



meme

/mizm/

noun

1. an element of a culture or system of behaviour passed from one individual to another by imitation or other non-genetic means.
2. an image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations.

Weird things the youth do: political meme pages

Leo Alder should know, he's one of them

Whether because of the changed technological environment, or simply that age old chestnut of youthful rebellion, the young people of today are interacting with politics in a form that didn't have a semblance of existence in their parents time. I am here today to tell you, people of Braidwood about a bold new form of political interaction in the 21st century — that of the humble political meme page.

These pages exist on Facebook and fall on both sides of the political spectrum. The predominant Labor party meme page is titled 'The ALP Spicy Meme Stash', on the opposite side and entrenched in the Liberals corner sits 'Innovative and Agile Memes', there is also, albeit with a much smaller presence even in the meme world, 'Australian Green Memes for Actually Progressive Teens' and 'The National Party of Memes' for those

partaking in the further reaches of the political spectrum. Now, obviously none of these Facebook pages are official in any capacity, and indeed, they seem to revel in the intentionally poorly constructed, juvenile nature of their output. I would hazard a guess that many of the posts made by these pages would be nearly indecipherable by older Facebook users, as many rely on previous knowledge of the meme templates they are based on to fully understand the humour. As much as these pages seem to almost worship their respective leaders, as far as I understand it, neither party leader has ever acknowledged the huge amount of memes churned out in support of them. That being said, I wonder how long it will take before, in a desperate bid to appeal to younger voters, political parties will begin to create and post

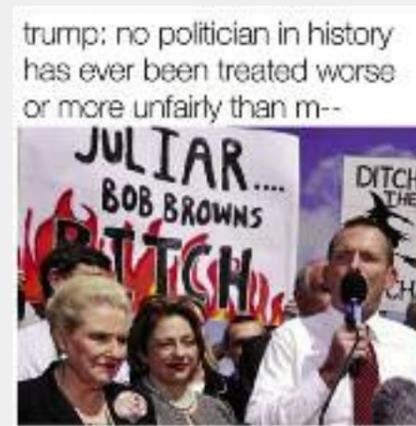
official memes of their own. The trend towards this has already somewhat started, with the NSW police force recently upping their efforts to appeal to the youth with a near constant output of youth-targeted memes exploding from their various official social media pages. However, to my knowledge, there is only one case of a politician actively interacting with one of these pages, that honour being bestowed upon the Liberal member for Bowman, Andrew Laming, who in December last year, got into a surely ill-advised war with an anti-liberal Facebook page. The page in question was 'The Simpsons Against the Liberals' which repurposes Simpsons quotes to attack the Liberal party. One of their memes, which poked fun at Laming's comments regarding unions in schools, was brought to Laming's attention, who then plunged into the comment

section to defend himself and fire back, creating all-out chaos in the comments as the fans of the page mobilized to hit him with every related Simpsons quote they could think of, and Laming entrenched himself further by attempting to respond to every comment, and arguing indiscriminately with anyone who responded.

They say that arguing on the Internet is a futile endeavor, and this was no exception.

 The 'conversation' repeatedly went off-topic and devolved into arguments about correct language usage and jabs at each others intelligence. Apart from the obvious futility of the

entire endeavor, and the bad P.R associated with arguing with people on the Internet, don't expect to see a politician interacting positively or negatively with one of these meme pages in the near future. This is because at least re-appropriated Simpsons quotes represent a shared cultural knowledge that Andrew Laming could draw from to understand, and respond to the criticisms leveled against him. However, the content that most of these meme pages draw from, that of ironic, heavily in-joked meme humour would be unfathomable to any contemporary politician, and thus would, I'm sure, be completely disregarded by the establishment, no matter how large these pages get. But who can speak to the future? When one of these people tapped into meme-culture grow up and get elected, who knows what will happen? ■



EDITOR'S NOTE: IT OCCURRED TO ME WHILE LAYING OUT THIS PAGE THAT IN THE PIC ABOVE IT SEEMS THAT KARMA MIGHT HAVE PLAYED A PART IN THE CAREER TRAJECTORIES OF THESE THREE.

