further Work

- Ground campaign analysis - available after the ECQ releases final booth counts.
- Member attitudes to the campaign survey – breaking Australian records was the easy part, we need to know how to do it even better
- Examining how the skills and programs we used to change the election can be redeployed for other purposes: Driving our membership, supporting the issues they care about, changing not just the government – but changing Qld.
- A beer. For today Annastacia Palaszczuk gets sworn in as Premier