

KELLY SAVED BY T.K.O. – AGAIN

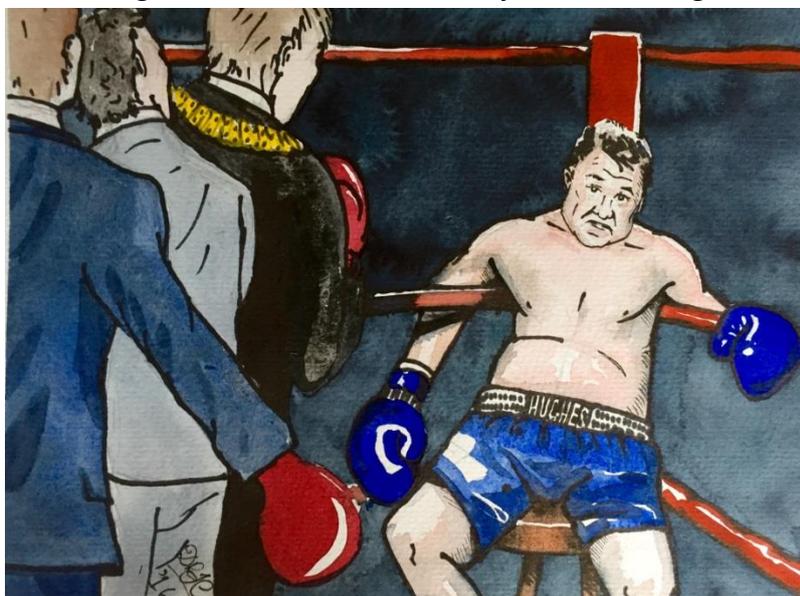
by Don Pagé

Local MP Craig Kelly has survived another bruising pre-selection fight for next year's Federal election – with a technical knockout in the dressing room.

The hard-Right MP for Hughes was facing certain defeat for his own job, after losing control in Liberal Party branches and persistent attacks on him, according to media reports.

The phantom contender was named as Kent Johns, a councillor in Sutherland Shire with a factional majority behind the scenes.

MP Kelly looked down for the count even before entering the ring, until saved by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, with all sitting Liberals endorsed without local pre-selection.



Our website cartoon as opponents queued in 2016, by Darren Coppin, Woronora.

It was an awkward victory because the Right had previously demanded more democracy inside the party, and a greater voice for the grass-roots in pre-selections. Liberals from the Right and Centre have been brawling publicly, exposing bitter divisions over years.

Ironically, former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull had rescued the Hughes MP in 2016, who then took part in the right-wing party coup which toppled the PM in 2018.

The new Rightist PM Morrison was a compromise, and then saved MP Kelly from defeat in the Liberal branches, where Centrist Cr Johns had the numbers, said media reports.

The Hughes MP has been under attack in the party by many lately.

Current Shire Mayor Carmelo Pesce (Lib.) provoked national headlines by refusing to shake hands with MP Kelly in public, triggering a loud argument at a local sporting club.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/craig-kelly-s-expetive-laden-rant-exposes-depth-of-liberal-party-tensions-20181202-p50jra.html>

Threats by MP Kelly to quit the party and run as an Independent at the next election had put in jeopardy the minority Morrison government.

MP Kelly now faces the ultimate battle in next year's Federal election, as a hard-Right figure in a political climate drifting toward the centre: e.g. the Victorian state election victory for Labor; the huge by-election loss in the blue-ribbon seat of the former PM; and the defection of a Liberal MP to the crossbenches, Julia Banks.

13 December 2018

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/liberal-party-in-turmoil-over-plan-to-save-craig-kelly-through-emergency-powers-20181202-p50jp2.html>

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/i-m-not-to-be-taken-for-granted-molan-eyes-morrison-intervention-20181202-p50jgn.html>