

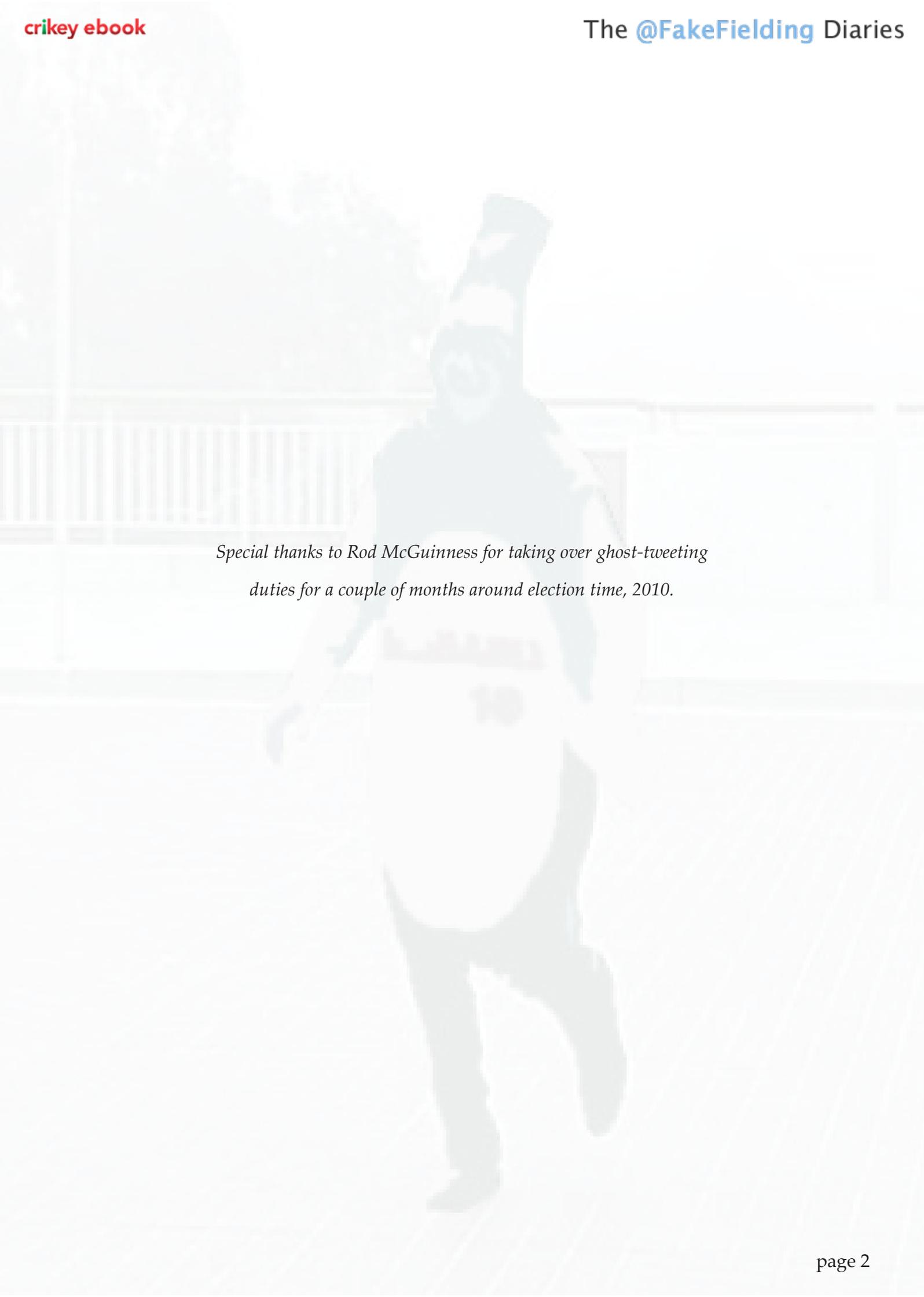
The @FakeFielding Diaries



All of the Both Sides of the Story

As told to Scott Bridges

Illustrations by First Dog On The Moon

A person wearing a large, white, bear-like costume is running on a track. The costume has a large white belly and a dark brown head with ears. The person is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The background shows a white fence and trees.

Special thanks to Rod McGuinness for taking over ghost-tweeting duties for a couple of months around election time, 2010.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Welcome to my Twitter



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Am thinking about writing an autobiography and using my printing allowance to self-publish it.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Possible autobiography titles: "My Life As An Engineer".



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"My Life: From Reservoir To Canberra".



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This one is simple yet effective, plus it's the inevitable title of the movie adaptation: "Fielding".



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Have calculated that I can afford to print 57,000 copies. That's one for each person that voted for me.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Told Xzennophone I'm writing an autobiography. He said to make sure I keep my crayons sharp. Idiot doesn't know you can't sharpen crayons.

Preface



To this day I don't completely understand how I got to Canberra.

I mean, I know that six years ago Susan put me on a Qantas flight as an unaccompanied minor and the nice lady gave me a colouring in book and a pineapple popper and cleaned up the vomit off my pants, but I still don't properly understand why I needed to be here in the first place.

One day I'm minding my own business being an accountant and then next I'm in Parliament being a

politician. Quite frankly, life can be a bit bizarre at times.

Over time it became clear to me that I had somehow been selected to represent the conspicients of the electorate of Victoria. How, I have no idea – maybe it was by lottery or something; I've seen the election numbers and something doesn't quite add up. But regardless of the method, the result was that I was here. When you think about it, it's almost as though it was pre-orday ...pre-ordar ... meant to be.

Anyway, days in Canberra turned into weeks in Canberra turned into months in Canberra, and I became all too aware that I had a responsibility to stand up for Victorian families. I felt this responsibility keenly, and in the beginning it lead to many sleepless nights and afternoons hiding under my office desk with Blanky. But over time, I grew in confidence and learned the difference between an intra-office memo, the TV guide and a Bill, and slowly I started working out how to play politics for my purposes instead of letting it play me.

Some Senators spend their entire parliamentary careers beavering away with scarcely a moment of recognition in the media, let alone any real and measurable impact on the laws and values of the nation. That was not the path I chose to follow.

While I was lucky to be entrusted with the balance of power and a direct line to the Prime Minister's office, I never took it for granted and tried to use the responsibility responsibly. Say what you will about Steve Fielding, but you can never say that Australians didn't know who he was, or that he didn't leave his fingerprints all over a range of nation-changing legislations.

After one gloriously successful election in 2007 (not a single vote was registered against me) and one not-so-successful election in 2010 (strangely, I lost despite attracting about 30,000 more votes than I did in 2004 – I've asked Susan to explain this to me but she just said to talk to Steven Conroy) the time has come for me to pack up the bottle suit and leave Canberra for good.

I am aware that my contribution to Australian politics has been controversial, and I've copped lots of criticism from the media, the public and even other politicians, but I leave this place knowing deep down in my heart that I stuck to my principals and fought hard for what I believe in.

Unless what I believed in was the same as what The Greens or Nick Xenophon believed in, in which case I fought for the other thing I believed in. Or unless there was political mileage to be made from changing my mind. Or unless I just didn't know what I believed in, so I fought hard for what Susan believed in, instead.

I'm just a simple boy from Reservoir and to this day I am still a little disbelieving at how much greatness I was destined to be. But above all else, it was an honour and a privilege to serve this great country in the Lodge in Canberra.

Until next time.

@FakeFielding
Canberra
June, 2011



Election to the Parliament of Australia

It's not every day that your life changes completely, so for that reason I guess those days are fairly memorable. My life has changed completely once before and I remember that day as clearly as the day that happened yesterday.

It was a plain old Sunday morning just like any other plain old Sunday morning, and after all the standard tantrums and arguments, Susan, the kids and I were at church. The service was finished and Susan had promised me Red Rooster on the way home if I got through the next hour without crying or screaming. The kids and I were standing around drinking cordial while Susan spoke to the pastor, and my son kept on rolling his fists in his eyes, scrunching up his face, and mouthing cry baby. "Am not!" I finally snapped at him, anger surging through my veins, causing Susan to turn and shoot me a warning look.

"Chicken salt, Steve, think of the chicken salt," I kept telling myself in my head, trying to calm myself down and diffuse the situation. I was in the process of pretending to unfold an invisible family-sized cardboard box of chips and wipe my face with a moist towelette, when a tall man with an enormous beard came and stood next to me, extended his hand, and introduced himself.

"Whompher egurloo," he said.

He had a very large beard. I was intimidated by his beard. He made me think of Santa, but a bad one. There were sounds coming out of the man's mouth but I couldn't interpret them – my brain had frozen completely.

"Plerxich ril frubnat."

I was utterly and completely transfixed by his beard and – if I'm to be completely honest about it – quite frightened, too. All I could see and think about was the beard. And he spoke with a pronounced mumble, almost as though the words got caught in his whiskers and got mixed around before they could reach my ear.

"Lawfel huzop, derple jubelet."

The fear momentarily dissolving, I wondered what the beard tasted like and absent-mindedly reached out to grab it, only managing to stop myself at the last moment. It was a thoroughly luxurious beard.

"Osertumpek numptie crofey lizin?"

This went on for some time as I tried desperately to pay attention to this man's conversation but couldn't tear my gaze from his beard. Are there special combs and shampoos for beards? Eventually, the man held out to me a sheet of paper and a pen, seeking, it seemed, my signature.

"Pog?"

I felt compelled to take his sheet of paper and sign it because I was afraid of the consequences if I didn't. Susan has me sign pieces of paper all the time and I learned long ago not to question such things. I carefully wrote my name in running writing (big letters at the starts of the words) and handed it back to him.

"Rippel, bunf!" he said, slapping me on the back. "Vell kunkel."

In the car on the way home, a box of Red Rooster chips leaking warm and comforting grease into my lap, Susan asked me what the man had been talking to me about.

"Dunno," I answered honestly. "Recruiting for the working bee or something."

A couple of weeks later, the phone rang and I went to answer it before remembering that I was banned from answering the phone after signing the house up to a new natural gas package even though we're not on gas. Susan got it instead. She listened intently before asking a few questions and staring at me with those dead, dead eyes she sometimes gets just before I become grounded. I racked my brain, desperately trying to work out what I'd done wrong. She hung up.

"Who was that?" I asked in the jolliest voice I could do, throwing in a long giggle to help lighten the mood.

"That was a reporter from *The Age*," she answered in that dead, dead voice that goes with the dead, dead eyes.

"The what?"

"The newspaper."

"Oh, you mean *mX*?"

"No, it's the ..." she paused, exasperated, before giving up. "Anyway, the reporter wanted to speak to you."

"Why didn't you pass me the phone?"

"Well, he didn't just ask to speak to Steve Fielding."

"Did he ask for Steve Fielding, B.Sc B.Acc?"

"No, he asked for Steve Fielding, lead Senate candidate for Family First in Victoria."

"Must've had the wrong number. That guy doesn't live here."

"What did that man at church have you sign the other week?"



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Right now I'm feeling about 60% happy, 30% hungry, and 20% confused.

Learning the Parliamentary ropes



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan has written "red" on the back of my hand in texta so I stop walking into the HOR by mistake every time the bells ring.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just asked Penny Wong if she knew where the "der" room is. She turned my hand up the other way and rolled her eyes.

My first few months in Parliament were really full on. I had to learn so many new things, like what a Bill was and where the toilets were, but I tried really hard and seemed to get into the groove without too much trouble. The other MPs were mostly nice to me but I had a lot of trouble making new friends. Everyone was so very busy and when they spoke about work it was like they were talking in another language.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I always get confused between the Left and the Right. Who are the good guys and the bad guys again?

One day I was at Aussies and ran into Barnaby from Queensland. I knew all about him because he'd been on the TV a lot.

"Call me Maverick," Barnaby said.

"No, I think I'll just call you Barnaby."

"Why won't you call me Maverick?"

"Because your name's Barnaby."

"Everyone else calls me Maverick."

"No they don't."

"They will."

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Nap time is my second-favourite part of the day, just after big play.

One afternoon during my second week in Parliament I was sitting at my desk staring at the whiteboard where Susan had put a second cross next to my name. I was absolutely fuming – it was so unfair! When a man is hungry he should be able to eat even if it isn't actually playlunch time, and if a man wants to eat at his desk then he should be able to eat at his desk. I would've played Minesweeper to take my mind off the rage but there was Yoplait all over my keyboard and when I'd tried to wash it off with my water bottle it went all down into the cracks between the keys and made some of them not push down properly.

Life is so unjust sometimes.

Anyway, while I was staring at the whiteboard I looked up to the top where someone had written in big capital letters our Party name: FAMILY FIRST. And for the first time, I really had a proper think about that name and what it means. I went over to Susan's desk.

"I thought I was representing all of Australia," I said.

"You're not. Only one state of it."

"Okay, whatever. So, why am I putting our family first?" I asked, pointing at the whiteboard.

"You're not just representing our family," Susan sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose, "you're representing all the families of Victoria and even Australia."

"All of them?" I repeated, shocked.

"Yes."

"Even the ones I don't know?"

"Yes."

"So, I'm here to make laws for all the mums, and dads and three kids?"

"The family doesn't need to have three kids. It could have any number of kids."

"Two kids?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Five kids?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Three-hundred and sixt ..."

"Yes," cut in Susan. "Any number of kids at all.

"What about no kids?"

"I guess so."

"What about no mum?"

"Unfortunately, some people die before their children."

"What about two mums?"

"I don't know ..."

"I'm really confused," I blurted, getting a little panicky. "How am I supposed to stand up for families if we can't even really define what one is?"



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan gave me my pen license for the office today.

When I got the job at Politics House, I thought that life would be a bit more fun than when I was accountanting. The idea of free rides on planes and lifts in cars driven by a man in a suit and not having to do sums anymore really appealed to me. I was going to get my very own "office" and "staff", which made me very excited because I could concentrate on the important job of being a politician and getting photos taken of myself opening the Harbour Bridge and having long, restorative afternoon naps, while other people took care of the grunt work.

The Australian people had offered me a castle and I was going to be the king of that castle. But then Susan was elected by the Australian people to be my office manager. It was just like being at home, but at work.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

All I've done this week is photocopy and file.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan made me move all the files from the green filing cabinet to the cream on Tuesday. Today she wants them all back in the green.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

On Wednesday I had to put them on the shelves in the storage cupboard.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Sometimes I stick my tongue out at Susan inside my mouth so she doesn't see.

Barnaby says that real politicians get to think about policy which is rules that we politicians write that other people have to follow in their lives. Real politicians don't have to do filing, Barnaby reckons. Real politicians sit around all day thinking about policy in their brains while the staff do the filing and photocopying and coffee runs to Aussies. When I told Susan about how I think I should be thinking about the rules for Australia and be allowed to play Minesweeper as much as I want, she told me to count all the paperclips in her desk drawer.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Every Friday, Susan tells me I can do policy "next week".



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Bought a packet of party poppers and put them in my bottom drawer. Whenever I'm alone in the office I let one off.

Thinking big



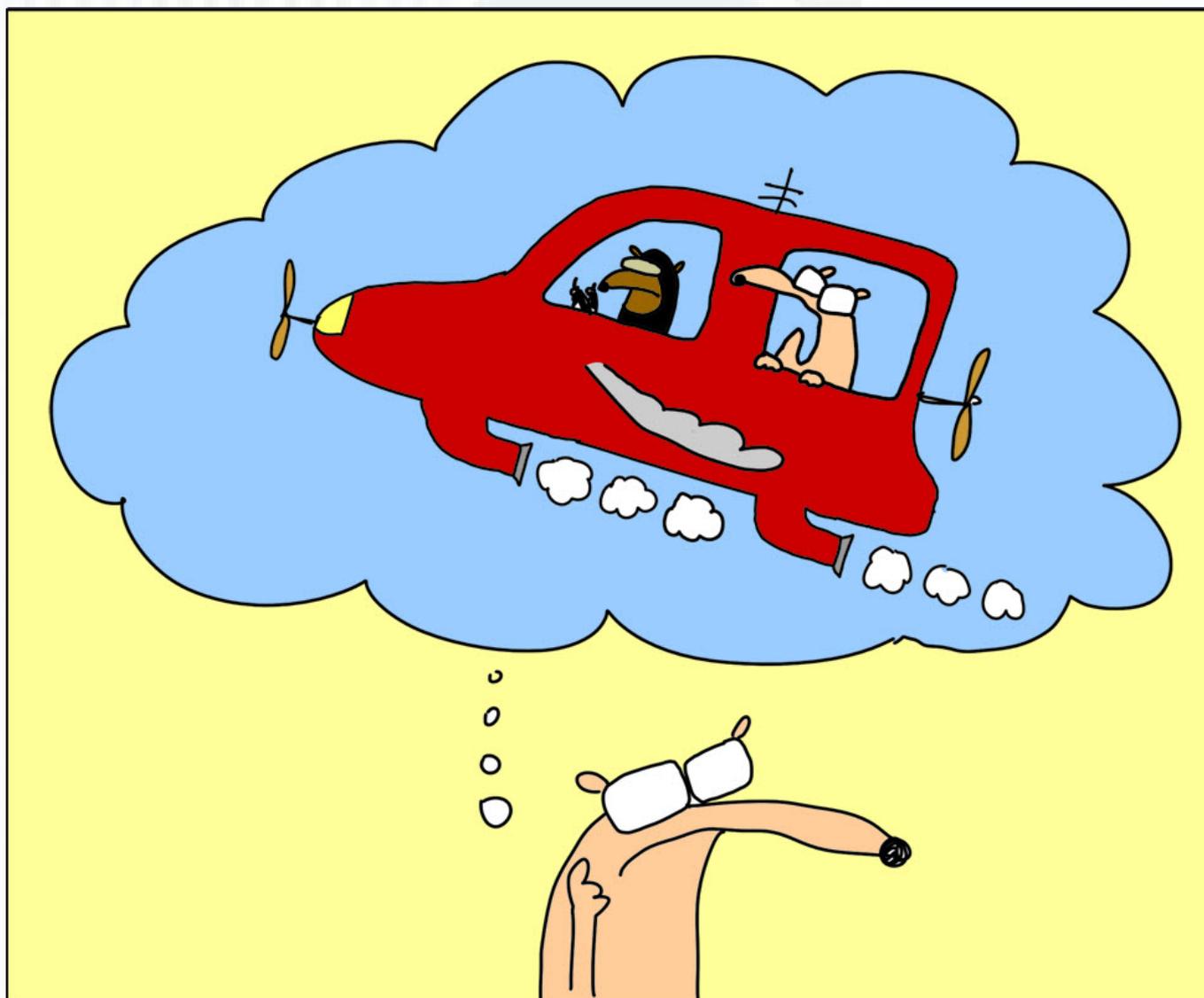
FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Trying to organise meetings with people about hovercars.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

"If we can make movies in three dimensions," I emailed them, "then what's stopping us from making cars float?"



Self-catering Steve



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Holidays! Lunchtime! Couple of microwave pies from the freezer, I reckon.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Can't find tomato sauce. Will call Susan.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Strange. Susan's number missing from phone's contact list. It was there yesterday. Will call Susan to find out what's going on.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Hang on.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Called son's school and said I need to talk to him urgently. They're going to get him from class while I'm on hold.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Son said sauce in pantry. I told him that he'd taken so long to answer phone my pies had gone cold. He said some swears and hung up.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Lots of crusted sauce around mouth of bottle. Will call Susan to inform her about poor cleaning of bottle.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Heck!

Being a politician isn't always easy



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Note on kitchen table from Susan. I'm supposed to do "the washing", "the bathroom" and "the floors". The what, the what and the what?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

So, Susan had the time to write me a note but she didn't have enough time to put my Coco Pops in a bowl. Typical.

I have to admit that I was a little surprised the first Monday that I woke up and started getting ready for Parliament and found out that I was on a holiday and didn't have to go. I'd managed my pants and shirt and socks and (only just) shoes, and had gone out to the kitchen on the verge of tears with my tie wrapped around my neck a little too tight in what I thought was a half-Windsor but turned out to be just a granny knot, when Susan told me that Parliament was in recess.

"Don't be silly," I replied, looking at my watch. "Recess isn't until 11:30am."



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

God, I wish Parliament was back. I'm so fricken bored.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Maybe I should build a billy cart.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Found rope. Need: wood, nails, milk crate, wheels, goggles, flame stickers, wheels.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan called. Told her I was volunteering at Meals On Wheels.

I've got a bit of a love/hate relationship with the summer Parliament holidays. I love them because you don't have to work and you can sleep in as late as you want and you can sit in front of the TV in morning in your jim jams eating Coco Pops and watching cartoons and you get presents from Santa at Christmas time, but I also hate them because a few days after new year's eve I start to get bored and Susan gets on my case about lounging around the house and whining about having nothing to do even though I lie to her and say I've got heaps to do and that Barnaby's going to call up any minute and invite me around to his house to play. And every year, no matter how busy I try to make myself look busy, Susan always eventually insists that I go in to my electorate office and help out a bit.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Susan suggested I do some work at my electorate office while Parliament isn't sitting. Calling AEC to find out what my electorate is.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Lady on phone said my electorate was Victoria, but more specifically, 50,000 people in eastern Melbourne.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Found Victoria on Google Maps. My word, it's big.

I didn't even know I had an electorate office until a few months into my term. The first time when Susan told me to go there I thought she was saying "electricity office" and I called her a stupid idiot, poked my tongue out the side of my mouth, crossed my eyes, and did the crazy sign with my finger around my ear. After my two weeks' grounding, Susan drove me to my electorate office and told me to help my office manager do whatever needed to be done.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

At electorate office. Staff were shocked to see me. I had to introduce myself to a few of them.

That first time, I asked the office manager what they all did all day. Apparently there are these things called "conspicuous" who I represent in the Senate and the electorate office communicates with them, and it turns out that I have a few million conspicuous because I represent the whole of Victoria because Victoria voted for me. When I was explaining this to my family over dinner later that night, my son mumbled something about me only really having a handful of conspicuous and most of them are in the room right now.

Anyway, this one summer holidays, Susan came into the lounge room just as I was putting the finishing touches on the cubby house's spiral staircase (made out of bricks, glue, and the Encyclopedya Britanica Ensyklopedia Brittanica Incyc big set of books about facts) and announced sternly that it was time for me to go to the electorate office. I begged and pleaded and put my foot down but twenty minutes later Susan had confiscated my Bob The Builder tool belt and I was in the passenger seat of the car.

I spent about a week at the office and I used my time there to walk around and and tell people what to do, given that I am technically everyone's boss. I like to remind people of this fact by ending all conversations with, "... and just remember that the Victorian people didn't vote for you." One day we had a work experience kid doing some photocopying, so I walked up, told him to do the photocopying more accurately, complete with my standard conversation ender, and he snapped back, "They didn't vote for you either, Senator," accompanying his last word with the inverted comma signals either side of his head. Later that day I saw him giving the receptionist a high-five.

But it wasn't all smooth sailing in the office. On my first day there the manager made me sort out the stationery cupboard, re-organising all the stock by height and colour. On my second day she made me lick envelopes and stamps for an electorate mailout. On my third day she made me organise the filing cabinet into reverse-alphabetical order. On my fourth day she made me organise the filing cabinet into Greek alphabetical order. Every couple of hours I had to go across the road and get a round of large muggachinos for everyone plus a weak hot chocolate for me. I tried to tell Susan that I suspected the work was beneath me but she told me to harden up and called me princess.

Every now and again, a conspicuent would come into the office with a question and the office manager would usually deal with them very quickly and effectively. There were only a couple of conspicuents that she sent through to see me in my office (I don't really have an office there but I made one in the storeroom using a bedsheet and a stapler, affixing a sign to the door that read, "Hon. Steve Fielding, Acc., Eng., Leader of Family Fist"). One of the conspicuents wanted to know what I was going to do to ensure that he and his male partner had the same rights as real families, and the other wanted to know when a large hole in his road was going to be fixed and told me that us pollies sit around all day playing silly games instead of working hard for our generous salaries and benefits funded by the taxpayer. I gave them both Barnaby's mobile number, thanked them for their time, and continued playing Minesweeper on my laptop.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Office manager gave me some policy documents to look at. Doesn't she know it's my nap time?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Office manager caught me napping under my desk. Begged her not to tell Susan. She said something about being the "real Senator".



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I simply pointed out to the office manager that only one of us is wearing a bottle suit.

Meeting Nick



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Had a chat to the new kid, Zeno ... Xenno ... Nick, in Question Time. Asked him if he'd be my friend.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Told Nick I'd share my snack pack of Barbecue Shapes with him at play tomorrow.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Gotta say, my social confidence is definitely higher on days that I'm wearing my Batman underpants.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan put Tiny Teddies in my box for playlunch again. She knows I hate Tiny Teddies.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I reckon Xzennophone would get some sort of crazy Dutch food.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I bet Bob Brown's wife gives him hippie food like lentils and tofu and stuff in his lunch box.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Told Susan that all the other Senators get to choose what goes in their lunchboxes. Susan told me to "name just ten."



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just saw my BFF Nick Xzennophone in the corridor. Said to make sure I'm here for special 6am sitting tomorrow morning. Lucky he told me.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Xzennophone lied to me! There was no Senate sitting at 6am this morning!



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Called Xzennophone and he apologised. He meant 6am tomorrow.

Pandemic panic



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

That's it. I saw something about pig flu on Mel and Cockie. I'm throwing out everything that's pig in the fridge and freezer.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Threw out bacon and hamburger patties.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan has just served pork chops for dinner! Doesn't she watch the news?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Feel nautical, like I'm going to spew. Pounding head, running nose and hacking cough. The pork chops ... I think it's pig cold.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan at work. Time for preparations. Have started putting masking tape around the gaps in window frames.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Put hammer, nails and planks of wood next to front door.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Superglued back door shut.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Sharpened a long stick and put it under the coffee table.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Put three cans of hairspray next to bedroom window with a cigarette lighter.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Have turned off gas at meter.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Going to servo for supplies. Taking son's cricket bat just in case.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Bought 20 bottles of Pump water (lemon), 20 jumbo packs of cheese and onion chips, 20 Chicken Heroes (cold) and 20 strawberry Big Ms.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Someone on footpath sneezed while I was walking back home. Warned them off with the cricket bat.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Need things from supermarket, too. Have tied cloth around my head in preparation for trip. Cricket bat is stuffed down back of shirt.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Shopping list: toilet paper, cuppa soup, matches, batteries, cotton buds, cat food, Panadol, Coco Pops, UHT milk, Nescafe.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Does anybody know where I can buy a gun?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Ignore that last tweet. Some woman with a runny nose and red eyes looked at me in the supermarket. I panicked.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Home safe. Going to have bath in Dettol.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Started collecting items for Fielding family memory capsule. Will bury in backyard in case the worst happens.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Recording entire afternoon of shows on Channel Ten so I've got something to watch when the TV stops.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Spent 20 minutes trying to get out the back to bury memory capsule. Remembered that door is glued shut. Went via the front.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

How long would it take to dig a moat around the house?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Son home from school. He's walking around the house laughing at my defences. Says that tinfoil hat will not protect against pig flu.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Have lined bottle suit with tinfoil.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Just heard son on phone: "Mum, you're not going to believe this one until you see it ..."



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Susan has arrived home from work, furious. Can't seem to understand that I am taking sensible precautions. Very upset about back door.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
She's peeling masking tape from window frames. I'm feeling rising panic about the air she might let into house.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Tried to put a tinfoil hat on Susan's head to protect her from flu but she refused.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Sent to my room without dinner for second night running. Bottle suit confiscated.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Tony Abbott on phone offering me "Tamiful" for \$5. Says it's exactly the same as Tamiflu. Told me to keep it "hush, hush".

Serious policy is serious business

Although politics might look like it's all fun and games and attention-seeking stunts to the casual viewer at home, being a Senator of the highest office in the land isn't all cups of tea at the Templestowe CWA and fancy dress policy generation. During my time in Parliament, I bore the responsibility for making decisions about serious matters that impacted upon the lives of hundreds of millions of Australian families, and let me tell you that responsibility weighed heavily between my shoulders.

For instance, I fought hard for my whole time in Parliament to ban the Internet because of the amount of disgusting and evil things that are inside it. So, I'm sure you can imagine the pride I felt when the ALP government saw sense and made the decision to adopt my Family First policy! A win for plain old common sense over reactionary evidence-based decision making. But even with one important battle against pornography, violence and Godlessness won with the Internet ban, the war still waged on.

I spoke immediately to my office and instructed them to start drafting legislation to ban those other tools of evil: paper, pens, paint, cameras, books and magazines. Unfortunately, at the end of my term, other Parliamentary matters had prevented me from ever introducing the Bill.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Thinking about getting a Facebook. Do they have them at Kmart?

For another instance, drink bingeing is one of the greatest scourges on the moral fabric of today's society, and I fought hard in the Senate to implement a policy that banned drink bingeing by banning alcopops. That is, of course, until I fought hard in the Senate to oppose a policy that banned alcopops. I still opposed drink bingeing, though, because drink bingeing hurts families; but banning the sale of alcopops also hurts families so I opposed that, too.

Confusing, I know, but you can't deny the logic of banning things. I even wrote an article for an online gossip newsletter called *The Punch* to explain my opposition to my previous opposition.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Wait until all the guys at playgroup hear that I've been published in the Internet!



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Maybe I'll call it quits after two or three more terms in the Senate and become a full time journalist.

But aside from drink bingeing and VSU (whatever that is), one of the most important things I had to think hard about as balancer of power in the Australian Parliament was the proposed split of the national telephone company, Telstra. More than any other company I can think of, Telstra is an Australian institution and part of the national psyche. Perhaps the only other companies more Australian than Telstra are Vegemite, Hillsong and Easy Off Bam. For that reason, I took Family First's role in deciding the future of Telstra very seriously while it was being debated. I especially put a lot of thought into how to vote on its structural separation.

I thought about matters of competition, the effect on mum-and-dad shareholders, and what the new logo might look like. I took into account the government's views, the opposition's views, Telstra's views, and Susan's views (one must always take into account Susan's views), but no matter which way I looked at the matter, I kept returning to one point which has me baffled and concerned in equal measure.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
I am an engineer.

As an engineer, I am particularly tuned to the technological ramifications of policy and laws and stuff. As an engineer, I understand that telephone calls can't just travel through the air and through wires and stuff, and there are all sorts of mechanical things that need to be built and maintained to pass communications between people. (It's a bit complicated for the layman, so I won't go into too much detail here. Suffice it to say that a good analogy is Chinese Whispers.)

So, as an engineer, I couldn't help but ask myself what would happen if Telstra was split into two as proposed by the government. How will customers of one half of the company make calls to customers of the other half, I wondered. And where will the split line be? Will it be vertically up and down, or horizontally across the country? Will it be a city/regional split? Imagine the impact on businesses, communities, churches and families. It's difficult to overstate the hardship that will be faced by almost every Australian.

And how will mobile phones deal with the split? Will you be served by one half of the new Telstra depending on where in the country you're standing? Will you swap from one of the new companies to the other if you walk across the imaginary Telstra split line?

In the end, faced with so many competing demands and technological conundrums, I decided to go back to first principals and think inside the square instead of out. "Steve," I told myself, "you're here in the Senate to represent families, and your voting choice is very simple: which course of action would most benefit families?"



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
I will vote against the Telstra legislation unless the government allocates \$1.5 trillion to anti-divorce measures.

Three people for dinner



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If I could have any three people over for dinner I'd invite Nelson Mandella, Gandee and John Malkovich.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I'd make it a fancy dress dinner. I'd come as the Pope.



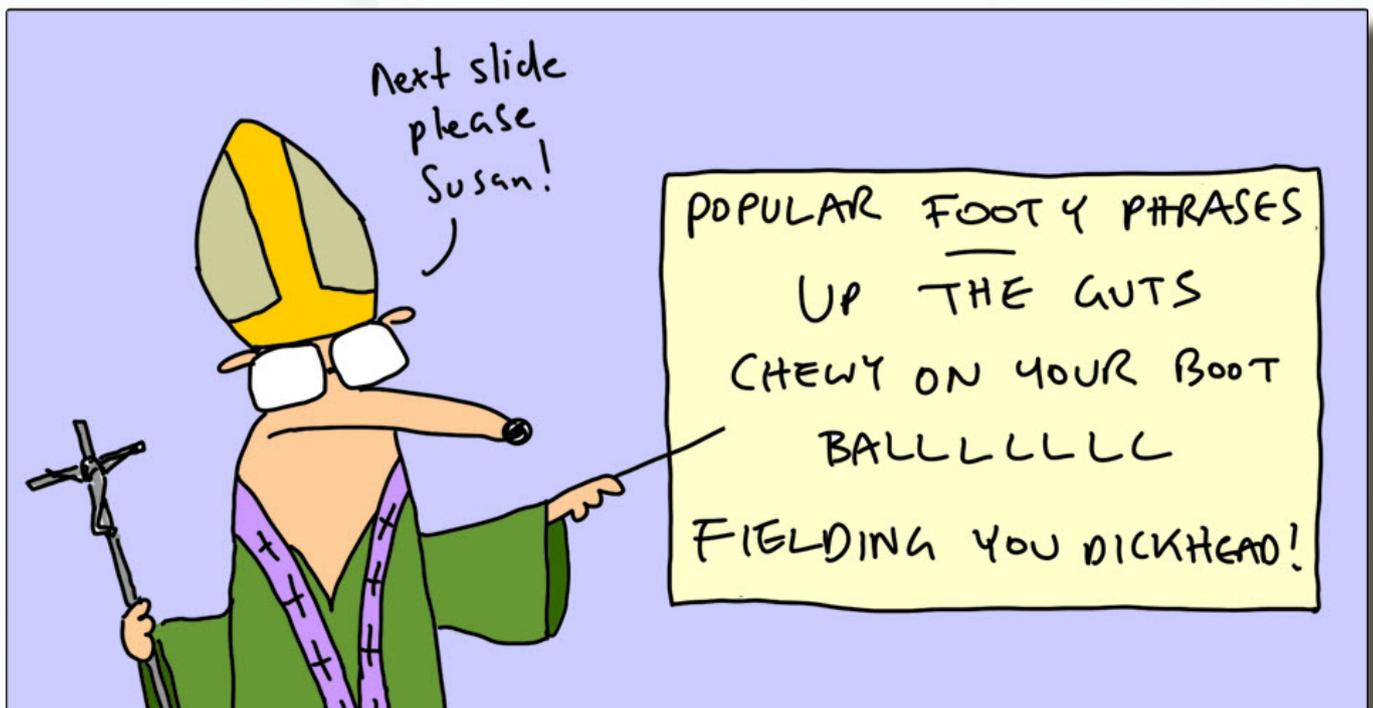
FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan could cook veal.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I could explain to them the ins and outs of Australian Rules football and we could discuss Portugese architecture.



The War on Science



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I'm getting a bit sick of this. Will somebody please just tell me why the coal and gold and aluminium foil was buried in the first place?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I know that coal is melted down into electricity, but how does the coal fit through the power lines? So many questions.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I am suspicious of invisible magic like nuclear power, flight and clear cola.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Sometimes it feels like I'm having a completely different conversation to everyone else.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

You know, just because you use big words doesn't mean you're big smart.

Some people in this world do evil and terrible things. Some people in this world organise themselves into groups and give themselves respectable-sounding names to do those evil and terrible things. Some people in this world have used the cover of semi-legitimacy and government tax breaks afforded these groups with respectable-sounding names to pull the wool over our eyes and do their evil and terrible things.

Luckily for Australia, though, some of us in politics have done our best to protect ordinary citizens from the pernicious threat posed by these groups of people, and so it was when one day, Nick Xzennophone rose to his feet in the Parliament, after previously rising to his feet on the news program Today Tonight, and declared war on science.

I got on the blower immediately and asked Nick if I could be in his war, too. I pointed out that I myself was an engineer so I was an “insider”, if you will, to the world of science, and I pointed out that I had been waging war on science myself for quite some time so it was only sensible that we join forces and mutually strengthen our blows. Nick started to respond to my offer in a raised and excited tone of voice but just at that moment Susan walked in the room and I had to hang up because I’d been grounded from the phone for a week after I accidentally called Kenya for an hour to claim a prize that was emailed to me.

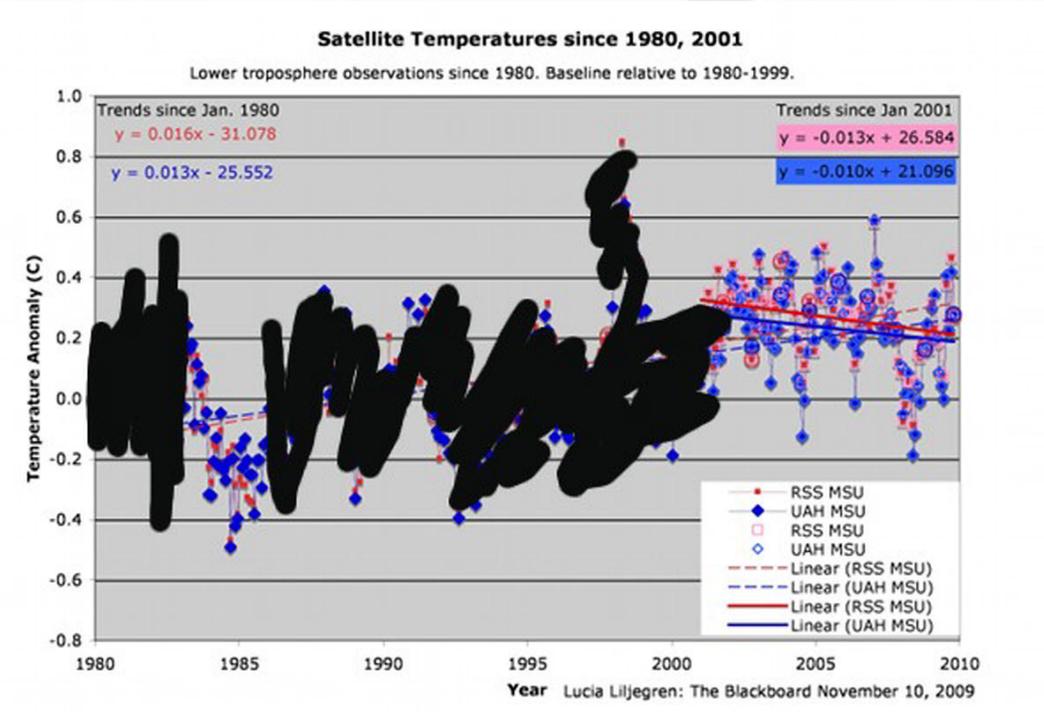
How relieved I was that somebody else saw the need to blow open this secretive organisation and expose its dodgy data once and for all! Nick Xzennophone may come across as a bit of a mug, and he may not be the most democratically elected guy in the world, but at least he’s switched on enough to see a conspiracy when he sees one.

It was once said that there are lies, dam lies, and statistics, and never a truer word has been spoken; don’t even get me started on the lies that governments around Australia have told to prevent the construction of new dams, despite the fact that people need to drink water. Did you know that humans are 8% water?

But back to the biggest scientific conspiracy going around: climate change. Sometime during my term it become dangerous for anybody who thinks that the “science” around climate change isn’t settled to speak their mind, despite the fact that even a cursory glance at the scientists’ own statistics tell a very different story to that being told. Did you know that since 2001 the trend line has been going down? That means that global temperatures are lower now than they were in 2001.

Or they might be higher right now, but they’ve mostly gone down over time. I think. What I do know for sure is that graphs are much easier to read if you move on from the distant past and look to the future; forget the little picture and look at the big. It’s safe to say that the 20th century is over and it’s time that our climate data reflected this simple fact.

Anyway, to try and impress Xzennophone, I created a new graph, all by myself, that showed not only a downward trend in global temperature in the 21st century, but also a period of intense cooling around 1985 – right smack in the middle of the period in which climate change advocates claim global warming has occurred.

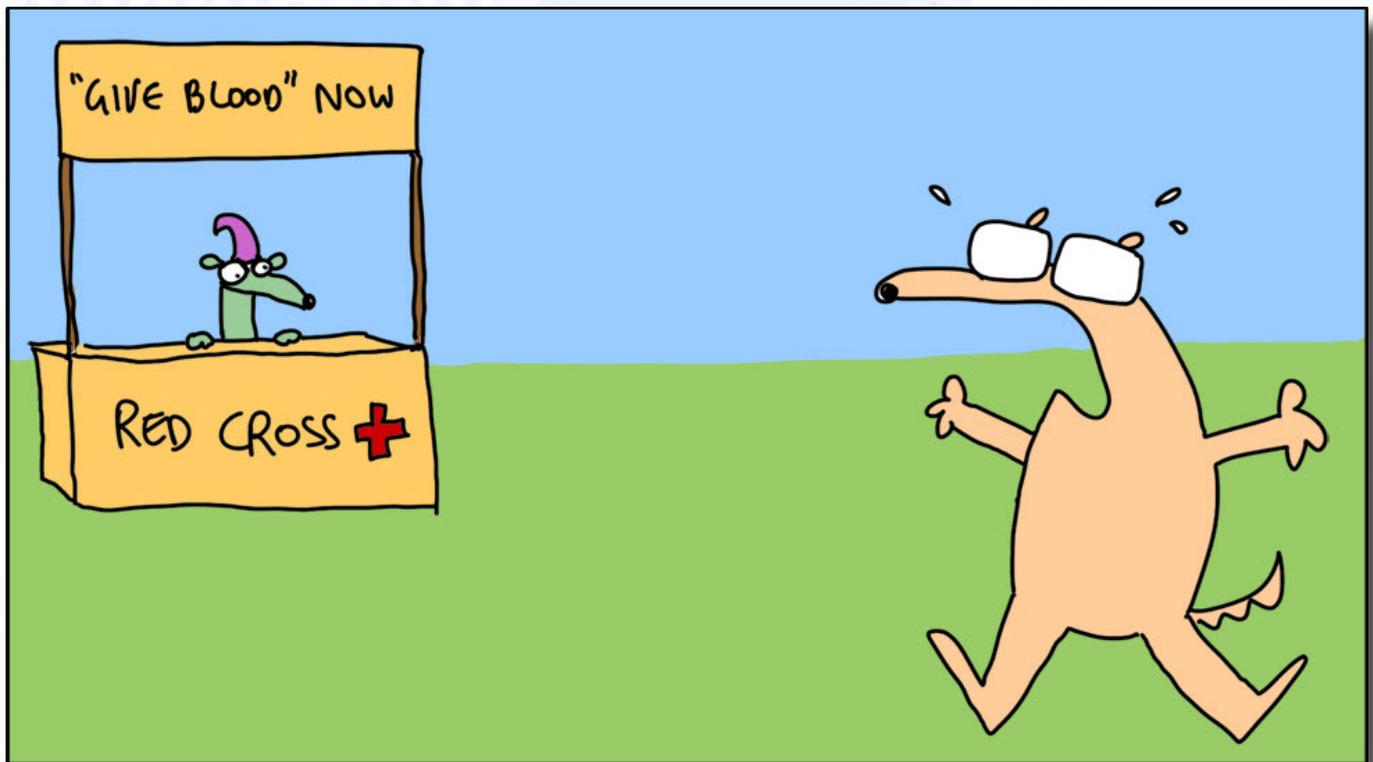


So, I'd been running around the House for the days trying to catch up with Nick to give him my graph (no easy task in a bottle suit, by the way) but I'd had no luck at all in finding him. I eventually found him in the Senate chamber, deep in conversation with that weird guy from the Northern Territory, Nigel Scullion, on the cross-benches and guessed that it may be a meeting of the war cabinet. How exciting! I started shuffling my way over to join in, making sure I gave the secret signals of repeatedly winking and crossing my middle and ring fingers, but as I approached the meeting it suddenly broke up and both Xzennophone and Scullion swore under their breaths. I looked around to see who had busted us but the only eyes I could see pointed in our direction were those of one of the Greens — I always forget their names — but she was probably stoned so our war was safe.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Next time you go to the Blood Bank, remember The Greens will make you shoot up heroin instead.



Divine Miranda



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Someone called Miranda Devine in the newspaper called me "strong".



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Photo suggests that Miranda is a woman.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Miranda, Miranda, Miranda. Swoon!



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Had a dream about Miranda Devine last night. It was like that scene in Ghostbusters.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Had to sneak my jim jams into the washing machine while Susan wasn't looking.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

"Miranda" is such a beautiful name. Four syllables of sweetness.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

@mirandadevine is in Twitter!



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Thinking about [@mirandadevine](#) in Question Time. Had to put Blanky on my lap.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just called Senate President "Miranda". Embarrassing. Last week called the Pres. "Mummy".



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Staffer caught me writing "Steve loves Miradna" on the Red. She corrected my spelling. Embarrassing.

The art of leadership



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
I am the leader.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Have made a name badge out of cardboard, texta and sticky tape. It reads: Steve Fielding, LEADER of Family Fist.

It's often something that people forget: I'm not just the balance of power in the Senate, and I'm not just a member of the Family First Party, but I'm also the leader of the party. This, I believe, lends extra weight to my actions because I'm not just an ordinary, non-balance of power, everyday Senator of no importance such as, say, Xzennophone and Barnaby. I am the leader.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Sorry, just to clarify my previous tweets: Susan is the leader.

As leader of Family First, the other politicians and I considered a number of highly important issues, and my speeches in the Senate (as leader of Family First) were some of the most passionate, articulate and emotional presentations the nation has ever seen. They had everything: shouty voice, soft voice, pauses for effect, graphs as props, and moral appeals to right and wrong. I'm exhausted even now just thinking about them. One of my speeches was so powerful that I went to do it again for the staff back in the office but Susan yelled at me to get down off the desk.

Those speeches (as leader of Family First), on a range of topics, were also highly effective. Sometimes I can't believe how many words people waste trying to prove a point, like that something is wrong, when that thing is just self-evidently wrong. For instance, men shouldn't have intimate relations with other men for no more complicated reason than they just shouldn't; it's unnatural. Even a twelve-year-old has enough anatomy knowledge to know that if God intended one piece of the jigsaw to connect naturally, without awkward and unnecessary force, to another piece of the jigsaw, he would've made the sticky-out bits and the gappy bits match up. It's not rocket surgery.

I remember those speeches well, and if I'm being totally honest, it was around this time that I really felt my politics self-confidence really start to grow. People were starting to talk about me and there was an undeniable atmosphere of respect around Parliament for this plucky upstart who defied the odds and got himself elected. I could feel that the time was approaching for me to start moving on to bigger and better things, and it was at precisely at this time that such a bigger and better opportunity presented itself.

The opportunity came from the one event during that period that eclipsed even my speeches for sheer extraordinariness: the coalition leadership explosion. No matter where you sit on the political horseshoe, there was no possible reaction to the Liberal meltdown other than disbelief and shock. From out of nowhere, Malcolm Turnbull became a dead man walking and it felt like literally anything could happen. History in the making.

Now, anything's fine, but I didn't want just anything happening, so I tried as hard as possible to write myself into that history. After it became clear that Turnbull was being rejected by his own party, I sent him an email proposing that he quit the Liberals and join Family First, offering him the incentive of deputy leadership of the Parliamentary Family First party. Malcolm's wealth and fundraising prowess is well known and Family First could really do with a bit of help in the cash department.

I felt quite pleased with myself for having such a good idea and taking the initiative so I excitedly told Susan about it, however she informed me that Turnbull is a follower of the global warming faith — a faith I simply cannot share. I have very little time and respect for people who throw themselves so fully into something for which there is no actual proof, letting it shape their lives, guide their thinking, and act as their intellectual and moral compass.

The global warming faith, as we all now know after the shocking revelations of ClimateGate, revolves around nothing more than some words and symbols of dubious authorship and authenticity masquerading as fact. Kicking myself for defying my scientific training (did you know I'm an engineer?) and letting my impulses run away with me, I called the IT department and asked them to intercept the email before its delivery. It's lucky I sent it after 5pm.

But then I had a better idea: why not run for the opposition leadership myself? I'm a global warming sceptic, I've got lots of leadership experience, and I scrub up pretty good on the telly. I decided not to let Susan in on this one because my name already had two crosses next to it on the whiteboard, so I ran it past Nick Xzennophone instead. Nick said it was an awesome idea and I should totally throw my hat in the ring, and even though he wouldn't be able to say anything publicly, I had his complete and total support. He said that Australian democracy had been waiting for a leader like me since Federation in 2001.

Boy Buyo Lifted by Xzennophone's words, I launched myself instantly into campaigning and networking, going from office to office through the House to drum up support. None of the secretaries would let me through to see their respective MPs or Senators, so I just left each of them one of the "Vote 1 Steve Fielding" posters that I made on Xzennophone's photocopier (Susan deleted my code from the one in our office.) On the back of each poster I wrote a personal message, thanking the recipient in advance for their support and promising them a Big M next time I see them at Aussie's.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Hockey and Dutton have a leadership ticket? I had no idea you needed a ticket to run. Where do I buy one of these tickets?

When I looked through the numbers I knew I could obviously rely on Xzennophone's vote, while the Greens wouldn't have voted for me even if they could take their tourniquets off long enough to pick up a pencil. Barnaby was a possible, while the rest were totally up in the air. That made two definites, half-a-dozen negatives, one possible, and lots of unknowns. The media seemed to believe that Joe Hockey and Tony Abbott were the frontrunners, going so far as to give them nicknames such as "avuncular" and "pugilistic" (I don't know what those words mean but I can be avuncular and pugilistic, too).

Although, as usual, the overwhelming anti-family bias of Australia's "journalists" meant that they refused to even consider the chances of a humble boy from Reservoir, despite the fact that the boy from Reservoir fought his way into Parliament against the odds. The media has had many good laughs at my expenses over the years, but in this particular case, their laughing at my expense cost me the Liberal leadership.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I demand a Royal Commission into why I lost the leadership vote.

Heterodox man



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

At the Fine Scottish Restaurant for a bacon and egg McMuffin; elegant simplicity.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I could smash a Milo right now. But with real milk.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

UHT milk always tastes so bad. Not it is impossible to drink this stuff bad, but burnt and very processed bad.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

The English language is a wonderful, dynamic creature.

Climate change and the One World Government



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Barnaby gave me a book called 'The Biggest Secret'. Says it will change the way I see the world.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Very interesting words, plus there are really good pictures.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Text from Barnaby: "Hope you licke the book". Idiot can't spell.

One of the hallmarks of my time in Parliament was the way that I followed the climate change and emissions trading scheme debates very closely and provided a much needed voice of reason. In 2009 I travelled to the USA to consult widely with the Heartland Institute and they gave me a nifty graph to show to all my friends at Parliament. Nick Xzennophone asked if I made it myself in crayon but he shut his mouth quick smart after I showed him the quality of the laminate and the superb laser printing.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just look at the graph, unbelievers, and BELIEVE! The line goes up! Up!



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Sorry, it was upside down. The line goes DOWN! Down!



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Are you seriously trying to tell me that a graph with so many numbers and lines and datas could be wrong?

I always like to make sure that I look at both sides of the story, and the ETS debate was no different. I looked at the government's side (climate change is definitely real and we need an EMS right now) and the opposition's side (climate change is possibly real and we might need an LMS sometime in the short or medium term), but Family First's side of the story is quite different again: anthro antro anthrop man-made climate change is a myth and the PMS is completely unnecessary and will destroy man's way of life.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If The Greens were really serious about climate change, they would buy carbon offsets for their bongos.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Scott Ludlum smells funny. It must be very musty in his squat.

But you wouldn't believe the trouble I had in getting my view heard! Penny Wong and Ian Macfarlane met regularly to thrash out a version of the government Bill that the coalition might support, but the way they dismissed Family First's role in those crucial negotiations was a disgrace to Australian democracy. Imagine a democratically-elected Senator being manhandled and ejected from meetings inside Parliament House! It's not like they didn't know I was coming; each time I've told Xzennophone to tell Barnaby to tell Macfarlane, and Xzennophone to tell Conroy to tell Wong.

Some nights I was in tears at home, burning up with the indignity of the way the other MPs treated me. I tried telling David Hawker about the teasing and bullying but he didn't seem to care.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

How do we know Labor won't set a price on sea shells or prayers?

So, when I heard some people start talking about a One World Government that might be formed during a global climate change meeting soon, I got very excited. Maybe, I thought, I could run for election to a government that is kinder and more accepting. A government that is inclusive and considerate. A government that looks at all of my sides of the story. I mentioned at the time to Susan that this new government will add significantly to the Pope's workload given that he's the head of the world, but Susan told me he's only the head of the Catholic Church. And you could've blown me right there and then when Susan dropped the bombshell that the Pentecostal Church is not part of the Catholic Church so the Pope isn't even the head of me! A lifetime of delusion, it seems.

Anyway, I started doing some research into how one would go about running a campaign for the One World Government, and discovered that I would need to go to some place I'd never heard of in some country called Scandinavia. But I checked my wallet and there was no way I could afford a tram ticket for that far. Xzennophone seemed very sympathetic when I confided in him over a Milo at Aussie's.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Plants eat carbon and Family First supports plants. Ipso factoid we support carbon. QEB

A few days later, I was awoken in the dead of the night by the ringing of my phone. After Susan showed me which way to hold it to my ear, and explained that I didn't have to shout even though the other person was a long way away, I said hello. A deep and mysterious male voice announced that it represented a secretive American society of climate change sceptics and asked if I wanted to go to Copenhagen, free of charge, as a guest of its organisation. The mysterious voice said that its organisation was impressed with the work I was doing to expose the climate change sham, and that my presence in Copenhagen was vital to the cause of climate truth worldwide.

The voice went on to say that it understood I was an engineer and an accountant and therefore highly qualified to critically examine the issues of climate science and emissions-trading policy. Plus, the voice said, if there were hypothetically a secret government of the world, I would hypothetically be a valuable addition to that government because of my proven balance of powering skills. Deeply flattered to have my intellect, importance and indispensableness finally recognised, I accepted the invitation without hesitation and asked the voice where Copenhagen is and why it's got anything to do with climate change.

After Susan showed me how to hang up the phone and explained how your voice goes through the air to the other person's phone even though you can't see it in the air, I was so excited about going on an overseas adventure that I could barely sleep a wink for the rest of the night. I rushed into Parliament the next day so I could tell everyone about how I was going to Asia to play a key role in a really important world meeting that they weren't invited to. I ran through the corridors with my arms outstretched and making propeller noises with my lips because I was so excited.

I burst into Nick Xzennophone's office to brag to him about my upcoming aeroplane ride and assured him that one day he might get to go on a plane too. Nick seemed really proud of me and keen to help so he wrote me out a checklist of clothes I should pack, and lucky he did because I was getting ready to take a bunch of jumpers and thermal underpants and stuff.

A few days before departure, I tried to contact the mysterious voice using the phone number that Susan retrieved from my recent calls list, but every time I called it went straight through to Nick Xzennophone's mobile. Bizarre. I told Nick that the voices must be bumping together in the air and going to the wrong phone, and Nick told me that engineers speak a complicated technical language that he doesn't understand.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Will my bottle suit fit in the overhead locker?


FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I tend not to like foreign food. I'll get Susan to pack me some tomato sauce sandwiches and Milo bars for the flight.

At the airport while waiting to leave, I made up some business cards using a machine in the departure terminal. On the front of the card I reproduced my brilliant "Inconvenient Fact" graph and on the back I wrote "The Hon. Senator Steve Fielding (Eng., Acc.) — Looking At All Of The Both Sides Of The Story". The nice lady who served Milo on the plane thought the cards were excellent and I asked her to give one to the pilot.

Just before we landed, I went into the little toilet to change into a Hawaiian shirt and shorts, thinking that I might just get my driver to take me straight to the beach, but after six hours in the arrival terminal looking for my name on a piece of paper I decided that the driver must've forgot to come and get me. I tell you, these Copenhageners are a bit rude and alooph — I was getting some very strange looks on the bus after the driver and I spent 10 minutes tying the bottle suit to the roof racks.

So, there I was: the lone voice of reason among a sea of climate alarmism; the lone voice of science among a sea of religious fervour. Surrounded by so many people speaking languages other than Australian, I went to an Internet cafe and worked hard on Google Translate making up some versions of my business card in various foreign languages, like Chinese for the benefit Ban Ki Moon and Muslim for Barack Obama. During breaks in proceedings, I went out shopping for long pants and jumpers since it was a bit colder than Xzennophone suggested it might be.


FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Locked out of Copenhagen conference. Trying to get Prime Minister of One World Government on the phone.


FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Can't find OWG in phone book.


FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Of course it's not in the phone book, Steve, you idiot! It's a secret government.


FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Has anyone else noticed Kevin Rudd's latex-like skin and his cold, dead, reptilian eyes?

Stream of Steve



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Blue is my favourite colour. I hate dark brown. I wish more food was coloured blue.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If you could lick blue it would taste like sunshine and kittens.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If I was a kitten I would run through the long grass all day long and I would make friends with all the other kittens.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Your dreams. #ff

Motel Christmas Island



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I have a question for Tony Abbott and my question is Motel Christmas Island.

One weekend I was really bored. The American hip hop video clips with all those bikini women on *Video Hits* were making me feel a bit funny so I'd turned the television off, I'd eaten so many tomato sauce sandwiches that I was starting to feel sick, and the linen cupboard suddenly had a child-proof lock on it so I couldn't make another cubby house. Susan was starting to get really grumpy with me moping about the house and was threatening to call the electorate office to see if there was anything I could do to help out, so I called up Nick Xzennophone to see if he could play. Nick's wife answered the phone and said he was out, but after I asked her why I could hear Nick in the background whispering, she put him on the phone.

Xzennophone told me that he'd love to play but was too busy researching the asylum seeker issue because it was going to be a big one this year. I asked him what asylum seekers were and after he told me I was overcome with sympathy for the poor sods. But after Nick suggested a coalition with the Greens who hold a similar position to us, I instantly decided that I was anti-asylum seekers, or anti-immigration, or anti-whatever it is the Greens are for. The Greens can pass around the friendship bong with whoever they want but I'm going to maintain the intensity of Australia's borders.

With my thinking on the matter clear, I decided that I too would do some research on the issue, but better research than reading reports, statistics and other one-sided information like Xzennophone was. The only way to see all of the both sides of the story is to go to the source of the story and see it for yourself, so I asked Nick where these "asylum seekers" (I do the inverted commas thing around my head every time I say it now) come from, and he told me it was places like Sri Lanka and the Middle East. I then went to talk to Susan and said that my zone one and two Metcard would definitely be okay for the Middle East given that we live in the middle of the eastern suburbs, but is Sri Lanka outside the city and would I need a V-line ticket? Susan suggested instead that I go to Christmas Island which is where the "asylum seekers" go to be processed after arriving in Australia.

Because I'm a doing kind of guy instead of a talking kind of guy, within 24 hours I had booked my flight, packed my warmest clothes to ward off the North Pole chill, and had instructed my office to send out a media release. Two days later I had landed at Christmas Island and, arriving at the detention centre, I introduced myself to the boss who looked me up and down and asked who I really was. I told him that I was really Senator Steve Fielding, accountant and engineer, and my office had been in touch. He humbly apologised and said he expected a politician to be wearing something a little more official than a woollen jumper, tracksuit pants, and ugg boots.

I was then taken on a tour of the facility and what I saw shocked me. There are rooms with beds and clean sheets and towels; there are relaxation areas with chairs, tables and televisions; and there are books, newspapers and board games. I mean, Australia is supposed to be an igaliegg-arli... egalar equal country but I'm not allowed to have a bunk bed or unlimited TV hours at home, so why should a bunch of cue jumpers who aren't even Australians have them?

At the end of the tour I had lunch with the “asylum seekers” in the dining hall (nice metal cutlery and ceramic crockery, I might add) and when I saw that they are allowed to put their own salt and pepper on their food I was furious; when I called Susan to ask permission she told the boss to put only a small pinch of each on my mashed potato.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

Life is so unfair. I'm not allowed a bean bag since I ate the beans (they're not beans), yet they get bean bags on Motel Christmas Island.

In the evening I went back to the recreation room to talk to some of the “asylum seekers”. One of them told me he had spent over \$8,000 on getting to Australia! That’s more money than I have in my Commonwealth Bank Dollarmite account! When I asked him how many Sri Lankan dollars that was he said they don’t use dollars. I asked him if they used stones or cows or something instead and he just glared at me and walked away. I tell you what, if these people can afford \$8,000 for a boat cruise I can’t see how they could have it so bad at home.

But the absolute icing on the cake of this “asylum seeker” and detention centre rort was sitting in the corner of the recreation hall: a brand new Apple Mac computer. I’ve been asking Susan for ages if I can have an Apple Mac and she keeps refusing, saying that our two-year-old PC can do everything that we want to do perfectly well and it’s just a waste of money. I tried sulking but that didn’t work, with Susan angrily pointing out that there is no way her family is going to spend \$2,000 on a new Minesweeper machine for me just because I don’t like the colour of the one I’ve got, and that \$2,000 could be spent on much more important things like food for the kids or textbooks for their schooling. I interrupted her and pointed out that Macs don’t even have Minesweeper and Susan sarcastically asked me what on earth I’d do with a Mac then given that it took me 18 months just to learn how to play that.

Sitting there watching these non-Australians with access to an Apple Mac made me burn up inside with jealousy and a fierce determination to bring to an end the government’s unfair Macs for Boat People program. After a while I went up to the machine and asked the “asylum seeker” sitting nearest it if I could have a turn. After he helped me turn it on, and showed me how to hold the mouse, and showed me how to open a program, I jumped on Twitter to reveal this injustice to the world. The boat person asked what Twitter did but I told him he wouldn’t understand. The boat person then opened up some program called “Microsoft Word” and I asked what it did but he told me I wouldn’t understand.

**FakeFielding** Fake Steve Fielding

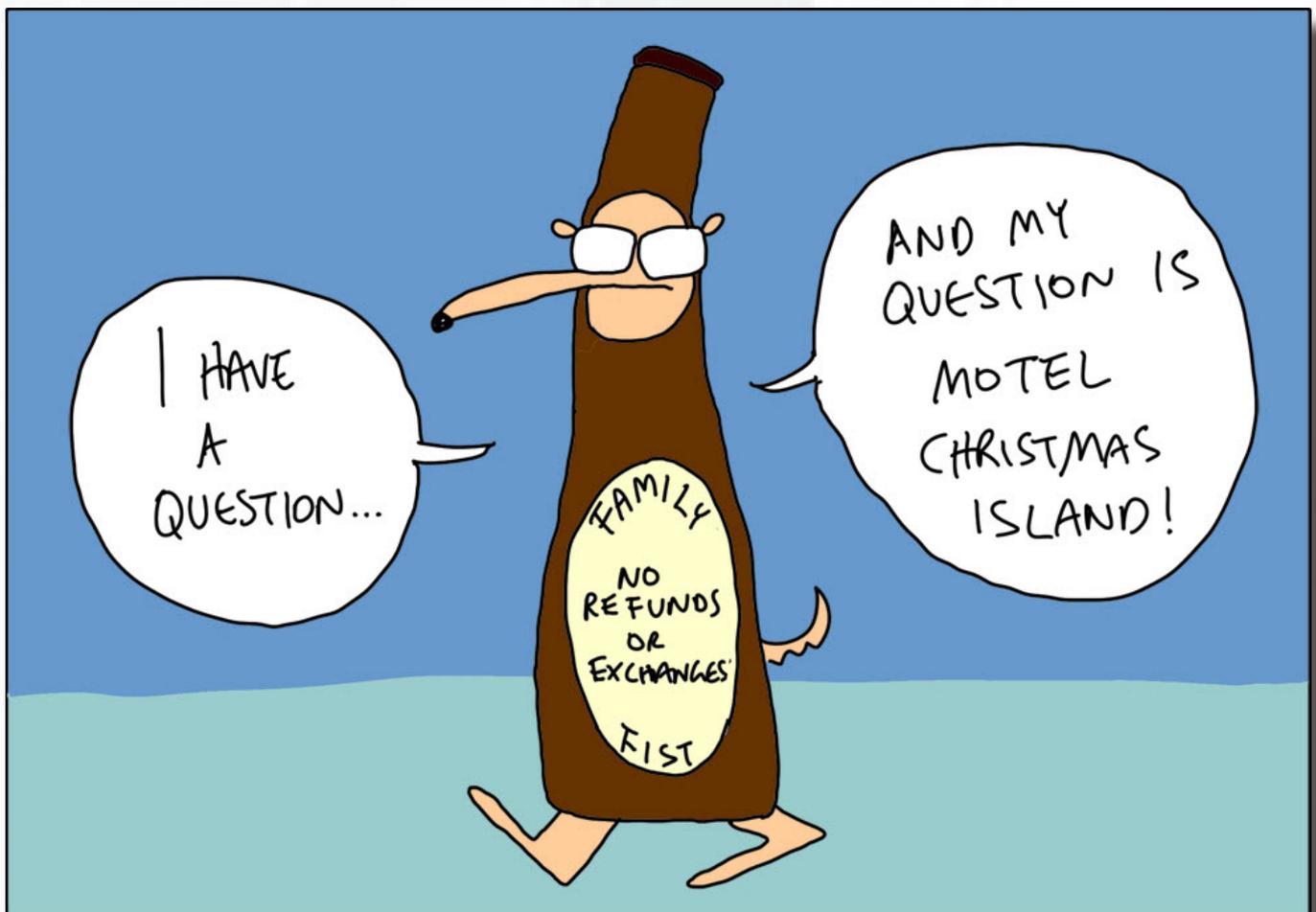
Where is the Start button?

So, I'm back in Australia now, Parliament is back this week, and I am going to make sure that fairness and justice will be brought to bear on "asylum seekers" and their rorting of the Australian taxpayer for extraordinary luxuries as rewards for their criminal cue jumping. Apple Macs and televisions belong in airport passenger lounges, not detention centres, and airports are where real asylum seekers should arrive. And as part of my research, I called up Flight Centre and asked how much a ticket from Sri Lanka to Sydney costs and I can confidently report that it's much less than \$8,000. This case is closed.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

My real action plan for the boat seeker problem is to oppose other real action plans. Or double them.



Food



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Printer toner tastes like black jellybeans.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
If I was a politician I'd outlaw the black jellybeans.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
My favourite vegetable is tomato sauce. Remember when you could buy green tomato sauce? Good times.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Why would anyone eat a rock cake?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Cornflour does not taste like corn.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
I don't understand yeast.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Oops, Susan has left me in front of the TV with a whole box of Saladas. This could be trouble!

Politics can be confusing



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I have brought the best democracy to Australia it has ever seen.

When you're a politician, it's difficult to not get a bit down and unmotivated from time to time. For instance, it took no time at all for the crushing boringness of the House's normal routine to extinguish any interest the nation's journalists might have had in my stunning expose of Motel Christmas Island over the break. I tell you, this democracy of ours is sick when someone like me can put so much work into independently and thoroughly investigating matters of national importance and then have so much trouble cutting through to his public through the media. Sometimes, I really wonder what my purpose is in this place, attempting to work with such a confusing and frustrating system that is seemingly imperfluous to rationality and logic.

On the first Tuesday morning back from Christmas holidays, I was sitting in my Parliament House office putting the cardboard letters into the clear plastic sleeves on my new red pencil case, when Susan suddenly burst in and convened an office meeting. I'd been trying to call her mobile phone for an hour and had left four voice messages asking for help to find an 'S', a 'T', an 'E', and a 'V', and was just about to leave another asking if I could use a sideways 'M' instead of another 'E', but Susan told me to put it away and got everyone to gather around the main desk.

She welcomed everyone back for 2010, hoped we'd had a good break, before telling us that it's going to be our biggest year yet with our biggest ever challenge in the shape of the election campaign. I cut in over the top of her and said that election campaigns certainly are tough because everyone's paying attention to the Prime Minister and the opposition leader and it's really hard for everyone else to get media attention even with big stunts, but there have been bigger challenges over the years, such as that time I accidentally ended up in the Senate Economics Committee instead of the Family First OH&S Ergonomics Committee because of a nomination form mix up. Susan said that this election challenge will be bigger, and that there would be no time for pointless stunts this time around because everyone will be flat out trying to get me re-elected using adult strategies.

At about this point I decided to stop Susan from making any more of a fool of herself due to her having one very serious thing very seriously wrong. But I didn't want to put her down in front of everyone, so I patted her gently on the head and told her in my nicest voice, "It's okay, Susan, because I don't ever have to face an election, remember?"

After pausing and looking at me strangely for a moment, Susan reached over, patted me gently on the head, and asked in a voice dripping with sarcasm, "What did you think, Steve, that you were elected forever?" ("Or at all?" the work experience kid yelled out from the back.)

Seeing as though she didn't take my subtle hint, I decided to try for comedy. I smiled widely, held my arms out to the crowd, and said in a jolly voice, "Well, I didn't have to do too much in 2007 and I'm still here, aren't I?" Susan, obviously embarrassed by her foolish error, put her head in her hands and groaned. I rubbed her on the back, shook my head at the assembled staff in apology, and said in a conciliatory tone, "Why don't you just leave the politics to the politicians, hey, dear?"

When I returned to work a couple of days later (the swelling was pretty bad the first day), and after I had hand-delivered the hand-written letters of apology to the staff, I went to see Nick Xzenophone because I felt quite silly sitting around the office in my son's oversized Corey Worthington sunglasses (the bruise was on my cheek too.) I asked Nick if he'd started planning for his re-election campaign yet but Nick said he didn't have to do anything this year and was looking forward to just taking it easy while all the attention was elsewhere. I patted him gently on the head and said in my nicest voice, "You know, Nick ..."

After leaving Xzenophone's office having promised to write apology letters to all of his staff, I went and sat at Aussies and blew a quarter of my pocket money on a hot chocolate, reminding them to make it extra cool so I didn't burn myself.

For the first time in days, I felt really, really confused. Susan said that I have to fight the election but Nick said that he didn't. Yet we were both Senators. It just didn't make sense. I asked the young girl who made my hot chocolate what was going on, but she didn't know either. It was time to do some proper investigations.

Full of fierce determination to get to the bottom of this matter, I went back to my office and got on the computer. After I got the work experience kid to show me how to type an 'at' symbol, I sent a group email around to all the MPs and Senators I could think of asking them if they had to fight the election that year, and also asking if they had seen my Optimus Prime keyring that I lost the previous October.

The thing about the keyring is, I saw Barnaby with it a few weeks later but he saw me seeing him and shoved it in his pocket with a mean smile on his face and gave me the rude finger. I'm too scared to ask him for it so I'm hoping to shame him into giving it back.

By Monday the following week, I had received less than a dozen replies to my email. Kevin Rudd's office confirmed that he was running, as did Tony Abbott's, although those two were obvious. Xzenophone replied personally and told me that my email had a virus called "Pentecostal Trojan" and all future emails from me would be deleted upon receipt. Barnaby also replied himself and said that he would indeed be going into battle against the evil Decepticons. I hate that guy.

The only other emails I got were from Malcolm Turnbull who said he would confirm or deny closer to the date, and from Peter Costello who said, "Obviously no, you fool." So four yes, one no, and one maybe. One big pile of confusion and zero rhyme or reason. Is the system insane?

But being the intrepid investigationeer that I am, I pledged never to give up until I had clarity. The next morning I emailed Steve Bracks, Anna Bligh, Mr Quentin Bryce, and the Queen, asking each of them if they would be up for election in 2010. I almost sent one to Ray Martin as well until I remembered at the last moment that he hadn't been on the telly for ages. Close call.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Locked in toilets. Send help.

Bringing accountancy to the Senate economics committee



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I am in the economics Senate thingy. Susan says that economics is all about money. I have money.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

For those who don't quite understand, the Estimations are in the red house only and are like Royal Commissions but different.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Ken Henry keeps looking at me and all I can think about is how I forgot to put underpants on this morning. Again.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Look, I'll be honest. I don't understand a single word that anyone here is saying.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

When's the German guy going to shut up and give me my turn? Need to pee.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Really happy with my interjection just then. I think I came across as authoritarian and stuff. Did my extra-serious face.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I've worked out that if I talk slowly, do a serious expression, and caress my lower face I look really, really important.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I'm just notching up win after win here.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

This is possibly my finest parliamentary performance ever.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I bet Ken Henry doesn't have an MBA.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

How many cents in a per?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If that effort doesn't get me an honorary PhD from the Melbourne University economics department then I'll eat Ken Henry's cat.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Hat.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Is it good or bad if interest rates go up? Will the price of a McFlurry change?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan says our mortgage is not with the Reserve Bank. I guess we'll be fine.

Parliament is no place for rock and roll



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

"Whispering Jack" on Walkman headphones. Bliss.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

You're the voice / Try and understand it / Make a noise and make it clean / Woo oo ooooooh, oo oo oo oooooooh



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Call me simple, but how do they get the tapes inside iPods?

When I was a boy of about fourteen I remember asking my dad if I could go to see *Johnny Young's Young Talent Time* show down at the Westfield. He stopped to think for a moment, shook his head, and then sat me down at the kitchen table where all important talks took place. After Dad made us both a cup of cordial (red for me, green for him) we had a man-to-man.

"Son," he said, "popular music is not quite what it seems to your young and innocent eyes."

"How's that, Dad?" I asked, genuinely curious.

"Well, rock and roll is ..." he trailed off and paused to gather his thoughts. "Rock and roll is the devil in the form of sound."

"The devil!" I exclaimed, shocked. "Tell me it isn't so!"

"Sadly, it's true, son," he said, giving me a big hug for safety.

"Do you mean to say, Dad," I started to ask, close to tears, "that the devil might get inside me if I listen to popular music?"

"Not all of it, son," he said confidently, "but a lot of it."

By now I was terrified that my weekly tradition of watching Johnny Young might have been putting me at risk of being taken over by the devil. "Dad, please," I wailed, "is Young Talent Time safe?"

Having been asked this question, so terribly important to his son's faith and self-image, my father closed his eyes and thought long and hard. Finally he opened his eyes and solemnly answered, "No."

"Why not?" I managed to sob through the tears.

"Because of the girls," said Dad.

“The girls,” I repeated, confused. “But I don’t care about the girls. The boys have much nicer voices.”

“You will one day very soon, son. And that’s when the devil gets involved.”

Ever since that day I have striven to protect me and my family from rock and roll music. My sacrifice began at the moment of the missed Young Talent Time concert and it continues to this day as we watch the TV on mute at home so as not to be caught unawares by the incidental soundtrack, Susan reading the closed captions aloud when they start to flash up too fast. The only exception has been Johnny Farnham who was one of my Dad’s favourites and who Dad assured me certainly didn’t have the devil in him.

“Even if it looks like he’s eaten the Devil and the Devil’s pantry!” laughed Dad.

But the Devil’s rock and roll is very serious and not a laughing matter. The recent deaths of young Australians installing the government’s insulation have been used for political footballs for too long and it’s time to end the game and place the blame fairly and squarely where it belongs: rock and roll music.

The minister responsible for this debacle, Peter Garrett, is, as we all know, an ex-rock and roll singer from the band Midnight Vultures. For many years the Godless Garrett lived a Godless lifestyle of sex, drugs and loud music. If anyone is in any doubt as to whether Garrett was possessed by the Devil they need only watch a clip of him “dancing” on the Internet (sound turned down, of course) — that is not the dance of a man possessed by God. For years, Peter Garrett made rock music that rolled out the red carpet from Hell, through the speakers of boom boxes, and into the bedrooms of Australia’s impressionable youth. An evil, evil man.

And then Garrett, obviously responding to the Devil’s suggestion that he try to branch out so more people could get possessed, became a politician. To this job, instead of bringing the purity that we genuine politicians bring, he brought with him his Godless lifestyle and evil intentions. Putting on a suit doesn’t automatically give you values and morals and intelligence and respectability. The Devil was in Canberra.

So, Peter Garrett rode the bourbon train directly to Canberra, rock and roll heroin needles hanging out of his arm, and brought disgrace to the honourable calling of democratic representation by treating the people of Australia as his roadies, subjecting them to terrible working conditions without a ounce of care. Rock and roll music killed those poor tradesmen; you can take the devil music out of the boy but you can’t take the boy out of the devil music.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Um, can I just ask why Australia is not in Eurovision?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If we got Farnham into Eurovision we would totally smash it.

I could be a cartoonist if I wanted to, I just don't want to



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I have lots of ideas for a @firstdogonmoon cartoon starring me. Perhaps he'd like to buy me a coffee and we can chat about them.



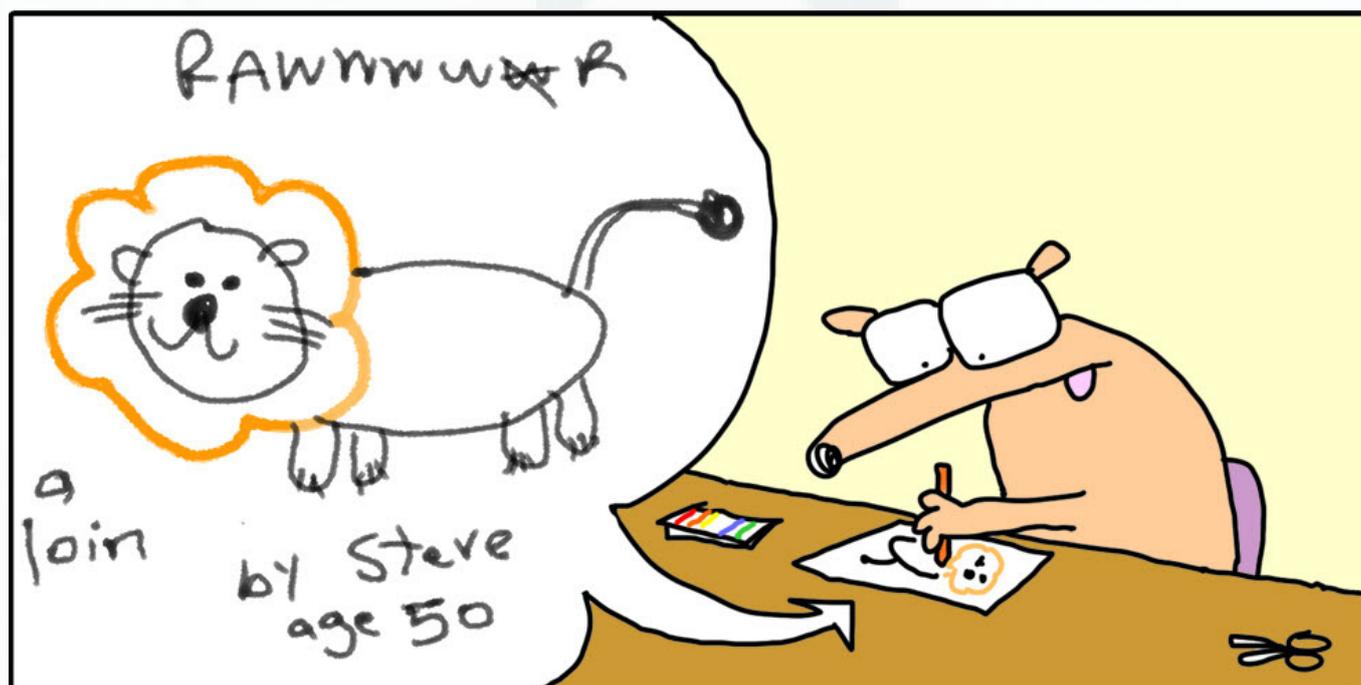
FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I think it would work best if @firstdogonmoon depicted me as a brave-hearted lion.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Yes.



Health policy



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I will not be blocking health reform automatically. I will sit down with the PM for a photo opportunity before doing so.

While in the Senate, I once had the misfortune to require the services of a hospital, and the harrowing experience has ultimately had a huge impact on health policy in this country due to my balancing of power and place beside the right-hand ear of the Prime Minister.

On the day of the incident, Susan was taking the kids to the cinema but I wasn't allowed to go because it was an M-rated film so I was staying home alone. She made me some lunch and put it on a plate in the microwave with a Post-it note arrow stuck next to the keypad, and left a Wiggles DVD on the table for me to watch. I love staying home alone because I can be totally independent and do what I want.

Having successfully re-heated my food after five frustrating minutes spent realising that I had to press the button next to the Post-in note arrow, not the Post-in note arrow, I settled down in the lounge room to watch the DVD. But all of a sudden disaster struck when I stuck the DVD into the VHS machine without even thinking! What an idiot! Panicking, I frantically pressed EJECT on the remote control and the machine itself, but the disc wouldn't come out. I changed the batteries and tried again but still nothing! I called Susan to ask what to do but her phone was on silent inside the cinema. Breathing deep to keep the anxiety at bay, I knew it was time for some creative thinking.

Careful to unplug the machine so there was no chance of electrocuting myself, I picked it up, pointed the tape door towards the floor, and shook it with all my might. I could hear the disc rattling around inside but it just wouldn't come out. By this stage I was nearly in tears, and I considered calling 000 but I decided to give it one more shot. Placing the machine on the coffee table, I carefully inserted my hand through the door and grabbed hold of the disc. Success! However, no matter how hard I tried, I could not get my hand out of the machine.

Two hours later Susan arrived home with the kids and found me sitting on the carpet, bashing the video player connected to the end of my arm on the floor, and covered head-to-toe with all the butter and olive oil I could find in the house. It was not, I'll admit, one of my finer moments. I was so overwrought with emotions that I couldn't stop my son from taking photos on his phone and texting them around to his friends.

I spent the next six hours in the emergency room of my local hospital, and this harrowing experience makes me supremely qualified to formulate and analyse this country's health system. For starters, waiting lists are at crisis point as people in need go without necessary treatment. I had to wait for four hours before a doctor saw me! Four! I was attended to by many nurses but they were hardly taking their jobs seriously going by the level of giggling and photo texting that they were doing while they were supposed to be working.

The indignity I suffered, sitting there in the waiting room, was stinging. Our hospitals are supposed to be places where people heal their bodies and minds but mine were getting sicker. I vowed then and there to do something about health in this country.

Finally, I was examined by a doctor who removed the VHS machine and dressed the grazes on my hand. I asked him why the whole thing had taken so long and he said that hospitals are all understaffed and under-resourced for the work that they were asked to do. I told him that I was a lawmaker (I heard Barack Obama say that word on the telly) and that I could do something about it. He stared at the puddle of grease on the sheet around my bottom and said he doubted that. I gave him my APH business card and said that I seriously was a politician, and after he'd called my office and described me over the phone to verify my credentials I asked him what was the one single thing that would most improve health. Money, he said, and lots of it.

As soon as I got home I emailed Kevin Rudd and told him that we should give more money to hospitals. Then I called my staff to tell them that this was a new policy. And finally I called Nick Xenophon to tell him that it was my new policy and I thought of it first so don't go announcing it himself and claiming it was his. Nick told me to say thanks to my son for the MMS. What's an MMS?

And then finally, after months and months of my lobbying and tireless work on my behalf, Kevin Rudd announced his health plan, modelled on Family First's policy, which included more money for hospitals. Excellent. But the good work is totally cancelled out by his bizarre decision to move all hospitals to Canberra. How on earth anyone could possibly think such an idea is a good one is beyond me. Just imagine how far people will have to travel for treatment if they live in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, North Australia and the Western Territory! Madness.

As usual, the Labor government took a good, sensible idea and baked it by half.

Jessica Watson

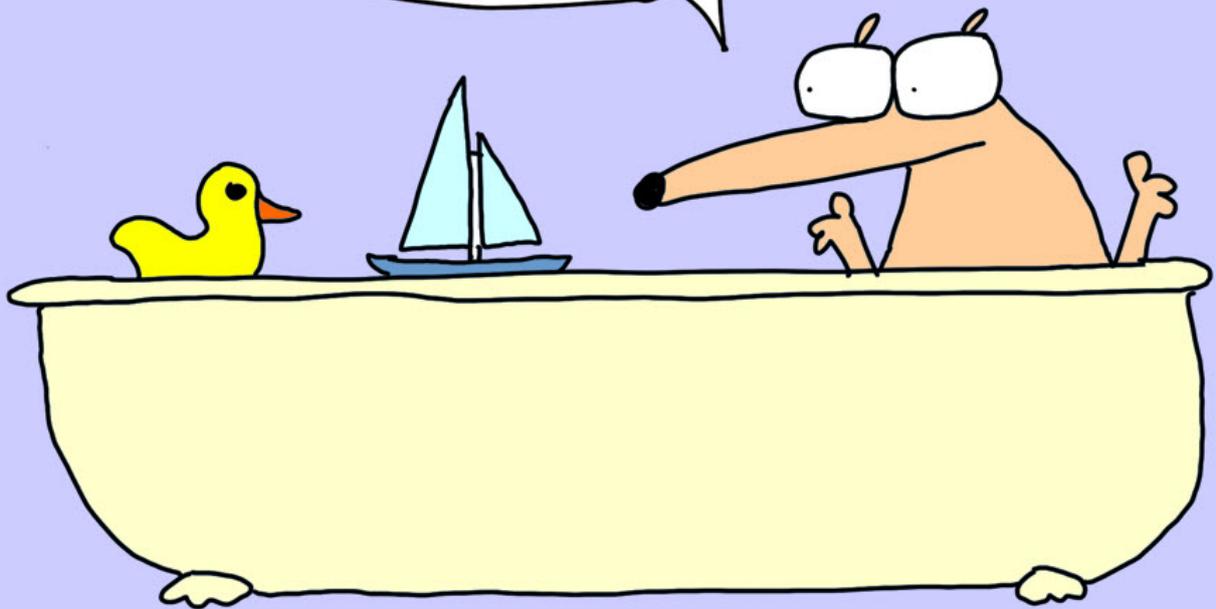


FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Congratulations to Jessica Watson on her amazing solo circumcison of Australia.

Sometimes I play at being Jessica in the bath (but I'm careful not to splash)

look out Mr Duckie,
I'm coming round
the horn!



Repairing the moral fabric of society, one swear at a time

I really hated Senate holidays. It's impossible to say how much I hated them. There was nothing to do and there was no media waiting in groups out the front of the house to do stunts at every day. Not only were Senate holidays boring as anything, I hated the ever-present threat of having to go down to the electorate office and I hated having to look busy to prevent Susan from enacting that threat onto me.

One thing I started to do after one too many trips to the electorate office was walk around at all times with a notepad under my arm and pencil behind my ear, squinting my eyes like I'm thinking and murmuring policy under my breath. Susan asked to look in the notepad once but I told her it was secret political business and she wouldn't understand, for which she made me put another cross next to my name on the whiteboard in the kitchen. I hate that.

I hated Senate holidays on their own as it was, but I hated them even more when they coincided with school holidays because my kids were home with me. One day, my son snuck up quietly behind me while I was looking in the fridge for the devon and shouted out, "BOAT SEEKERS!" I jumped literally out of my skin and did a little bit of wee in my pants. It took my son about four minutes to get the footage out of his mobile phone and onto YouTube, and I was on the phone to Conroy reaffirming my commitment to the Internet filter that very evening.

One night, the whole family was sitting around watching TV (the kids and I get to stay up until 9:30pm during holidays) when that new Victorian road safety ad came on. "Don't be a dickhead," boomed the voiceover and my son turned around and said, "yeah, Dad." We were all a bit shocked; Susan bit her bottom lip really hard but had to wipe up a fleck of snot that came flying out of her nose.

I'm really sick and tired of these kids — they have no respect at all for their elders — so in response to my son's attitude I tried out a line I've heard all the teenagers using lately. "Your mum's a dickhead," I told my son, and 40 seconds later I was in my bedroom without dessert and grounded for a month. I hate it how Susan always takes our kids' side.

The next morning, still furious about the previous night's events, I decided to use my special powers for good and release a press release about the road safety ads. There are too many swears in today's society and politicians shouldn't be encouraging our kids to use more swears. We're just a slippery slope away from perhaps the S-word and even the F-word being used in government campaigns, and from there it's just another slip before it's the C-word or even the J-word. Once upon a time there were no swears in society and society was a better place for it.

A dirty mouth is a sign of a dirty mind, my Dad always told me, and society's mind is getting dirtier and dirtier every day. I was elected on a clearly articulated platform of stopping the rot and upholding decent family values and that's exactly what I will do once I make as many people as possible pay attention to me.

I called up Xzennophone to make sure that he wasn't going to steal my thunder because he often trumps my press releases with his own press releases; Xzennophone tends to write my thoughts, but so much thinkier than I think. I asked him if he'd seen the road safety ad with the swears in it and he said he hadn't, although he had just seen a great YouTube video of an Australian Senator dropping a jar of mayonnaise on the floor and screaming "Jesus fuck!" at the top of his voice. I hung up the phone and got back in touch with Conroy proposing an outright ban on the Internet (again), or at the very least, YouTube.

While I was grounded I had nothing to look forward to until Senate went back except for Easter which is always awesome for the chocolate bit, but a bit of a drag because of the church bit. Why can't we just celebrate the miracle of the holy rabbit laying the chocolate egg in the cave where Jesus was resting by sleeping in on Sundays?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Accidentally ate a crayon. Again.

Third-person Steve



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Steve Fielding is going to talk about himself in the third person for maximum authoritarianness.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Steve Fielding is hungry.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Steve Fielding is helping his son with maths homework.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Steve Fielding is getting help from Susan to help his son with maths homework.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Steve Fielding is being taught by Susan how to do take away sums.

Balancing the power of health



When I was a kid I always wanted to be an astronaut when I grew up. I used to sit in my bedroom at night and stare out the window at the stars, wondering what the earth would look like if I were up there in a spaceship looking down. I imagined it to be a beautiful sight, with oceans and mountains and clouds and volcanoes and airplanes criss-crossing the sky between me and the sleeping families down below. I had a lot more trouble imagining what it would look like when the spaceship went around the bottom of the planet — what does the underside of the earth look like, anyway? Would it be just lots of dirt with

all the tree roots sticking out? Can you see all the oil that hasn't been pumped up yet and the bottoms of coffins and stuff?

But my point is that never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be an accountant when I grew up. Not many people know that I was an accountant before I was in control of the Senate; humble beginnings, I can hear you say, but from little things big things grow. As an accountant I probably have a much more intimate knowledge of economic and taxation matters than most ordinary Australians, and I often have to step in at dinner parties and in meetings with colleagues to pour some hard facts on uniformed speculation. Like this one time, Barnaby suggested that we should just print more money to pay off debt and I gently scolded him, pointing out that the cost of the extra plastic and ink and holograms would completely wipe out any benefit gained.

One of the things that happened while I was a working accountant was the introduction of the GST. The GST, for those of you who don't quite understand, is a tax on goods and services. Services, for those of you who don't quite understand, are the sorts of things done by state governments — health, passport printing, policemen, garbage bins etc. Every time you buy a good (except for birthday cakes which are exempt) or use a service, you pay \$10 to the federal government. This money is then deposited into the state governments' bank accounts to pay for more services like public libraries.

Complicated, I know, but try to stay with me.

So, with my natural interest in economic matters, you can imagine how my eyes pricked up when the Australia Prime Minister started talking to the state Prime Ministers at their COGA meeting about changing the way the GST money is shared around and spent on hospitals. Now, nobody doubts that the nation's hospital system is getting worse, and everybody knows that the finger-pointing and blame game games are mostly to blame for this terrible state of affairs, but healthcare is far too important to be used a political football and there are many, many both sides to the story to be considered. That's why I was angry and disappointed that instead of just fixing hospitals, the Prime Ministers squabbled like children over who got what GST money and who gets to spend it. Enough is enough.

There is heaps and heaps of GST money. Consider that each year I probably consume about 50 loaves of bread, 12 jars of Vegemite, 15 tins of Milo, 100 litres of milk, and 200 Chicken Heroes (and those are just the staples of my diet); plus I might use a hospital once or twice, get my garbage collected every week, and usually get questioned by the police once every couple of months. And I pay \$10 each and every one of those times. Just on my own I reckon I pay easily over \$100 in GST and I'm only one of 21 billion Australians! Clearly, there is enough GST revenue to fix the hospitals once and for all.

In the end, all but one of the PMs came to an agreement about changing the carve-up of the GST, with just Western Australia's Colonel Barnett holding out. Because it wasn't a yoonani yunany younanny all of them agreeing on it at the same time agreement, the changes had to go to Parliament, and as the balancer of power in Canberra I looked like the one who would be required to make a decision that would have serious repercussions for all Australians. And to think that once upon a time I was just a simple accountant!

But with great power comes great responsibility, and I take my responsibilities extremely seriously. Unfortunately, details of the changes agreed upon were sketchy at best, and I was quite vague as to the exact proposal I was going to be balancing power on. I spent all the week of the meeting trying to gain access to the CAOG negotiations, mindful of my need to be totally across the issue, but I was foiled at every turn. I inundated the offices of Kevin Rudd, Joan Brumby and Kerri-Ann Keneally with faxes and emails asking for them to let me into the circle of talks, but nothing. A cynic might suggest that these people, charged as they were with great responsibility by the people of Australia, weren't taking their responsibilities seriously. How was I supposed to vote on something I know nothing about?

In the end, I'm not entirely sure how I voted on the proposed healthcare reform, or even if I voted on it at all. It gets very confusing in the Senate sometimes and when I don't know what's happening I just do what Xzennophone does — if he puts up his hand, I put up mine; if he goes to the toilet, I go to the toilet, as well. I must remember to ask him about how the health thing went one day.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

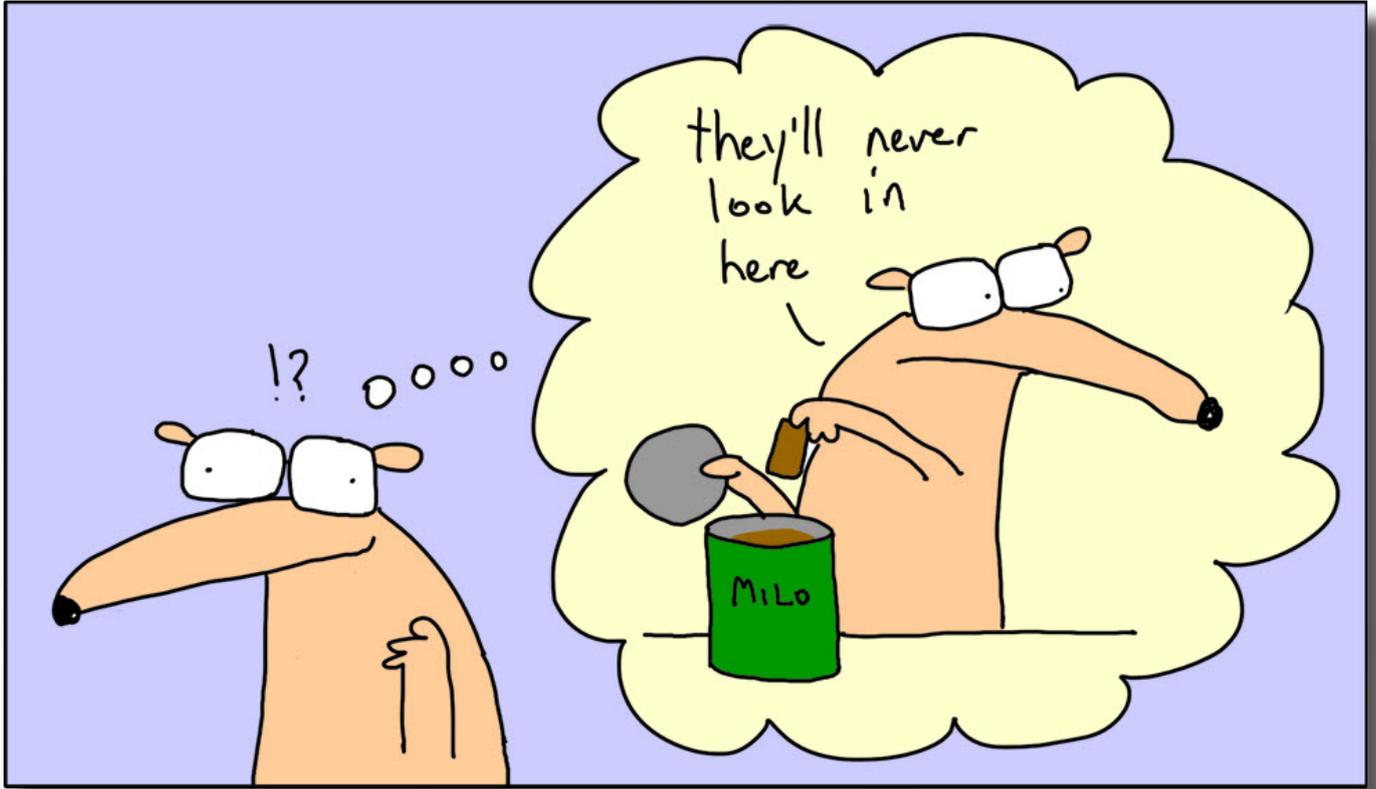
Some days I wish I never even got into bed.

Chocolate biscuit



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just remembered where I hid a chocolate biscuit.



Governing from inside the TV



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Arrived at ABC studios only to be turned away and told I'm not on Insiders. So why did Xzennophone tell me I was?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Estimates question for [@abcmarkscott](#): How often will ABC News 24 be on?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Have left a message with the ABC switch suggesting a three-part Australian Story profile on me.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Estimates question for [@abcmarkscott](#): How often will ABC News 24 be on?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I have just heard the most brilliant news. After months of calling the producers of Q&A I have been invited on tonight's show!

I remember the day I heard the news about my Q&A very clearly. I was sitting at home on the floor of my room, absolutely smashing the evil Decepticons with a double-pronged attack of Autobots and Voltron, when Susan came in to tell me that I had been invited to go on the television! Apparently, a guest due to appear had cancelled and the ABC wanted me to go on instead! Tears welled in my eyes because it was the happiest day of my life.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Left a voice message for Tony Jones asking if I can do a magic trick just before the credits.

I immediately sent a text to Nick Xzennophone, asking him if he'd ever been on the telly before. He answered yes, so I asked if he'd ever been on the ABC before. He answered yes, so I asked him if he'd ever been on the Q&A before. He answered no, so I told him that I was going on Q&A and he wasn't. I signed off, "Regards Steve", even though I don't really have any regards for him. Xzennophone can be such a media whore sometimes so it's nice to get one up on him now and again.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Texted Tony Jones telling him to make sure there's Milo and Redskins in my rider.

Within an hour I was packed and ready for my flight to Sydney. In the car on the way to the airport Susan explained to me again and again how the television gets sucked up into the camera and then goes flying along a cable to a big metal tower that throws the pictures through the air to television sets across the land, but no matter how hard I tried to visualise and understand this magic I just couldn't. I guess I'm a simple kind of guy who's happy just accepting it as one of those mysteries of God that are all around us. Life's easier that way.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Drinking heaps and heaps of Weight Watchers shakes today because I heard the TV makes you put on ten kilos.

The ABC woman said that a car would be waiting at Sydney Airport for me but I couldn't for the life of me find the driver. After thirty minutes of standing there, twiddling my thumbs like an idiot, I called the ABC woman to find out what the heck was going on. She told me that she would call the driver and get back to me. A few minutes later a guy who'd been standing near me holding a sign the whole time answered his phone, looked around, and walked over to me. The silly idiot had written half of his sign wrong which is why I didn't know he was looking for me. My first name isn't "Sen."

Arriving at the studios, I was taken to a dressing room which looked just like in the movies. There were light bulbs around the mirror and comfy chairs and everything. I changed into my TV outfit and headed over to the makeup department. The girls there were lovely although they said my Diamonte shirt would probably make the television cameras flare so it would be best if I changed into a plain business shirt. I immediately sent a text to Susan asking her to post my rhinestone shirt to Sydney by registered post.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

About to jump on air on #qanda



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Who is this Richard Dorkins guy, anyway? #Qanda

I was lead into the studio and seated between Julie Bishop and some guy called Richard Dorkins. I'm not shy to admit that I'm absolutely terrified of Julie Bishop. She reminds me of that story that I think was in the Bible about the woman who turns you to stone if you make eye contact with her, and I make sure to keep my eyes cast safely downwards whenever I'm near her. Problem is, she kept brushing up against my leg because the chairs were so close together – lucky I had blanky on my lap.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
For sisters, Julie and Bronwyn have very different hairstyles.
#qanda



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Julie's hair looks very crisp. I wonder what it feels like to bite it.
#qanda

The Dorkins fellow was a bit strange. A lot of people seemed almost in awe of him but his hair is very scruffy and his clothing looked like it came from Vinnies. He smelled nice, though, and at least his scruffy hair was obviously clean. When Tony Jones was talking to me before the show he said something about a possible clash between me and Dorkins about religion or something, but how can I have a religious clash with somebody who doesn't believe in religion? Curious.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
I can't stop watching myself in the little TVs on the floor. #qanda



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Julie Bishop keeps staring at me. Is it my Lynx Africa? #qanda

Before I knew it the opening credits were rolling and Tony was introducing the panellists. As I saw the camera panning along the desk towards me I started to freeze up and my veins ran cold. "Not now, Steve," I told myself, "the whole world is watching." So I grabbed blanky with one hand, Julie's hand with my other hand, and flashed a beaming smile up the camera, along the cables, and out of the big metal tower. I knew then that this show was going to be a piece of cake.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

When the red light went on the camera the turtle poked its head out. #qanda

But then I was asked if I was a creationist or an evolutionerist. I've spent the past five years rehearsing my answer to this one because it's something that my detractors want to use to attempt to delegitimise and discredit me. I'd even rehearsed my answer in the car with Susan earlier that day; Susan repeatedly asked me the question and I practised saying "NO!" in my best confident and semi-shouty voice. But with the eyes of Australia watching, and with Julie Bishop staring a giant hole right through the side of my head, my mind went blank and I heard myself tell the world I was a creationist. "Think fast, Steve," I told myself, and so in a stroke of genius I mentioned that Kevin Rudd was a creationist too. Crisis successfully avoided. Steve Fielding: 1, ABC: 0.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

So far I give myself eight stars out of ten. #Qanda



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I am a little transfixed by Dorkins' tie. I want to rub his forehead. #qanda

For the rest of the show, I performed brilliantly, articulately answering everything that was thrown my way and managing even to tie the idiot Dorkins up in knots of perfect logic. Hours of practise in front of the mirror paid off brilliantly with my hand gestures adding to my appearance of calm and studied confidence, and successfully distracting people's attention from what I was saying. Even Julie Bishop was mesmerised by my hands which saved a few audience members from being turned to stone.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Asylum seekers. I'm across this issue. When it's my turn I shall re-expose Motel Christmas Island. #qanda



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I bet Dorkins has a shiny new Apple Mac. I hate that guy. #qanda

Shaking Tony Jones' hand as I prepared to leave the studio I told him that I was available most Monday nights as long as he called Susan a few days in advance so she could buy one less pork chop, and I really looked forward to being a regular guest on the show. I gave him my business card but Tony said he was out of his own cards, but not to worry anyway because he'd call me.

On the way out to my car I was asked by a producer if I'd mind sharing a ride with Julie Bishop. I walked to my hotel at the airport.



Watching the World Cup



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I am settled in front of the TV for the World Cup soccer. Got a jar of Pringles and a 2L bottle of Diet Coke.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Why on earth did they schedule Australia's soccer match against Germany at 4:30am? The players will be very tired.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Hang on, is this night/day thing like the summer/winter thing because South Africa is in the northern hemisphere?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Hand stuck in Pringles tin. Son crying with laughter.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Asked Susan to get the butter, she came back with the camera.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Getting a bit teary.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Asked son to call 000. He dialed and handed me the phone, I explained my emergency, and I heard Nick Xzennophone laughing down the phone.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Unclenched my fist and the Pringles jar fell off.

My ten-point contract with Austria

One Wednesday night, right in the middle of a tense moment in the kitchen, my phone rang. It was Nick Xzennophone, and before I could say anything he shouted, "Spill!"

"I know," I replied. "There's Milo everywhere and Susan's furious with me."

"No, there's a spill on for the Labor leadership!" Nick said. "I've been making some phone calls and I reckon you've got the numbers to have a crack."

"Really?" I asked.

"Really."

I was gobsmacked. How far a simple boy from Reservoir had come; from engineer to accountant to Prime Minister of Australia. It was the proudest moment of my life and I was determined not to let the chance slip away.

"What should I do?" I asked Xzennophone.

"Leave the campaigning to me," he said. "You just worry about the vote tomorrow. Make sure you're there shaking hands and networking. Wear something striking."

"Okay," I said. "Where's the vote?"



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I rate my chances at 80-95%. #Spill



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Preparing my acceptance speech. How do you spell "desteny"?
#spill



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

My first act as PM will be whatever Susan tells me to do. #spill

So on Thursday morning I arrived bright and early at Templestowe Primary School, ready to greet MPs on their way to the ballot box. I wandered around for ages but I couldn't see any voting booths, sausage sizzles or anything. I couldn't even see any adults, although they had to be somewhere because there were kids all over the place. Eventually, a man came up to me and said that if I didn't get out of the school immediately he'd call the police. I asked if he was a Labor MP and offered him my hand. "Steve Fielding," I introduced myself. "Next Prime Minister of Australia."

"I'm the principal," he growled. "And you're trespassing on my property so get out."



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

How will Julie Gillard have time to run the country while she's staying home to look after her kids? #spill

In the end, the vote didn't go my way and we were stuck with our first female Prime Minister in Julie Gillard which is certainly historic but is bound to cause problems and is unlikely to be sustainable. I mean, the role of Prime Minister is a busy one and houses get dirty and dinner doesn't just cook itself. Plus, she's an athi ... athee not God believer, which points towards perhaps not being the sharpest tool in the lunchbox. I mean, Julie, do you seriously think the earth just built itself hundreds of thousands of years ago? Did the pyramids and Ayers Rock and the Statue of Liberty just materialise out of thin air? And you claim to have the intellectual capability to lead this country.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Look, all I can say is I hope Julie Gillard is more consultive than Rudd was. I'm sick of being a mushroom in this government.
#Spill



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

When you think about it, women are in charge everywhere. Gillard, the Queen, Susan ...

Anyway, I thought, given that Julie would quickly be seen by the electorate as too silly to lead it, I still had a shot at becoming Australia's first family Prime Minister. To that ends, I signed a 10-point contract with Australia's voters, trumping the contract points signed days earlier by opposite leader Tony Abbott:

- Point one: Restore the budget to surplus within one year and clear all debt. This is two years faster than Tony or Julie and will be achieved through the printing of more money — an obvious and effective measure.
- Point two: Restore cabinet government. I promise to consult widely with Susan on all matters of policy.
- Point three: Reject the Great Big New Tax on Mining. In fact, all taxes will be abolished in favour of a flat, egalitarian tax. Probably about two per cent out of a hundred.
- Point four: Enforce our borders. Boat seekers will be sent to the back of the cue and there will be no more free Apple Macs.
- Point five: Take direct action on water and the environment. I support both, and will implement simple, practical measure such as, "If it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down."
- Point six: Help stay-at-home mums with unlimited paid parental leave at twice the minimum wage. Those whose job titles start with "pr" — e.g. prostitutes and prisoners — need not apply.
- Point seven: See point one.
- Point eight: See point two.
- Point nine: See point three.
- Point ten: See points four, five and six.

I declared my contract with the people to be the gospel truth and I invited the media to come and watch me sign it so that everyone could be confident that I was serious. But nobody showed up which is probably lucky because my crayon was a bit blunt and my signature looked a bit like a drawing of a yellow river.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If there is a double dissolution election it means I can win two seats.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If I win two seats I will give one to Susan.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Big meeting about re-election strategy today. Susan says she will tell me all about it when she gets back.

Branding my brand



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Still thinking about my preferred date for the election. I expect Julie will be calling to ask me soon.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Faxed the PM's office. Asked her to rule out election on baby Jesus and my mother-in-law's birthdays.

One night, Susan went out to the shops so I got on MSN and had a chat with Barnaby. I have to wait for Susan to leave the house because I'm banned from MSN after I gave Susan's credit card details to that nice man from Nigeria who needed help moving money. I would've given him my credit card details except Susan banned me from having a credit card after I emailed the details to another nice man from Nigeria who needed help moving money.

Anyway, I was chatting to Barnaby and we got talking about the upcoming election.

"What is the family 1st election slogan?" asked Barnaby.

"Slogan?" I replied.

"Like a sentence to sum up what u stand for. Labour's is 'Moving Forward'," he explained.

"Oh right well I'm not 2 sure," I admitted. "How do u come up with a slogan?"

"Usually u do some focus groups and stuff."

"Have you got any ideas for a slogan?" I asked.

"How about this?" answered Barnaby, including a link to a YouTube video.

When I was halfway through watching the video that Barnaby sent me, Susan walked in the front door and I panicked and turned the computer off and quickly sat at the kitchen table with a magazine, doing my best to look engrossed by squinting my eyes and sucking on the end of a pen.

"Hi, everyone," called Susan.

"Dad was on MSN," said my son casually.

"Liar! I was not!" I shouted, shooting him a dirty look and mouthing doobers wear nappies.

Two days later, after my 24-hour grounding had expired, I called up Nick Xzennophone to find out more about focus groups.

"It's when you pay ordinary people, like folk on the street, to give you their opinions about the ideas you have for something, in this case a slogan," he explained.

"But I've only got one idea! Can you help me with another one?" I pleaded.

"Well," he said, "Labour says that a vote for them is moving forward and a vote for the coalition is moving backwards. Which way do you reckon you're moving?"

"I'd like to think of my role in politics as a balance between two extremes — someone who looks at all of the both sides of the story," I said. "So if I'm in between forwards and backwards I guess I'm moving nowhere."

"Hmmm, 'Moving Nowhere'," pondered Nick. It's almost perfect but it doesn't sound quite right. How about 'Going Nowhere'?"

"Family First: Going Nowhere," I said slowly, testing the sound of the words. "I think I like it, but maybe it needs to be a touch more ephmat ... enphati ... empathised."

"OK," said Nick, thinking, "how about, 'Family First: Going Absolutely Nowhere'?"

"Perfect!" I exclaimed. "Brilliant! Now, how much do focal group people normally get paid?"

All I could find in Susan's purse was \$150 so I could only afford to focal group three people. First I went down to the nice lady at the servo who gives me a discount on Chicken Heroes. I showed her the two slogans that I'd printed professionally on sheets of A4 paper in Comic Sans bold and asked her which one she liked better.

"The first one, dear," she said.

"Why's that?"

"The second one sounds a bit negative. Going nowhere makes me think of standing still which is not really making much progress, is it?"

"I guess not," I conceded.

Next I went to see the dry cleaning man who did a superb job of getting all that strawberry jam out of the bottle suit. He also liked the first one.

"Is there anything at all you like about the second one?" I asked. "It's sort of my favourite."

"Not really, Stuart," he said. "I feel like the country's been going nowhere for the past three years so I'd like it to go somewhere now."

"Steve," I reminded him.

"Who?"

Lastly, I dropped in to see my pastor who is a very wise man. I asked him to select his favourite slogan from the two choices but only showed him the second hoping he'd just like that one.

"Where is the other one, Steve?" he asked.

"What other one?" I dodged.

"You said that there was a choice between two. Where is the other choice?"

"Oh, here it is," I fumbled with the papers, pretending to suddenly find the missing one.

"Definitely that one, my son," the pastor said, nodding. "It reminds me of faith which suggests to me that you're a party of God, and the other one about going nowhere is terrible. Very negative."

Walking home I felt a bit forlorn because I really, really like 'Family First: Going Absolutely No-where', but I could see the value in focal grouping because it makes you see that other people have opinions, too — even if they are a bit stupid — and if there are more other opinions than your own opinion then maybe all the other opinions are right and yours is wrong. In my time as a Senator I've learned that democracy is about respecting all opinions no matter how wrong they are and respecting the will of the people.

So, when I got home I gave in to public opinion, sat down at my desk, sharpened a crayon, and started drafting my first press release of the election campaign:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STEVE FIELDING UNVAILS ELECTION SLOGAN — 'FAMILY FIST: NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP'

Remote control



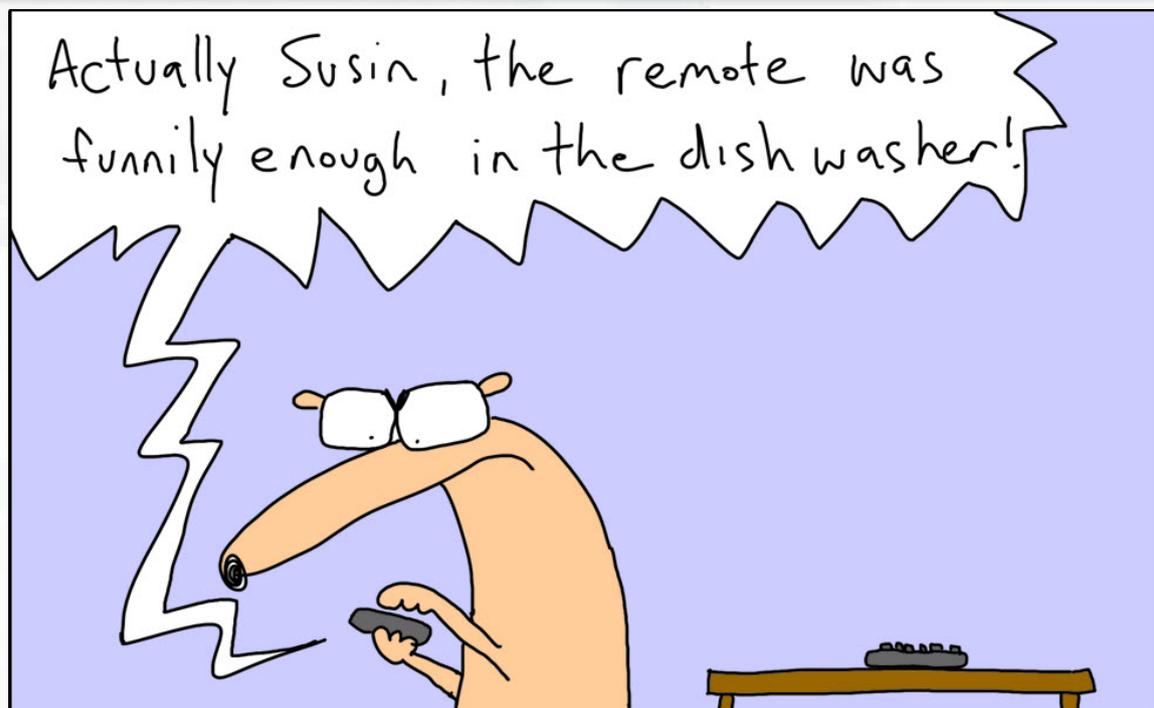
FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Called Susan to ask where remote is. She asked if I checked on the coffee table. I asked if she thought I was an idiot and laughed.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Remote was on coffee table. Texted Susan and told her it was in the dishwasher.



The two Ps: promotion and policies



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just imagine if John Farnham was a guest on the new season of Hey Hey It's Saturday. All of my dreams come true.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

This is the happiest day of my life. I've been in tears since the opening titles started rolling.

It was during the second week of campaigning, while still feeling a little bit sick from that VB my staffer dared me to drink on the long airplane flight back, that I was watching Daryl, Plucka and the gang. And finally, after an hour of the standard out-of-control craziness that makes *Hey Hey* such a brilliantly funny show, on came my favourite segment: Red Faces. Oh, how I booed that rotter Red Simon!

He is very mean to those brave people who go on the TV give it their best shot, so I make sure I always give him an extra-loud boo. My son asked Susan to tell me to keep it down because he couldn't hear the TV. I turned from my position sitting on the carpet in front of the television so I could see him over there on the lounge.

"I'm right here, you know," I said.

"Tell dad I know he's right there," he said to Susan.

I turned back to the television only to see on the judging panel Tony Abbott! I was furious! I mean, I'm the biggest *Hey Hey* fan in the whole wide world — I've been watching the show since I was about five years old. I remember me, my mum and dad, and my brothers and sisters gathered around the TV set on Saturday evenings to have a great big laugh together at Ding and Dags Dong and Richard Knee (my father wouldn't let us use his real first name), and it was truly a show that brought families together.

And here was Tony Abbott getting to go on my favourite show in the world and I wasn't. I'm an opposition leader, too! There are a lot of things in life that aren't fair and this is probably right at the top of the list. I started to boo at the TV really loud, giving Abbott both of my thumbs down, and throwing in a hiss every now and again for good measure. I bet he's never been overseas on an airplane. Susan turned the television off with the remote.

"Right, that's bedtime Steve," she said.

"But ..." I started, looking at my son still sitting on the lounge. "He's ..."

"You've got three minutes to brush your teeth or it'll be another cross against your name on the whiteboard."

The next day I called Channel Nine to find out if I could go on *Hey Hey* next week.

"Sorry, dear, but *Hey Hey* is finished for the season," said the nice lady on the switchboard.

"Finished?" I asked incredulously, "but it only just started again!"

"You might be able to try again next year, dear," she said. "Keep an eye on your TV guide."

I was furious. My big chance to go on my favourite show in the world during a crucial election campaign was ruined. I went back home and started drafting a Bill: the *Truth In Television Program Titling Bill (2010)*. Never again will I miss three-quarters of a season of a TV program because of an inaccurate or misleading title. I called up Nick Xzennophone to run the draft of the Bill past him and show him that even though Parliament is on holiday and an election campaign is on, policy development at Family First never stops.

"It's OK, I guess, Steve," he said. "But it's not really a show-stopping, election-winning policy. Have you got anything else?"

"Um, well ... I ... Wind turbulines are dangerous."

"You mean you've got no policies to take to the election?"

"I've been to Afpakistan," I boasted.

"Sorry?"

I started to make a hissing noise and held the phone away from my face.

"Sorry, Nick!" I shouted. "I'm going through a tunnel so I'll have to call you back!"

"You're on a landline, dipshit," he said, just before I hung up.

The next day, I went into my electorate office to see what our election policies were. I must admit that I started to panic a bit when the office manager told me she was not aware of any election policies.

"Anyway, isn't that sort of your job?" she asked.

"I suppose so. But maybe you could remind me how you write election policies."

She looked at me over the top of her glasses for a while then heaved a massive sigh.

"OK," she said, getting out a large sheet of butcher's paper and a thick permanent marker. "Let's blue-sky this."

"But it's cloudy," I said, looking out the window.

Later that evening, after an exhausting two-hour policy session in which I decided to ban wind, I called Xzennophone back.

"I'm out of the tunnel now, Nick."

"Whatever," he said.

"I think you were asking me about my election policies," I reminded him.

"Was I? OK."

I paused, waiting. The line was silent.

“So ...” I prompted him.

“So, what?” he asked.

“Ask me about my election policies.”

“This is insane,” he mumbled before sighing and clearing his throat. “Steven, I was wondering if you could tell me about your election policies.”

“No,” I said. “I wouldn’t want to give you a chance to trump me on them,” and I hung up.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Need to take a break from campaigning. Going to sit in the wardrobe.

Sunday night



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just another Sunday night. I've had my bath, washed my hair, got into pyjamas, and now Susan's clipping my toenails.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan told me to go to bed. I told her she's not the boss of me. She laughed and made me go to bed.



A real education revolution



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I've been to Afpakistan. I went before Julie Gillard was even born.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Until you've been to Afpakistan, you can't make a judgement on it with any irthority.

I'm not a conspiracy theory kind of guy, but to my well-trained conspiracy nose the timing of the 2007 election date announcement had a stink of conspiracy. There are 350 days in the year and it's too cute times half to think that Julie Gillard, in her decision to choose that one day for the announcement, was completely oblivion to the fact that I was at that moment fighting the Tabilan in Afpakistan. But I've faced a lot of challenges in my time and I may not be the brightest tool in the shed but I am as tough as nails so I've decided to fight on regardless of the unideal circumstances. They don't call me The Decider for nothing.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If Julia Gillard likes kissing babies so much, she would have had one by now.

Determined to fight back against this disadvantage, I spent weeks and weeks out door-nocking for ages and ages. This one week I must've done at least a dozen streets around Templestowe and a couple in Bulleen, and as anyone who knows how big Victoria is knows, I was very conscious about having to keep up a cracking pace to cover my whole electorate. On Thursday afternoon I rapped at the door of a single-story brick house. A middle-aged lady answered.

"Are you the milkman?" she asked, looking me up and down.

"What? No, I'm Steve."

"What do you want?"

"I'd love to chat to you about the upcoming federal election if you have a moment," I told her.

"Can I come in?"

The lovely lady made us a pot of tea and we had a good old natter in her lounge room about the issues that are important to her. We seemed to be very like-minded about issues such as drink binging, wind turbulines, and Motel Christmas Island. Things got a little tricky, though, when she asked me to comment on some of the others' policies.

"What are your thoughts about the NBN, Simon?"

"Steve," I reminded her. "The NBA?"

"NBN."

"Um, well, I support it, I guess," I stalled. "These Tim Tams are amazing; I'm never allowed to eat them at home."

"Really? So the government's on the right track with it, then?" she continued.

"The government? Is it a government policy?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Well, I oppose it then," I concluded.

When I got home I asked my son what an NBN was.

"Let me Google that for you, dad," he drawled.

"OK," I said, waiting.

"No, I'm not really going to Google it for you," he said. "Go do it yourself. And wash all that chocolate off your face while you're at it."

I tried to log into the computer but for some reason it was suddenly asking for a password. I texted Susan for the password and she replied, "No", but that word didn't work in capitals, little letters, mixed or anything. I gave up and called Xzennophone.

"What's an NBN?"

"It's the government's proposed new super-fast broadband Internet network," he told me.

"But we've already got an Internet," I protested. "Why do we need a new one?"

"This is the same Internet but it's going to be heaps faster."

"How fast?" I asked sceptically. Already I can't type fast enough to keep up with Barnaby on MSN chat.

"Really fast," said Nick. "Fast enough that things like education and health and business will increasingly move out of the physical world and onto the Internet."

"Wow," I breathed in awe. "Like Tron?"

"Yes," sighed Xzennophone. "Like Tron."

That evening I sat at the kitchen table making letterbox pamphlets out of craft paper and Clag. While I cut my face out of a green square I thought about the NBN, and I hated to admit it but the idea sounded really good so how on earth could I oppose it? Deep in thought, absent-mindedly licking the brush, the answer suddenly came to me like a thunderbolt: if I can't oppose it, I should improve it.

I rushed out to tell Susan about my new policy.

"You're talking about a brand new university large enough to provide a quality tertiary education to possibly millions of people simultaneously. We're probably looking at billions of dollars here. How do you propose to pay for such a thing, Einstein?" asked Susan.

"Print more money."

Susan's face fell into the palm of her hand.

"Barnaby thinks it's a good idea, too," I assured her.

The next day I was back out on the streets and my new Internet and education policy was front and central in my sales pitch. I stopped at the door of a second-floor apartment and a young man let me inside. He turned out to be a university student and was very interested in my policy.

"You mean," he asked, "that I could get a degree without having to leave the house?"

"Yes, you could."

"And I wouldn't have to go to any lectures or tutes?"

"That's right."

"And I wouldn't have to pay a thing?"

"Not a cent," I assured him.

"What's this university called?" he asked.

"Tron University," I told him. "It's tronline."

"Dude, that is awesome," he said, giving me a high-five. "Hey, one more question ..."

"Go for it," I said.

"Are you supposed to be a bong?"



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Aussie families are sick and tired of the major parties' gimmicks and popularity contests. Time for serious election debate on the flag.

Newspoll



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Another Newspoll and another pernicious snub of my preferred PM stats.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Did poll of my family, my neighbours, the fruit shop lady, and the guy at the post office. My preferred PM rating is 100%.

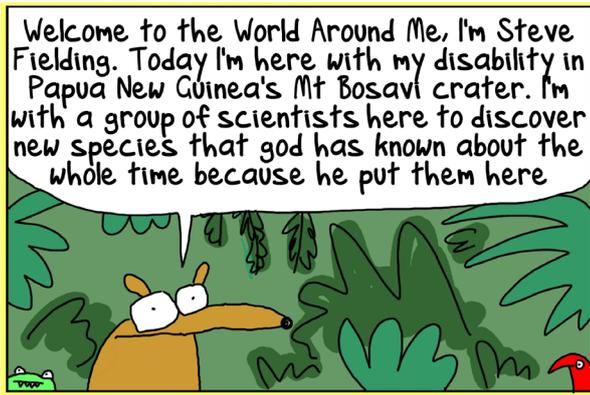


FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Why does Newspoll always add up to a hundred? Aren't there, like, 150 million people in Australia?



Out-journalising the journalists



Every Sunday I set my alarm early, desperate to beat my son to the lounge room and bags the television set so I can watch cartoons instead of his boring *Insiders* show.

On the final weekend of the election campaign, when the alarm went off at the extra-early time of 5:30am, I jumped out of bed, grabbed the doona from the bed, ran out to the kitchen, quickly made a bowl of Coco Pops, and flopped myself down in front of the telly on the beanbag.

For once, my plan paid off and I was the first one awake so I was going to have total control of the remote control until I let it go! Victory! While I was sucking the milk from my pyjama top that spilled when I dropped into the beanbag, Susan walked up behind me, slapped me over the back of the head, and tore the doona from my legs before storming back to the bedroom with it.

I found it difficult to concentrate on the television because it was so cold (I'm not allowed to use the heater after last time when I put the doona over the top of it and made myself a warm little cubby house but then fell asleep and only woke up when I smelled smoke) and when my son came out he wouldn't share his doona, so I went back to bed and lay there staring at the ceiling. And after a while it suddenly hit me: this is probably going to be the most important week of my life and here I was laying in bed like a lazy layabout.

It's not every week that you have to fight for re-election to the Senate in the face of a sustained anti-family values campaign from a family-less government. "Time to step up to the place, Steve," I told myself. "Time to grab the bull by the handles, Steve," I told myself. "Time to shut the fuck up, Steve," Susan yelled at me.

I jumped out of bed and threw myself into campaigning. Over the next three frantic hours I got a Facebook, drew a poster and put it on the community bulletin board at the library, called every Victorian in my address book, and memorised the names of the five largest towns in my electorate so I could better endear myself to my conspicients in these towns.

(By the way, those towns are Melbourne, Geelong, Murray River, Bendirat and East Brunswick.)

That night, exhausted from such a big day, I settled down with a notepad to watch 60 Minutes because Xzennophone bet me a Redskin that I wouldn't watch or read any news that week and Monday was the day I had to prove to him that I did. The first article on the show was by a journalist called Mark Latham and it was pretty complicated but I managed to pick up that Julie Gillard and Tony Abbott don't deserve any votes and that democracy was sick. Good points, I had to admit. I turned to Susan and said that it was an interesting article and did she need me to explain any of it to her.

"As a journalist Mark Latham makes a great politician," said Susan contemptuously.

"Sorry?" I asked, confused.

"The reporter. It's Mark Latham."

"Yeah, I read it on the writing at the bottom of the screen. So what?"

"You don't remember Mark Latham?" she asked, arching one eyebrow.

"Is he from the bingo club?" I asked.

"Oh, he's only one of the two candidates that ran for PM at the election you won," replied Susan, dripping with sarcasm.

"Him?" I exclaimed. "The one who wasn't John Howard?"

"Yes."

"What's he doing on the TV being a journalist? Did he go to journalism school?"

"No. And it's a disgrace to both Channel Nine and to journalism," said Susan, before going off on a long rant about something or other.

But I wasn't listening any more. An idea was forming inside my brain. Mark Latham used to be a politician but was now on the TV being a journalist and recommending that people vote for the Blank Party, and I am a politician, so maybe I could go on the TV and recommend that people vote for the Family First Party. I knew what I had to do.

The next morning after checking the Newspoll results, and calling Xzennophone to find out what an asterisk means, I hit the streets to film my own television news article. I left the house in my best tracksuit and made sure my mobile phone was fully charged because my mobile phone has a movie camera built in — I bet Tony Abbott's special boat phone doesn't have a movie camera in it. First I went down to the servo where the nice lady gives me a discount on Chicken Heroes and asked her what she thought of the election campaign so far. She looked into the camera and said that it was fairly uninspiring and that she wished she could vote for herself or something.

Next I went to the library and asked the librarian what she thought of the issues being debated in the campaign. She said that the focus on demonising asylum seekers was an insult to our country and she was insulted that her preference would end up with a party that would continue to do so. I told her that Family First would stop the boats so they wouldn't need to be focused on any more. This made her angry for some reason and she sent me to the back of the cue.

I did about half-a-dozen similar interviews and then put my phone on the top of a wheelie bin and filmed myself walking slowly towards the camera like on the news. During my walk I gave my opinion on Australian democracy and said that there is only one party standing up for decent values and for Motel Christmas Island and for drink bingeing and that party is Family First. I finished my speech by saying that next Saturday if you care about Australia, there's only one sensible thing to do, and that's to vote for Steve Fielding ahead of Julie Gillard, Tony Abbott, and Blank. And that if your ballot paper didn't have Steve Fielding written on it just write it yourself and place a tick next to the name.

I was pretty proud of myself and made a mental note to print new business cards that have "journalist" written next to "accountant" and "engineer". But I ran into trouble when I realised that I didn't know how to get the video out of my phone and onto the TV. My son wanted \$20 to show me, but who has that sort of cash just sitting around?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just dropped my mobile phone in the post. How do you know when the video on it will air on ABC News 24?

Physics and stuff



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

It's pretty amazing when you think about it, that the earth spins around the moon once every 7 days, and around the sun 12 times a year.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Of course, the start of Spring signifies the day the sun completes one third of a spin over the earth.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Xzennophone says the calendar runs out soon and when it does the world will end.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Checked. It ends in December. This is bad.

Election day



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

AEC officer says they won't start counting my twitter followers until after the polls close.

On the morning of the election I was fast asleep and then I woke up. After so long of waiting I couldn't believe that it was here; finally, it was here. It was a special day — a day I'd been waiting and planning for as long as I could remember. "Yes, Steve," I said, pinching myself in case it was a dream, "today is eggs and soldiers and blood day".

One morning two weeks beforehand, I'd got a little bit frustrated with my Coco Pops because our house had just been unilaterally declared a full-fat milk-free zone and Coco Pops with skinny milk just isn't the same, so I refused to eat them and asked for eggs and soldiers and blood instead. But Susan wouldn't let me, saying that eggs are full of kolel colles fat, and that they should only be eaten in moderation.

"That's not fair!" I protested. "I'm a grown man and I can eat anything I want!"

"You cook it, then," Susan said.

"You mean, in the kitchen?" I asked.

"Yes."

"But I'm not allowed to use the stove or the microwave," I protested, "and I don't know how to make the can opener work on the eggs."

"I know," said Susan smugly. "So how are you going to cook yourself breakfast if I don't make it for you?"

I have to admit she had me there.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Standing outside Stephen Conroy's house, ready to talk preferences. It's cold.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Where could Conroy be? I'm supposed to be in bed now.

But midway through last week, Susan promised that because I was going to have such a busy day on Saturday I could have any breakfast I liked on Saturday morning, eggs and soldiers and blood included. I could barely sleep for the excitement on Friday night; plus, it was really uncomfortable on Stephen Conroy's driveway where I was waiting to meet him to negotiate a preference deal.

So, when Susan put the plate of eggs and soldiers down in front of me the next morning I got a little bit carried away with the tomato sauce bottle and got blood everywhere, including on the roof and down the front of the bottle suit. My son got all surly because he needed another shower.

Disappointed about having to leave the bottle suit at home, I first changed into a tracksuit and then into tan pants and a casual shirt when Susan gave me That Look. Getting in the car, full of purpose and a feeling of history in the making, the whole family headed off to spend the day hitting the hostings and fighting for my re-election to the parliament of Australia.

I was determined to visit every polling booth in the country but Susan suggested we visit only a handful around the Family First heartland of eastern Melbourne. When we arrived at the first primary school Susan gave me a bundle of papers and told me to hand them out to the voters who were lined up in a line.

“What are these?” I asked.

“How-to-vote cards,” she answered.

“What are they for?”

“They tell voters how to vote for Family First.”

I studied the card and discovered a terrible printing error.

“But there’s somebody else’s name in the Family First box!”

“That’s the lower house candidate,” Susan explained.

“The what?” I asked.

“The House of Representatives.”

“Sorry?”

“The green house,” Susan said, exasperated.

“Oh, right,” I said. “So where’s the red house voting card?”

She reached out and turned over the card in my hand and, upon inspection, I discovered another terrible printing error.

“There’s no number in the box next to my name!”

I spent the next couple of hours walking along the line handing voting cards to the “punters” as my son was calling them. After a while I perfected my pitch. “Hi!” I’d greet them cheerily, giving them a how to card vote. “Vote for Family First,” I’d implore before instructing them to write their name and signature on the card and drop it into the ballot box. Some people would ask me what my policies were and if I couldn’t find Susan I’d tell them that I supported water and stopping the Apple Macs. Every now and again I’d walk past someone from another political party so I’d stick my tongue out at them inside my mouth.

It was hard work, let me tell you. Walking up and down and up and down, and talking and talking and talking to a whole bunch of conspicuents I’d never met before. By lunchtime I was exhausted but Susan wouldn’t let me have a sausage until I’d voted because a bunch of TV cameras had arrived and she said I shouldn’t keep them waiting.

I joined the line and waited for my turn to vote but it was taking forever. I was so hungry that my tummy was rumbling and my head was spinning, and all I could smell was sausage and onion. So, I decided to exercise my right as leader of a political party and push in. However, this ended disastrously when my conspiciuents, surely not aware of just who I was, sent me straight to the back of the cue. One of the TV cameramen was laughing so hard he had to put his camera down.

After dropping my signed how-to-vote card in the box, eating two sausages in bread, and trying to wash the sauce out of my shirt, me and the family drove around to a few other schools to hand out more voting cards. By 6pm I was a dead man walking and fell fast asleep under a tree next to the Greens' booth. Susan must've carried me to the car and into the house because I woke up hours later and fully clothed in my bed. I stumbled out to the lounge room where Susan was watching Mel and Cockie and asked who won the election.

"Nobody," said Susan.

"Don't be ridiculous," I replied. "How can nobody win the election?"

"It looks like a hung parliament."

"OK, yeah, so, I get that," I lied, "but who won? Gillard or Abbott?"

Susan got out a notepad and pencil and drew me some pictures to explain a hung parliament, which I think I get now. It kind of means that independent politicians become sort of more important than the Prime Minister and get to choose which side they like better or something. I stopped listening because there was a close-up of Mel on the screen and I felt that funny feeling I get if I watch SBS late at night.

"Anyway," said Susan. "Don't you want to know how you're going in the count?"

"I thought I won," I replied. "I voted for me."

Susan started to explain how Senate voting works but I was ... isn't Mel simply gorgeous when she laughs?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Waiting for Rob Oaksnot to call and arrange a sit down meeting. If anyone can think outside the box, surely it's me.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Still no calls from Oakescott or those other renegades. Not sure which ministry I'll take. Maybe Finanse or Pastoral Care.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I notice Labor haven't ruled out making Bob Brown Minister for Euthinasians and Abortions.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

There's a 30 to 73% chance I'll get a Senate spot depending on how hard you pray right now.

A week after the election there was still no winner, and I was making constant attempts to make touch with Katter, Oaksnot and the other guy so I could advise them on some out-of-the-box negotiation strategies, but nobody was returning my calls. Sometimes I wonder whether Australian democracy deserves me.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

What's the opposite of majority but not a minority?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Why is there even a G in paradigm if you don't pronow ... pronon ... say it?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Next time I'm running in a ballweather seat.

Counting down the days

After a couple of tense weeks when I wasn't sure if I'd won the Senate or not, I learned that a second Family First term was not to be. It took a while for the loss to sink in, and if I'm being completely honest, I felt a little bit flat and embarrassed. I was struggling to see the point in even going back to Senate for the last six months, afraid that the other MPs would laugh at me. I kind of laid low for a while.

And not only did I lose at federal politics, I felt like I was losing at everything. I lost at peace:



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Didn't win the Nobell Peace Prize. Again.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Just asked Susan if she remembered to submit Nobell nomination form. She didn't. That would explain it, I guess.

I lost at television:



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Have emailed Kerry O'Brien and asked if I could take over as host of The 7pm Project.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
I bet Lee Sales and Chris Yoolman have never been to Afpakistan.

And I lost at Victorian politics:



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Congratulations to Ted Bayloo ... Baillo ... the tall one with glasses.

But to balance out this short-term period of fail, I started making the necessary preparations to put some projects on the slow burner for longer term win:



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

How does one apply for canonisation? I'm asking for a friend.

Anyway, 2010 was drawing to a close so I tried to enjoy the holidays. I love Christmas and new year's! 2011, of course, began at exactly midnight on 1 January, and was the 2,011th anniversary of the resurrection. In the Fielding household, our Christmas celebrations always begin on the eve of the big day itself, with lots of carols singing and hot Milo. We decorate our house with tinsel and plastic leaves and we always have a great big Christmas tree in the lounge room. The tree, of course, being a highly symbolic symbol of the death. Under the tree are lots and lots of presents from all of us to each other, with space reserved for those delivered overnight by our "special visitor".

At midnight we all head off to church for mass, solemnly commemorating the tragic crucifixion of Santa on 25 December in the year takeaway one. As we all know, on that fateful night, Santa, while out delivering presents to the good boys and girls of planet earth, had a terrible accident in his sleigh, fell out of the sky, and died in a tree.

For the next six days the world was in shock and there was chaos, pillaging and looting, and lots of people got into fistfights (hence the name "Boxing Day"). Nobody knew what to do and the children in particular were in quite a state, so lots of men dressed up as Santa and flocked into public places, pretending to be the real Santa, to try and calm the children down – which is why we continue with the tradition of men dressing up as Santa to this day.

But all was not lost. Six days later, of course, at the stroke of midnight on 1 January, 0000, Santa came back alive and walked out of a cave to the shock of some onlookers, jumping into his magic sleigh and riding his reindeer back to the North Pole. And all was well with the world and the children were going to have their presents again. A fine reason to celebrate new year's day each year.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Happy new year! We're all a year older today.

In 2011, just like every other year, I was barely starting to get over the gluttony of Christmas and new year's when along came Australia Day, with its barbecues and ice creams and barbecues.

This year, we all went down to the park for a picnic barbecue using those barbecues that are in the park. Some people think that those barbecues are unhygienic because of all the germs on them, but your average park barbecue runs at six- or seven-hundred degrees centigrade so all the germs get burned off the barbecue. I'm an engineer.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Today is a day for us to celebrate all that is Australian. Like Hawaiian pizza and AC Cola.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Let's also spare a thought for Queen Elizabeth I who on this day 400 years ago stepped off a boat in Sydney and discovered this country.

After a good old break over the summer, I felt renewed and revigourated and in much better spirits to face my final few months in Canberra. I threw myself into the new political year, determined to make one last difference before I left. "I may not be the balancer of power anymore," I told myself, "but I can still be a formidable negotiaioner and my blocking manoo manow move is as effective as ever."



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Back in Canberra. This term I will be working constructively with the government to oppose legislation.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I will be applying what I call the Family Test to all Bills. If it doesn't have the word "family" in the title I will oppose it.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Unless the government opposes it in which case I'll vote for it.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Yesterday in Senate I drew a picture of my house, Susan, the kids and Blanky.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Then I made a picture out of paper, Clag and dry pasta.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Today I am going to solve the surplus.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Sometimes life's like that Alanis Morrisey song. I've been paying for cabs for the past five years and today discovered I have a driver.

One of the big challenges we faced in the politics in that first part of the year was how to deal with the tragic Queensland floods.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Why can't cycladoes have normal names? Like Trevor.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Who names cycladoes, anyway? Is it the Governor General?

One of the proposals was for a flood levy. This was one area I could lend some much-needed engineering expertise to.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
What people don't understand is that a levy for the whole of Queensland is going to require ALOT of dirt. That's going to cost money.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
You can't just print money, you know.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Queensland should sell the water to drought-stricken countries like Ayers Rock to pay for the levy.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Can't decide what my position is on the flood levy. What are the Greens doing? Other than smoking bucket bong, that is.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Hang on, so Xzennophone's supporting the flood levy thing now? Looks like I'm opposing it.

As the year wore on, there were some really big, world-changing events. Two countries in South America had revolutions which is where politics stops working and people go out on the street to demand new politics. Sadly, Liberia descending into armed warfare when the broken politicians refused to admit that they were broken.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

If the Egyptians hated their government so much why did they vote it in in the first place?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Who is Gaddafi? Is he Labor or Liberal?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Maybe I'll run for the Security Council when I'm finished with the Senate.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Tomorrow Family First will introduce legislation for a no-fly zone over Motel Christmas Island.

But there were not just wars overseas. I woke up one weekend to shocking headlines in the news about a war right here in Australia.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Milk wars? When did that happen?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
I like milk.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Milk is in Milo.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Milk doesn't just grow on trees, you know. Millions of innocent cows lose their lives every day.

Above all else, the main political battle in Australia in 2011 was the divisible issue of climate change and a great big new tax on carbon. Now, my position on this issue is very well known, and I had lots of graphs and stuff to share in my knowledge to the debate, but the whole thing became very personal between Julie Gillard and Tony Abbott. As much as I tried to inject myself into the negotiations and discussions between those two, I found myself, as ever, marginalised to the margins. So, when a carbon rally was announced on the lawns of Kirribilli House that anyone could go to, I knew what I had to do.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
What time does the carbon tax rally start tomorrow? I'm modifying my bottle suit so it looks like a power station smokestack.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Can't sleep. Thinking about tomorrow's rally. Wondering: is there any way that I can combine the words "liar" and "Gillard"?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Xzennophone just sold me some carbon. Said he'll post it to me.

With the first of July starting to really creep up on me, I sat down one day and tried to start planning for my after politics life. Susan said I should write down all the things I want to be when I grow up, plus all the things I'm good at, and see what matches I could make between the two lists.

What I want to be when I grow up:

- Astronaut
- Postman
- Politician
- Journalist
- TV person
- Drive through person at Red Rooster (first window only, not second)

What I'm good at:

- Politics
- Engineering
- Accountanting
- Craft
- Shoelaces
- Taking money from cars (but not giving food)



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

That Friday song is absolutely bursting at the seams with good, wholesome, family-friendly fun and entertainment. I give it four stars.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Fun fun fun fun fnu fun fun.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Still don't know how Kerrie-Ann Kennerley does her tv show and campaigns to be NSW Prime Minister again.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

I see Andrew Bolt has a new show on Channel Ten. If the rates are reasonable I may consider it myself.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

You know, this whole Pauline Hanson nearly sneaking into Parliament on only a handful of votes and a bunch of lucky preferences makes me so angry.

The final week

On a chilly June morning, I arrived at Canberra Airport for the very last time. On the drive across the bridge next to the upside-down tornado thing in Lake Burley-Griffith, as the mast of Parliament House stood erect on the horizon, I was filled with a fierce determination to make my final week in the Senate a week that everyone would remember.

“Think big, Steve,” I told myself, “make your legacy a legacy based on serious legislating.” In that vein, I spent all morning locked in my office furiously drafting my parting gift to Australia: *The End To Silly Elimination Contests On Masterchef That Evict Consistently Good Chefs Because They Mess Up One Tiny Thing Despite Performing Brilliantly Week After Week Act*. But just as I was about to email it to Julie Gillard and make it law, Tony Abbott stole my thunder.

A plebiscite! When I asked Google what it meant, I was shocked to learn that it was like a vote but more like a referendum but different to both and not even for serious. What a joke! Luckily, my vote in the Senate (not in the plebiscite, but on whether we should have a plebiscite — I know this is confusing but stay with me) was crucial, so this cloud had a silver lining in the shape of I could make it all about me.

Because I never make decisions lightly, I sat down and for the last time as a Senator considered all of the both sides of the story. I considered that the government did not take their carbon tax policy to the election so they couldn't really claim they had a mandate to introduce it. I considered that, despite this, they were the duly elected government so they had the right to introduce any legislation they could pass through both houses. I considered that a plebiscite would cost a lot of money but even if the vote was “no” the government could go ahead anyway. I considered what Xzennophone was doing because I hate being seen to do the same thing as him.

But in the end, there was one factor that overrode all the others. One important aspect of the whole exercise that takes precedence over all else. In the end, I voted against the proposal because Tony Abbott's plebiscite was nothing more than one great big new political stunt on everything. You should leave the stunts to me, Tony. Have you learned nothing?



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Just saved you \$80 million, Australia. You're welcome.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding

Susan told me to eat my crusts. Demanded a plebiscite.

As all things that come to an end tend to do, the end finally came. Packing up my office was sad and it offered a chance for some reflection. As I put shelves into boxes and took down all my posters and liquid papered over the blue tack marks on the walls, I was reminded of the six years I'd spent in that room strategising and planning and plotting the laws of this great nation.

I remembered the good days, like when my voice was the most important in all of Canberra due to its balance of power; I remembered the bad days, like when I got locked in the toilets without my phone and had to write a help message on toilet paper and slide it under the door; and I remembered the fun days, like when I made everyone in the office smile by showing up for work in my pyjamas and declaring spontaneously that it was work from bed from the office day. That right there is six years of my life that I'll never forget.

As I walked out of Parliament House on my last day, carrying the last box of things from my desk (half a packet of Cheetos, that VHS of *Toy Story* which is three years overdue at the video shop, and the SIM card out of Barnaby's phone that I stole a few days before when he wasn't looking), Xzennophone came up to me in the corridors and patted me on the back. "Sorry to see you go, Steve," he said.

"Yeah, yeah," I muttered darkly.

"Listen, there's no doubt that you were a fish out of water who did some screwy things and gave us all some good laughs, but nobody can doubt the effort you put into this. I admire the way you've worked hard and taken most things in good humour."

I paused, exchanging a stare with Xzennophone.

"What?" asked Nick.

"I'm waiting for the punchline," I sighed.

"No punchline, mate," he said, proffering his hand. "I'm being serious for once."

When I got home later that night Susan had made soldiers eggs and blood for dinner (even though it wasn't breakfast time) and the whole family was sitting around the kitchen table underneath a sign that read, "Well Done, Dad"!

"Dig in and enjoy, Steve," Susan said, giving me a cuddle. "You've earned it."

It was the best night of my life that I'd had all month.



FakeFielding Fake Steve Fielding
Until next time.

