

YASI

AND THE “WINDS OF CHANGE”
LEADING DURING IMPENDING
& IMPOSED CHANGE

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ORGANIZATIONAL
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Introduction

We shared a life changing ‘weather event’

Tropical Cyclone Yasi

- Not predicted
- Timing wasn't chosen
- Imposed on large populations

Yet ...

Leaders had to manage,

- Guide people through
- Achieve least long term damage.

A Comparison:

***Leadership strategies during Yasi ... with
Leadership during organizational change.***



People had to be Alerted and Mobilized.

Maximum survival!

Use the best available skills, & unite in one team

Proactive with clear plans

Establish communication channels

Reliable, consistent, clear messages

'from the ground' up

Assess and revise plans as required

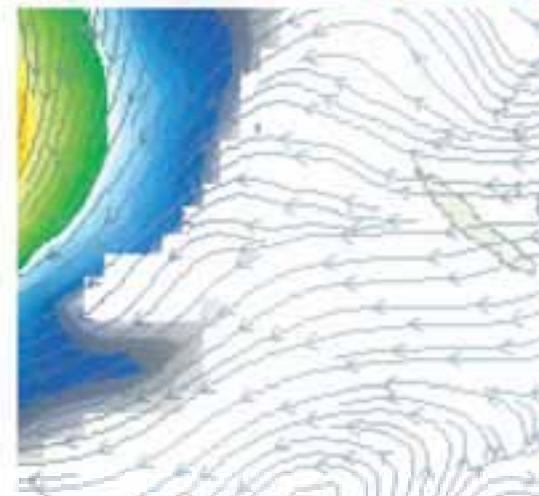
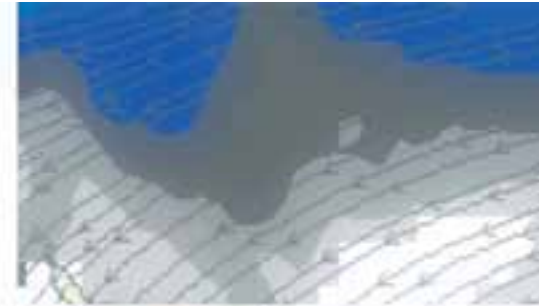
Build credit & demonstrate unity

Build trust, so people work together & do as asked

Encourage and support people

Demonstrate empathy

Provide assistance during and after crisis



Organizational change is more subtle

meteorological pictures

lightning strikes, or crashes of thunder

plastic bags to fill

sleeping in evacuation centres

offers of support

of Impending Change

is much slower

like months or years of waiting

Easier?



of Drama Makes it Difficult!

I can't predict... I can't prepare!
Are my skills OK?
Will I cope?
Will I have a job?
How will I pay the mortgage?



ous sign of a crisis brewing
ervable threat or damage
SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY.

Ending Change can Dominate Lives... Months... even Years!

less nights

and productivity deteriorates

become
ed and annoyed.



reluctance
resistance

BOSS

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WWW.AFRBOSS.COM.AU

HELL AND HIGH WATER

Anna Bligh learns
the power of instinct

The new blokes
network: CEO
champions of equity



Analysis of a Change Leadership Strategy

Public face was Premier Anna Bligh

Wrote the words

Had to take responsibility for the results

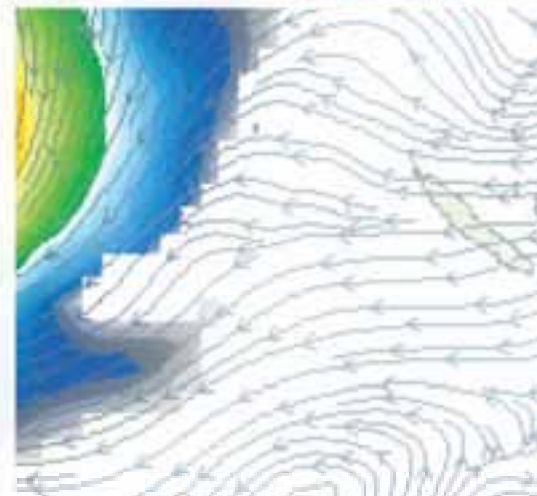
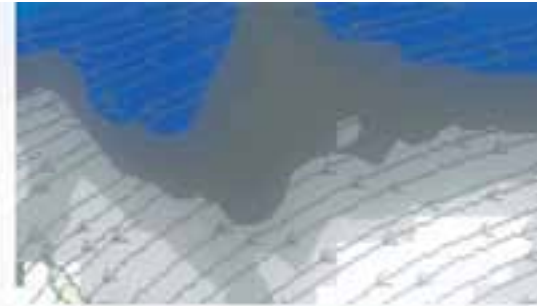
Unpopular (like some org leaders)

Was she the lead given her public image?

How did she approach her role?

Did her approach 'hit the spot'? If so, why?

What can we learn from what she did?



'Chosen' and 'Imposed' Change. Ultimate Double Whammy!

Change is coming
Ask for it
Know its' potential impact
Not have skills or confidence to cope
Need to be enthusiastic and energetic!

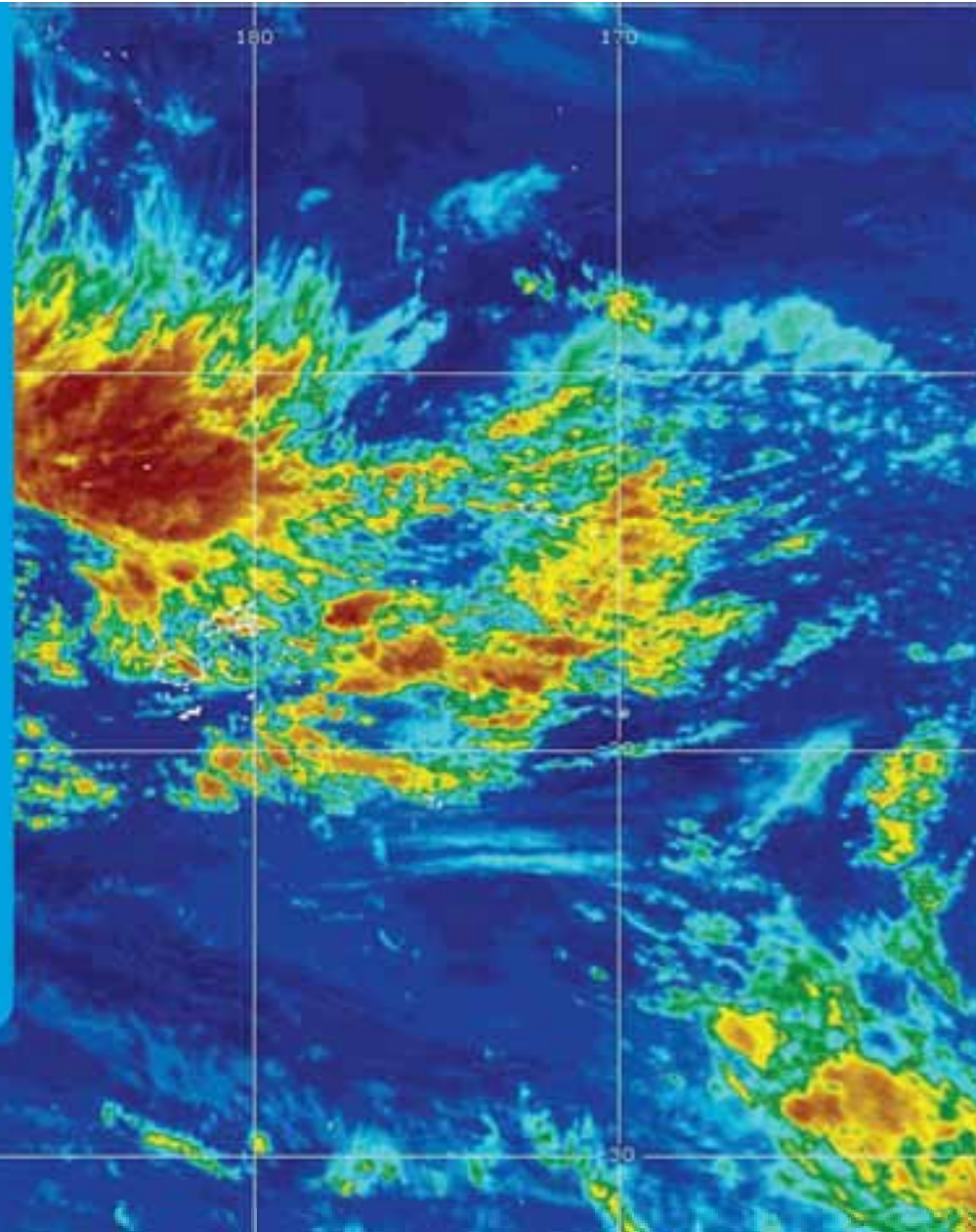
Greenlanders & organizational staff
Experience
'Chosen' and 'Imposed' change



Did Impending Change Take during Yasi

Warning weather forecast maps
shows with fearful people
doubt as they questioned their ability
to make preparations with sand bags,
locking down, moving items to
safe places
Elderly and families being flown south

Hours of Change had not arrived yet!



What does Impending Change look like in Organizations? We don't see much!

Employees feel: *anxious, uncertain, alone, insecure, angry, uncared for, unsupported, undervalued, not heard, increasing self-doubt etc.*

Employees: *ask questions, complain, resist, or go 'underground', spreading wild rumours and speculation
Feel powerless: *Don't know what to do! Can't prepare!**

Organizational symptoms: *stress and tension builds, with no release
Working patterns are disturbed
Employees become sick, or take stress leave*

Organizational level: *loyalty declines*



**Most Organizations
Staff are Constantly
Resisting Change!**

Most leaders understand this.



er Bligh's Mind Set

acknowledged the grave fears.

*demonstrated personal care
concern.*

e

trusted her messages, co-operated,
responded to instructions
lously, only one death.



Adults will do their best.
People are intelligent &
require information so
we can work through
this together.

and Mind-Set Frequently Observed in Organizations

Authoritarian leaders

Employees are evidence of negativity and resistance

Know what's best ... We will push this through despite them

Information may be censored or hidden

Employees are brushed aside

Focus on Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness

e

Employees feel 'like pawns & robots'

Employees feel betrayed

Engagement, morale, and productivity decreases.



*do people need during
nding Change?*

*o the leadership styles
are?*



**What We Want ... Leaders who are prepared
to be consistent with words and actions**

Bligh

was fully briefed

and demonstrated this was her priority

and let someone else 'sort it'

was the response, with input from specialists.

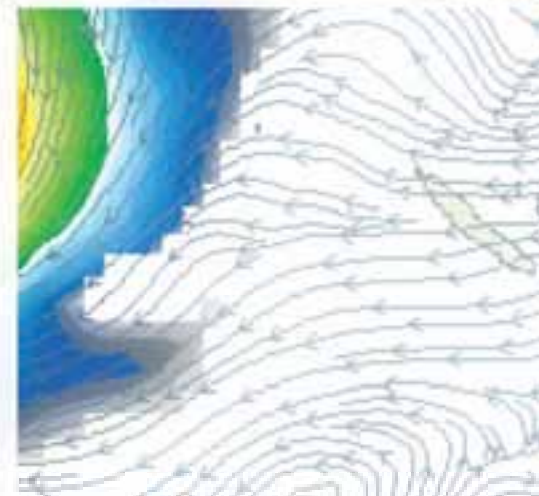
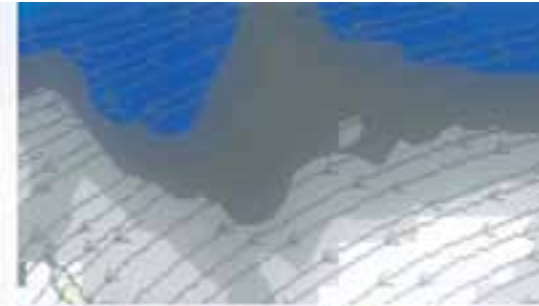
Transformational leaders

understand the importance of the change, yet spend little time on it

and communicate to others, often only 'kicking it off'

and use *honesty, co-operation, and consultation*

and do not appear secretive, unco-operate and don't consult



ed united leadership team serving all.

Bligh

at together 'partners' in a united effort :
army of great people... well trained. We can do this."

at co-cooperation and co-ordination
versus 'them'

l the platform as appropriate
credit and regular congratulations

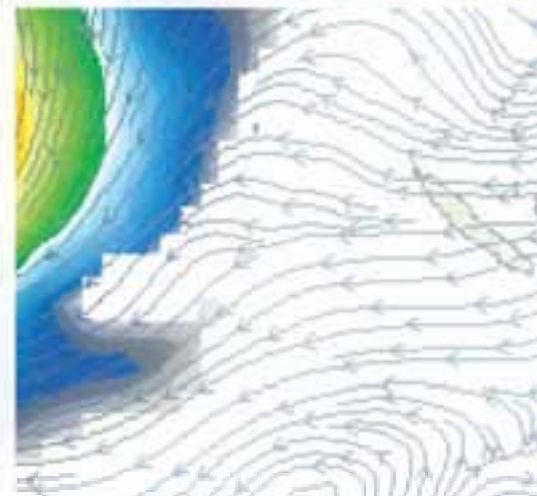
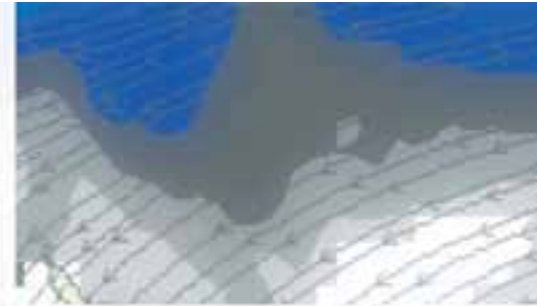
Organizational leaders appear to operate in 'silos'

ion and competition

operate as allies and partners

appear united, Don't work in interests of all

e is an opportunity to wrestle for credit, position and power.



Leaders who are believable

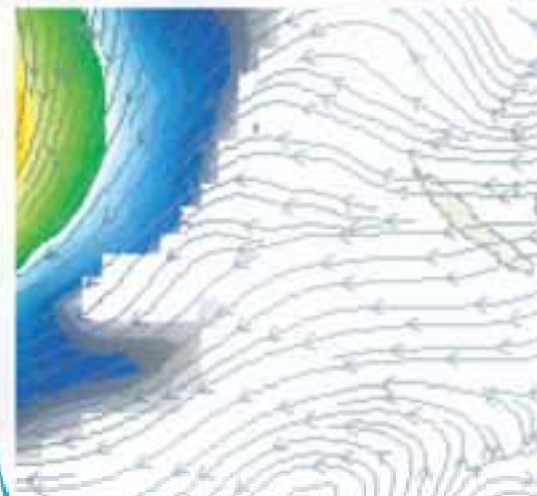
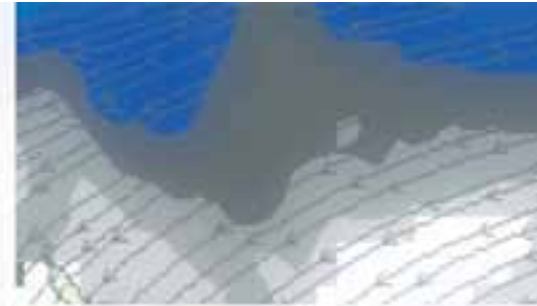
Bligh

‘In a moment of crisis, Bligh’s body language matched her words. He acknowledged the seriousness & looked concerned.’

Emotional leaders

They appear awkward under pressure
They talk about important things
They say: *“This is not a problem. This is an opportunity!”*

Example:
“I am different from my Boss’s.
I don’t want to shut up!”



ear the truth & not be patronized.

Bligh

*ne line. You don't want to panic people but you must
y the gravity, or the Australian 'she'll be right' will kick in.
re concerned! We still had people saying, 'No, I'll be right'*

e truth, in its' barest form

*more life threatening than anything we have experienced
erations.*

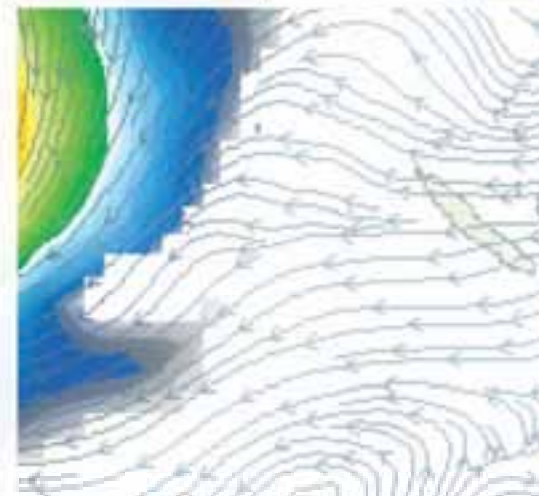
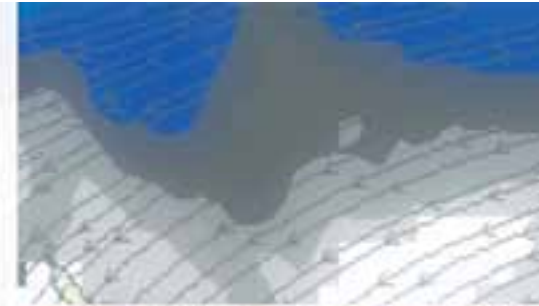
uld be on your own for a couple of days. It will be too

ous for emergency workers to assist you.

ll need to bunker down and take care of yourselves.

ntional leaders

ack the truth often believing: *We are protecting staff*



istent, clear information.

Bligh briefings were

l & informed, based on full understanding

, consistent, repeated, reinforced

and honest

ult ... Recognized as a reliable source

ceived the same messages at the same time

was little confusion

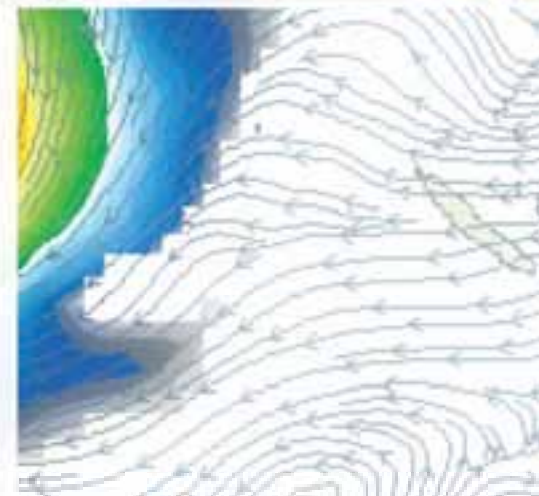
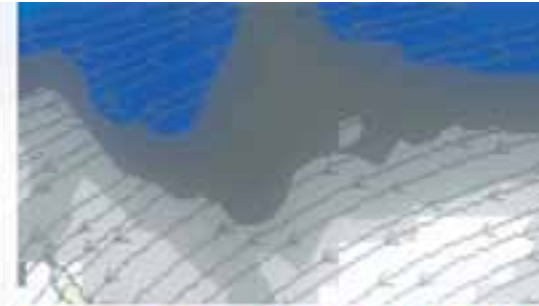
knew what to do to be safe

ational leaders

keep people informed

only bits of the whole picture

understand people want/need all the information



Leaders fail to understand the importance of the 'grapevine!'

Bligh

... corrected incorrect information

... **18m wave off Townsville's coast:**

... large buoy tipped upside down, and this is a false reading'.

... ected, this could have created major panic!

... will fill a vacuum of insufficient information!

... organizational leaders rarely tune into the 'grapevine'

... s annoying

... l by 'dissidents' or people 'with too little to do'.

e:



ow what is expected of them,
e acknowledged for their part

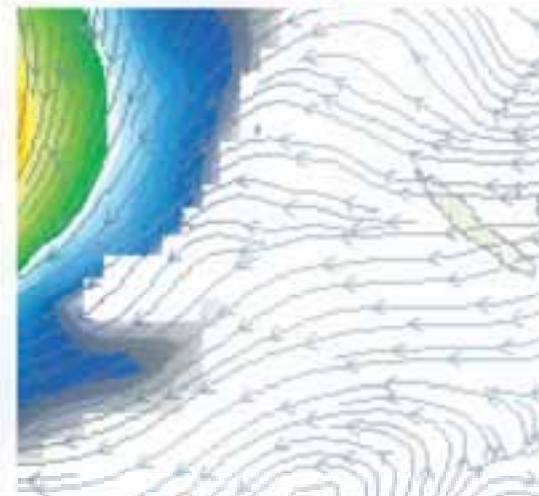
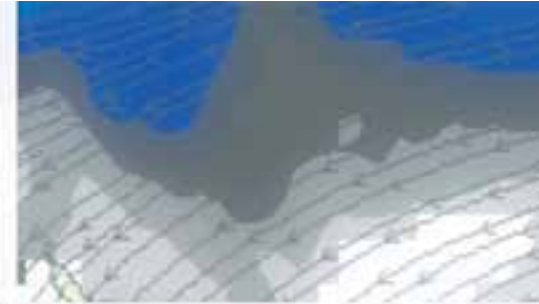
Bligh continually reinforced messages eg

*are being very patient and tolerant.
mend and thank them.*

*you for co-operating with emergency workers
you for working together during this difficult time.
continue to be patient.*

it's been a distressing and uncomfortable night.

**statements remind people of what is expected and
edges their efforts.**



show what is expected of them,
and be acknowledged for their part

Organizational Leaders

put energy on driving the change project forward
and get people on-side

Leaders don't give positive feedback:

That's what they are paid for!

Even those co-operating (despite personal angst) are ignored
and unappreciated, uncared for, and unsupported

e:

commitments falter over time.

Some become disenchanted.



ers who care

Bligh spoke from the heart

onstrated she'd heard
ved empathy
d her humanness
at an emotional level:

*I be thinking of you every minute and
our throughout the long night ahead.*

pe you can feel our thoughts.

ve you in our hearts.

pe to see you all safe in the morning.

e in this together! You are not alone!



Tonight we need
to remember the
unbearable anguish
of those in the north.

ers who care

ntional Leaders

recognize the searing pain

istance as *something to be broken through*

ely believe leaders care *typically saying:*

'like a pawn on the organizational chessboard'.

e:

ders don't demonstrate empathy and caring,



We want to be the highest priority

People don't hear well, and logic is lost, during fear. Messages must be stated clearly, again and again.

Bligh

Stated the basics: 'People first!'

Want to make sure there is no loss of life and no one is seriously injured. There will be property damage, but it's not as important as saving people.

on:

When the winds die down, stay in your houses...Often after the storm has passed people are badly injured or killed.

International leaders say

People are our most precious resource.

Evidence of this, and seen as 'lip service'



Leaders who provide genuine reassurance certainty about the future

Bligh

could NOT be provided with Yasi! But she ...

... took the steps to survive the crisis

... had people and resources in place to assist

... This will be the last briefing until the morning. We are waiting

... patiently with you. We will have the best resources on the

... island as soon as it is light.

Traditional leaders

... were OK! Seen as a patronizing 'pat on the head'

... no emotions to yourself! You make me feel uncomfortable!

... and openness is missing

... clear end point

... clear transparent process to get there



**we respond to emotions and metaphor
cold logic is insufficient**

Bligh

ve done this before.

re tested and we passed.

*ve the strength to survive this,
u will pass this test also!*

are a powerful symbol.

the night, several babies were born...

ed: Charlotte Crichton

ntional leaders

‘management speak’ not searching for words to reach



Yasi's babies, 5 months



le hope, however bleak the situation

Bligh

*ed to prepare for heartbreak and devastation in the
g. But as soon as it is light, we will have planes searching
greatest needs. We have the assets in place. There will
nfort and support as soon as we can get in, first thing in
orning!*

ntional leaders rallying cry is often:

*This will improve the efficiency and effectiveness
of the organization!*

This is not inspirational!

nt:



OP-ED COMMENTARY

Anna Bligh, Channel 7 Sunrise to Premier Bligh:
Far from over... That people have coped so well is a testament to your leadership.

Anna Bligh, ABC of devastated town, interviewed after Yasi:
They made it through a terrifying night. Anna said, they breed 'em tough in North Queensland!

ABC News, 6 Feb 2011,
Critic over previous months, headlined with:
For Anna Bligh's finest hour

ABC News, National Federal Senator, 6 Feb 2011:



Successful 'project' for Premier Bligh...

... of life & absence of serious injury

... es:

... ad to Queensland's recovery

... ms emerging

... ay not survive politically

... change management perspective?

... ffective leadership in 'Imposed' and 'Impending Change'.

... ssions for organizational leaders! If you want to:

... rove your relationships with staff,

... nicate more effectively with staff, and

... nd maintain trust and productivity during change, then

