

THE FASSIFERN

# GUARDIAN



OPINION

## **Scenic Rim Mayor blasts local newspaper**

Mar 13 2020 Updated March 13, 2020

Editorial

At two public meetings in the last week Mayor Greg Christensen attempted to discredit the *Fassifern Guardian*, labelling us ‘a tabloid’ and ‘garbage’.

Normally we would not deign to reply to such comments. But their timing, made at meetings of council election candidates, was obviously meant to impugn our integrity as a news outlet.

Under those circumstances it would be unfair to our readers, advertisers and other council candidates to allow his remarks to go unchallenged.

His first deliberate prevarication came when, as he began to advise his audience where to go for information about council affairs, he said: “Firstly, don’t go to the *Fassifern Guardian* - it’s very tabloid.”

[Interpretation: It can't be trusted.]

Yet the word 'tabloid', once a synonym for trashy or sensationalist journalism, refers to the size of a newspaper.

The more respected bigger newspapers, such as that other *Guardian*, used to be published in 'broadsheet' size, but have long since given way to the requests of readers for a more manageable newspaper. So they reverted to a tabloid size that is known as 'compact'.

Your print edition of the *Guardian* comes in this size. And the number of awards we have won from our peers for all sections of our paper are the best answer to the Mayor's accusations - including the second one, made earlier, at Kalbar's Meet the Candidates Night.

He told everyone there that the *Fassifern Guardian* was 'garbage' and urged them not to believe what was written in it.

So, that must mean: Letters to the Editor that comment on our stories, comments from our firefighters during the bushfire crisis, reports by police, the opinions of our various respected columnists, and contributed sports reports, are all 'garbage'.

It also puts into the garbage basket his own reactions that we seek to 'balance' any comments involving him or Council. And ditto for any material that we use from Council releases.

To be fair, it would seem what he means is we do not print verbatim some of the white-washed press releases sent out by Council. These are often propaganda vehicles that fail the tests of transparency and may conflate or confuse important issues.

Not all are garbage in the sense that Mayor Christensen uses the word. But, in our summation, some do fail to tell the whole story, only disclosing that part the Mayor wants published.

But we refuse to go along with a tactic that treats our readers as children who only need to be told what he deems they should know.

It appears that because the Mayor was upset by something we have printed (and we are uncertain what that was) he has adopted the old political trick of 'shooting the messenger'.

It's a tactic that can sometimes result in the word-slingers shooting themselves in the foot.