

It's a fiasco we won't easily forget

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A TREASURER forgetting about the centrepiece of the State Election; a Premier missing in action, unless you check Twitter; dodgy how-to-vote cards, cosy lucrative appointments, Labor MPs circling with a whiff of leadership changes in the air.

Welcome to the third term of the Rann Government, where the bizarre now appears to be the normal.

Treasurer Kevin Foley is adamant he will not resign despite misleading the public during the State Election on the blowout in the cost of rebuilding the Adelaide Oval, and misleading Parliament on the same issue.

He blames his memory.

Let's hope he remembers the other \$2 billion worth of election promises the Government made during the campaign.

In NSW, a government minister resigned during the week over inadvertently misleading Parliament over a \$2800 air fare: the Opposition says if Premier Mike Rann applied the same standards, Mr Foley should go.

But Mr Rann is not around to judge. He is on a jaunt through Britain, by himself.

Normally, when a state leader travels he takes advisers. Oddly, Mr Rann is travelling solo, a choice he has made for interstate travel in recent times.

His preferred method of staying in touch with the public is social-networking site Twitter, a condescending if not outright insulting way to report on the affairs of state.

His Twitter feeds report on his many meetings and dinners while extolling the virtues of places in London such as the Royal Institution. The organisation's expensive offshoot here appears to be

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doing slow business in the science department, although the Opposition's David Pisoni notes it is now doing a roaring trade selling alcohol and food.

"South Australians have a right to expect more bang for their education buck than the bangers, buttermilk pancakes and French toast with cinnamon breakfasts (at \$44.50 per head) and other 'degustation-style experiences' being offered by what was sold to taxpayers as a centre for science but has become a high-end-seminar catering business paying peppercorn rent," Mr Pisoni said.

WHILE Mr Rann tours Britain, talk of leadership changes grows. Such talk tends to take on a life of its own as MPs look towards the endgame - where they will end up if there are changes at the top? The affable John Hill and solemn John Rau are names being mentioned for the future.

Other decisions by this Government, following its five minutes of humility after scraping to victory with the help of bogus how-to-vote cards, point to an administration coasting in neutral.

Appointing Thinker in Residence Laura Lee to a job worth \$250,000 a year, which she suggested be created, without advertising the position suggests a government somewhat out of touch with public opinion.

Still, now the water crisis appears to be over taxpayers at least will save some money on Water Security Commissioner Robyn

McLeod's part-time pay packet. Oddly enough, her Water For Good plan to end the crisis (it is over, isn't it?) with its raft of recommendations made no mention of the \$50 million Goyder Institute for Water Policy announced by the Government last month.

And forget about a corruption watchdog - Mr Rann's plan for a national ICAC was rejected by a meeting of state attorneys-general and there is no move for a body to guard against political and other corruption in SA.

Meanwhile, the Public Service Association is hoping Mr Foley's memory improves in relation to the global financial crisis.

It notes the \$750 million in cuts to the public sector - read, jobs to go - is no longer necessary due to a windfall in GST revenue and a stronger than projected recovery.

PSA general secretary Jan McMahon called on Mr Foley to re-examine the need for a Sustainable Budget Commission.

"The Government no longer needs to cut jobs and services in light of independent evidence that South Australia is not now facing a financial crisis," she said.

"South Australia's projected income is now \$1 billion better than expected 12 months ago. The decision to cut \$750 million is no longer appropriate. Continuing with the cuts is now only a matter of Government policy, not financial need."

While the PSA tries to save jobs, the Opposition continues to call for Mr Foley's job. Late yesterday he said he wasn't quitting.

But odds are now shortening that neither Mr Foley or Mr Rann will be in politics come 2014.

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