

The Pandora's Box of "Character"

Once the Federal Liberal Party opens as a central political federal campaign issue the Pandora's box of a Leader's "character", in this case Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, but equally applicable to all - international, national, state and local, then the sleeping dogs of disgust, alienation and resentment, amongst others, will begin to growl and perhaps bite ferociously. Witness what is currently happening in the United Kingdom election.

From a reader's perspective the "character" of journalists such as Glenn Milne and his colleagues at *The Australian*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and elsewhere, are also on show in their reporting of a leader's "character" strengths and flaws. Can they stand the scrutiny of their past writings on the great "character" issues of our times and their holding of leaders in whatever fields to account?

I site just three of many events of recent years.

Firstly the Australian Wheat Board (AWB) Iraq Scandal wherein hundreds of millions of dollars of wheat sales were made to an Iraqi Government, in breach of UN decisions, which overthrow has brought the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians let alone combatants.

Secondly the Rio Tinto China convictions of four senior executives for crimes clearly committed by others and on behalf of their company.

Thirdly the Melbourne Storm Rugby League Club's payments to senior players without the "knowledge" of their owners and in breach of NRL rules.

In all cases the Australian public witnessed the "character" of their leaders – "I knew nothing", "I wasn't told", "I didn't ask" and "It's not my signature" were common claims from the Liberal Party's Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Trade Minister; or Rio's CEO, Iron Ore Chief, China Marketing Head; or the Storm's Australian Newspaper Owner's local CEO.

ACCCI asks the key question of this century - how is this group of leaders going to stand up to the rampant Communist Party of China (CPC) and the extraordinary economic growth of the PRC? If and when China buys more from Australia than the rest of the world put together it would not be surprising to read glowing reports of the Chinese leader's "character" from Glenn Milne and his comrades at *The Australian*. The Liberal Party might even make it a "central political federal campaign issue".

"Character" is indeed the central issue for Australia's future.

Michael C H Jones
President - ACCCI