



INNISFAIL ADVOCATE COLUMN 12.5.10

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For immediate release

THE MONTH THAT WAS IN REVIEW

Since my last column in mid April, there has been a lot of activity that deserves some attention. First, I offer my sincere compliments to the Feast of the Three Saints Committee, for organising a very successful event. There was a huge crowd in attendance, including a noticeably large number of families enjoying the day together. In a sometimes uncertain world, it is pleasing to see the traditions of the Feast of the Three Saints being successfully passed down to the next generation.

I was proud to see record crowds across the country mark ANZAC Day with the solemn respect it deserves. However, I was once again saddened to see TV presenter Ray Martin cynically take advantage of an important national day to promote his views about changing the Australian flag. I have outlined my views previously, but I have no hesitation in reiterating my support for our current constitution, our current national day, our current national anthem and our current Australian flag.

I welcome the news that the Cassowary Coast Regional Council is showing an interest in developing the Mundoo airport in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. I wrote to the CCRC in January 2009 to underline the fact the Mundoo airport was an important strategic economic asset and that with the sale of the Cairns Airport, there could be a significant opportunity for the Cassowary Coast to benefit, particularly in relation to the potential for general aviation operators to relocate from Cairns.

I also welcome the news one of the Innisfail Chamber of Commerce's priorities is the dredging of the Johnstone River. I fully support the Chamber. This project could deliver positive results for Innisfail. Innisfail is a river town. The river should be a focus for the community. The build up of sediment limits the recreational and commercial opportunities that can be pursued. Dredging happens in many other locations in Queensland. There is no good reason it shouldn't happen in the Johnstone River.

In my last column, I said the Rudd Labor Government shouldn't let the opportunity the Henry Tax Review presented to go by without doing something to secure the future of regional and rural Australia. I nominated serious zonal taxation reform to encourage population decentralisation as a prime candidate. Sadly, it would appear the Rudd Labor Government has failed to do this. It's just another failure, to add to a long list of failures, which have become Kevin Rudd's trademark.

In fact, it seems the Rudd Labor Government is out to actively disadvantage one of the major drivers of Australia's regional economy through its outrageous proposal to impose a huge tax on company profits in the mining industry. The fall out from this policy announcement has been very serious, with proposals for new mining projects shelved and the bottom falling out of mining company shares on the stock market. This policy calls into question the competence of the Rudd Labor Government.

Regional Australia desperately needs a change of government at the upcoming federal election.

Contact:	Andrew Cripps MP Member for Hinchinbrook	Address: PO Box 1515 Ingham Qld 4850	Ph: 07 4776 1428 Fax: 07 4776 3503
E-mail: Hinchinbrook@parliament.qld.gov.au			
