

Letter to the Editor – *Warwick Daily News*

(27 April 2020)

Dear Editor,

In response to recent comments made by Tracy Dobie about Vic Pennisi and the newly-elected Councillors of the Southern Downs Region, I would like to humbly offer the opinion of a concerned resident of Warwick...who could also be speaking for all those who did not vote for Ms Dobie in the 2020 mayoral race.

Most people understand that politics at the Federal, State, and even Local Levels can often be “dirty”; at the very least, it can be a “rough sport”. What most people do not like, however, is when someone fails to win an election and yet cannot show basic courtesy and respect in defeat. It is not simply a matter of frustration for locals to see their “leaders” behaving in such ways; it is more about the disruption to the community and the successful functioning of the new Council.

If Ms Dobie had serious concerns about Mr Pennisi, the time to publicly challenge him was *before* the election and not *after*! What purpose does it serve for her, or any other former councillor, to criticise the new Council when The People of the Southern Downs have already spoken? It is a democracy, and the majority voted for Mr Pennisi. It was the *Will of The People* for someone new to be the Mayor, so why is Ms Dobie using her platform as a former Mayor to “bash” the incoming Council...and to do so before they even had their first official meeting?!

What will happen now that Ms Dobie has her own weekly column after losing the election? Can we expect enlightened discourses that share a vision of hope and prosperity for the Region and her expressions of genuine support for the challenges the new Council will be facing? Or, should we expect regular ridicule in order to constantly harass the new Mayor and Councillors in order to make them “look bad” and give the superficial appearance that she and her Councillors were “better” in comparison?

May I respectfully say that nobody cares! The “ordinary people” in the community, like me, care about giving the new Council a chance to do what they can in a time of drought, water restrictions, consequences of the recent bushfires, coronavirus pandemic, high unemployment, struggling local economy, fear, concern, and even hopelessness and depression. The people of the Southern Downs are good people; they work hard and want to simply live in peace. They want to be healthy, happy, and to provide a better life for their families. They are not interested in “playing politics”. They are not interested when people have a lust for power and will do whatever it takes to get it and maintain it.

There is no honour in the type of behaviour where people cannot let go of power or simply need to create a certain narrative in order to preserve the “image” they hope for others to remember. That is nothing but pride and ego, and neither of them are character traits that most people want to see in their leaders...past, present, or future. Where is the honour, integrity, and diplomacy? Where is the sincere concern for The People and their majority vote for a new Mayor and Council?

Ms Dobie had her chance as the Mayor, and yet I wonder if the previous Mayor was “bashing” her after she became Mayor? Everyone I know cannot stand the solar farm outside of town and never wanted it to happen, but their voice was ignored. It is an eyesore and is

taking up valuable farmland. Did that project lower the power prices of the locals? Let us be honest... THAT is what “ordinary people” actually care about! There are many other examples that could be given about what people did not like about her decisions as Mayor. However, she was still given an opportunity to be the best Mayor she could be. Why not allow Mr Pennisi the same opportunity? He did win the election, and the *Will of The People* should be graciously accepted.

We do not want to say, “Go away, Ms Dobie.”; that would be rude. Afterall, she is entitled to free speech and has a right to her own opinions. However, is it wrong for a local resident to politely ask that she handles defeat with dignity and shows respect to a new Council that should get a “fair go”? Is that not one of Australia’s primary mottos? Does it not make sense that Mr Pennisi and his Councillors should be given a chance to prove themselves, instead of being slandered and dealing with character assassination after they won the election?

We can clearly see how disgracefully former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has been behaving since he was replaced as Leader by the Liberal Party. He was (and still is) arrogant and narcissistic. It is easy to see that he believed he was the most intelligent and most talented member of the Party; therefore, it was his “divine right” to be the Leader. The problem is that his actual performance never lived up to the Grand Vision that he had of himself.

Turnbull formed a coup and overthrew Tony Abbott, who had won the 2013 election in a landslide, and yet that was perfectly acceptable to him. He was then replaced because of his unpopularity among conservatives and his absolutely certain defeat against Bill Shorten, and yet he blames everyone else for his failures. If that was not shameful enough, he has spent the entire time since then working to make sure the Liberal Party suffers because they dared to “dethrone The King”. His new book proves that he is vindictive and is seeking revenge for the grave injustice that he experienced, and that means viciously attacking current Prime Minister Scott Morrison. If he cannot support Mr Morrison, he should at least demonstrate some class and dignity. However, that seems like an impossibility.

What does this have to do with Ms Dobie? It is sad to see that she seems to be acting in a similar manner as Malcolm Turnbull. I, and perhaps the majority of the Region, respectfully ask Ms Dobie to please not become the “**Malcolm Turnbull of the Southern Downs**”. We are not interested in the “death by a thousand cuts” to a new Mayor and Council that literally have just begun their time in Office. Our children also need good role models, and Leaders must demonstrate the virtues that make society stronger and better. The children need to know that morality is the core of who we are, as individuals and as a community. The world desperately needs people who will demonstrate *Noble Characters*...in victory and in defeat. Making the world better is a worthy mission, but we must remember that doing so begins with making ourselves better first.

With Sincerity and Gratitude,

Travis Adam Bradach