

The big issue: Unbounded cynicism

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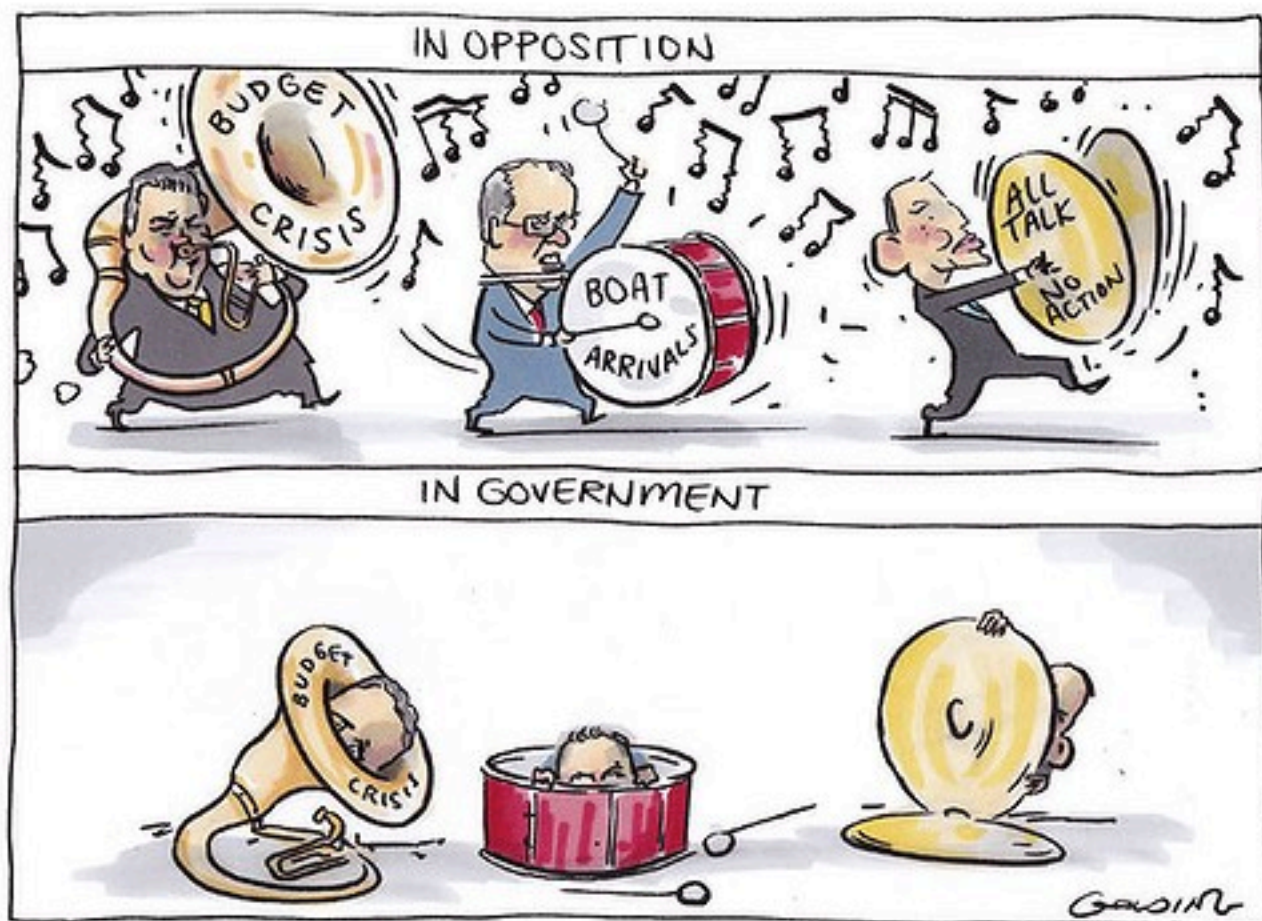


Illustration: Matt Golding.

The Napthine government is promising to maintain a ban on fracking purely, it would appear, on the grounds of votes to be lost should onshore gas exploration be allowed to develop.

Deputy Premier and Nationals leader Peter Ryan appears to predicate his care for Victoria's natural environment based on the number of votes he is likely to lose should coal seam gas exploration go ahead in Gippsland. He is quoted as saying that "our liveability" is a very important issue, but that seems to apply only when the number of voters affected by a decision reaches a critical mass.

I agree totally with the decision to continue the ban on coal seam gas exploration. However, should you live in a small, remote rural township in East Gippsland, the "liveability" factor can obviously be totally disregarded in the government's decision-making process.

Fracking no, destruction of Bastion Point, Mallacoota's beach and reefs, yes. Victoria's wilderness coast, of which Bastion Point is an integral part, can be desecrated and the majority of Mallacoota's wishes ignored. Our voting power is unlikely to affect the outcome of next year's election. Shame on you, Peter Ryan, and your government.

JUNE DRAKE, Mallacoota