

Tony Abbott can make it hard to find the silver lining

by Maggie Cooper via sal - Northern Star *Tuesday, Sep 1 2015, 8:54am*

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I've always been an optimist ... looking for the silver lining. In that spirit, I'd like to thank the prime minister for expanding my vocabulary this year.

Hitherto unknown words and phrases have entered my lexicon - shirtfront (tick). Captain's pick (tick). Plebiscite - a word I knew vaguely but couldn't have correctly defined (tick).

That faint sound you hear in the background is Cecil Rhodes spinning in his grave while the other scholars that bear his name quietly amend their curricula vitae, as Tony Abbott continues his gaffe-ridden performance.

According to Wikipedia, Rhodes' goals in creating the scholarships were to "promote civic-minded leadership in young people with moral force of character and instincts to lead".

Apparently this includes knighting the Queen's husband without consulting anyone; referring to indigenous families living in remote communities as indulging in a lifestyle choice; and now, not being responsible for his own party's policies.

The man dubbed Toned Abs by the media has quickly distanced himself from the latest debacle - the "Border Farce" raid planned for Melbourne's CBD last Friday.

Apart from the inevitable comparisons to Nazi Germany, the press release equates to the Japanese letting the Yanks know that they were about to bomb Pearl Harbour.

I don't have much time or respect for social media; TwitFace seems to enable narcissists to bore the pants off those silly enough to read the minutiae of their tedious lives. Where it does shine is as a tool to spread the word and allow the organisation of the modern era's equivalent of a pitchfork-wielding mob in a heartbeat.

Said mob gathered in Federation Square within minutes of the announcement by the Australian Border Force (ABF), brandishing signs that bore the ugly (but accurate) words fascist and racist.

The blame for "Operation Fortitude" has landed at the feet of some unfortunate named Don Smith, the ABF regional commander for Victoria and Tasmania. Yes, Tasmania, although the only boats heading there seem to be lots of terribly expensive yachts on Boxing Day - not exactly the sort of boat people one incarcerates on Manus Island, really.

Mr Abbott's denial of any involvement in the raid may be the truth. Immigration Minister, Peter Dutton, has also denied knowledge - a worry in itself. But the fact is that Mr Abbott's incompetent leadership has trickled down through the ranks.

It was reported on the weekend that a 43-year-old WA man allegedly set one of his children alight after dousing his three kids in petrol, while in Sydney a 34-year-old man allegedly punched and bit his partner then blamed her.

Given the number of people who have suffered at the hands of terrorists on Australian soil, I know where I'd prefer my taxes to be spent.

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