

Spinning around

In an exclusive interview, indomitable PR maven Rhonda reveals the secrets of her stellar career at the NBA.

When and why did you decide on a career in communications?

I realised I had a talent for making bold claims unsupported by evidence a few years back when working as a lobbyist for the multi-vitamin industry. Since then I've fallen in love with the time-honoured art of shaping a message, creating talking points, changing topic at will.

What kind of training was required?

I spent two years as chief of staff to a



Rhonda (Kitty Flanagan) with Jim (Anthony Lehmann) in *Utopia*.

former state minister. My role was leaking cabinet documents and issuing denials - but it provided an excellent background.

What is the golden rule for a successful PR campaign?

Never treat the public as stupid. They are,

of course, but you've got to at least look like you're taking them seriously.

What aspect of your work do you find most fulfilling?

Formulating policy and document shredding.

What have you learned in your time with the NBA?

Building infrastructure is too important to be left to engineers and economists. What's the point of a new toll-road if it doesn't have the right comms team to design its logo?

If you had to give NBA chief Tony Woodford one piece of advice, what would it be?

Don't speak until you've taken a moment to collect your thoughts, formulate an appropriate response. Then still don't speak.

Which NBA project do you believe will be of most benefit to the country?

The (soon-to-be-announced) Adelaide to Rockhampton Very Fast Train. It crosses 11 marginal electorates in less than half a day.

What goals have you yet to realise?

Alcohol-free weekdays are still proving a challenge.

What is your five-year plan?

I am currently working with the gambling industry on a campaign to have online betting ads classified as "community service announcements". I think we're close.

What do you do in your leisure time?

Spin classes. (That's actually a joke. I opened with it during my keynote address at the Gov-Com 2017 conference. It brought the house down).