

Brain fade: W'bool Mayor Tony Herbert breaches C-19 laws



Mayor Tony Herbert was seen drinking a beer with three others at the bottom end of Liebig St just hours after his video message on the importance of social distancing. Image supplied.

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

Why, oh why? Why would our Mayor Tony Herbert sit out in Liebig St on Tuesday night (7/4) with three other people, drinking a beer, breaking the Covid-19 laws now in place?

And why would he do so on the *very same day* [that he recorded a video to the WCC Facebook page](#) urging people to stay at home and “up” their efforts to stop the spread of the virus?

Why, oh why?

This photo was taken last Tuesday night around 9pm and that, by the way, is the official mayoral car parked facing the wrong way, but we will leave that to one side, because the bigger issue here is a complete lack of judgment and, I hate to say it, a sense that what rules apply to some, don't apply to others.

I didn't want to ruin our Mayor's Easter – I had plans for a quiet day today – but our civic leaders need to be accountable.



The Mayor's decision to visit traders and have a beer has become a test of whether the social distancing laws apply to all. Image: supplied

So I asked Cr Herbert why he was out drinking a beer on what I initially thought was a Wednesday night, after the WCC

emergency meeting. He said he wasn't out, but went home straight after the meeting, feeling unwell.

I then learned the photo was from Tues night, not Wed. I contacted the Mayor again. This time Cr Herbert agreed that yes, he was out, and below is his reply in full. I read it, digested it, and could only come back around to the same conclusion: this is so wrong.

Other leaders both in Australia (NSW Arts Minister Don Harwin resigned 5 minutes ago) and internationally have fallen on their swords for failing to follow the Covid-19 laws.

I have no idea what, if anything, will happen to Cr Herbert but boy, I am still staggered by his thinking that this was okay. It is not okay.

Cr Herbert's reply in full:

"On Tuesday night, I left home to buy some items at the supermarket.

On the way, I drove along Liebig Street to see how businesses still open in the southern block, the dining precinct, were faring.

There, I had a chance, unplanned encounter with two business owners.

We had an emotional and refreshingly optimistic conversation. We stood metres apart from each other with the exception of a brief moment when one of the business owners passed me a beer. After a short time I left for the supermarket.

The job of being mayor doesn't ever stop. I considered it part of my role to see for myself how our city is faring in difficult times. This is something I do regularly.

The decision to drive along Liebig Street I viewed as mayoral duty, so too the conversations I had with the business owners.

I can't rely on social media alone for insights into how our city is travelling. It is important for any mayor, where reasonable and safe to do so, to find out first-hand about the state of the city.

Of course with the threat of COVID-19 ever-present, we need to be vigilant as we go about our work and my work has changed accordingly.

But, we also need to be mindful that our focus on safe behaviour does not morph into an ugly vigilantism.

In our conversations and online commentary I believe we need to be encouraging and supportive, not vindictive or constantly seeking to blame and shame.

After my purchase at the supermarket, I returned home to continue a board game with my family.

If you wish, I can provide a bank statement of the supermarket purchase.

Regards, Tony. “