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# Xero boss withdraws advertising from Whaleoil

7:08 PM Thursday Dec 10, 2015

Advertising Xero



Clashing: Rod Drury, left and Whale Oil founder Cameron Slater.

Rodney Hide has confirmed he was probably behind a series of Whaleoil posts attacking Xero that led Rod Drury to suspend advertising on the controversial blog.

In response to the latest in a series of Whaleoil posts critical of Xero, Drury said had cut advertising spending on the site over what he claimed was a campaign being steered by Hide.

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"I've been a long time reader of Whaleoil and we even used to advertise here as we like to support the sunlight of good challenging discussions. (I turned that off yesterday after your misguided Hide campaign and it now appears to be open season on us.)"

Whaleoil, run by Cameron Slater, was at the centre of last years' Dirty Politics scandal triggered by Nicky Hager's book of the same name.

Mostly sourced on hacked correspondence, Dirty Politics revealed close links between Slater and senior figures in government.

Further material to emerge from the scandal appeared to show Slater was regularly paid to attack the rivals of his clients in blogposts.

In recent weeks Whaleoil has published a series of posts attacking Xero over the treatment of Christchurch woman Kristina Buxton who claimed the company had unfairly handed over private information to the Official Assignee.

*"Despite Xero being an apparently successful company (even though they have never made a profit) they are known to always have their hand out looking for more government money, in exchange for creating jobs."*

- Cameron Slater

Buxton is the partner of bankrupt Christchurch businessman David Henderson, a colourful developer whose battles with IRD were turned into the movie We're Here to Help and who was convicted in September of seven charges of not paying taxes totalling around \$163,000.

Buxton served as a director and trustee on many Henderson-linked entities. Former ACT leader Hide has been a long-time advocate for Henderson, including recently championing Buxton's complaints about the company.

Asked if he was behind Whaleoil's sudden interest in writing about Xero, Hide said: "I suppose I am."

Hide said there was no organised campaign as such, but he had raised Buxton's complaints in a column in the National Business Review which Slater had taken an interest in and linked to and followed up on.

"We have corresponded on this point. And of course he's quite hot on issues of access to personal data. He emailed me to say 'I know what that's like,'" he said.

Slater did not answer phone calls or emails about Drury's claims, but responded on Twitter to questions with a crude depiction of a raised middle finger.

"Another misleading and anti-Slater attack from [the Herald] designed to try an affect [sic] competitors," Slater said.

Xero's chief executive Victoria Crone has also been a target of the recent Whaleoil article, and has been mulling a run at the Auckland mayoralty.

Whaleoil has long taken a partisan interest in Auckland local body politics, having earlier been the main outlet in 2013 for extensive and lurid reporting on mayor Len Brown's extramarital affair.

In the post that triggered Drury's push-back, Slater had accused Xero of being a "corporate bludger".

Drury said this criticism was unfair.

"Of course that we are investing for growth and therefore making a loss and makes us an easy target but we are open about that and confident we are creating value," he said.

"So do you really think its warranted to beat up on a team that are working really hard and creating opportunities for thousands of people?"

- NZ Herald

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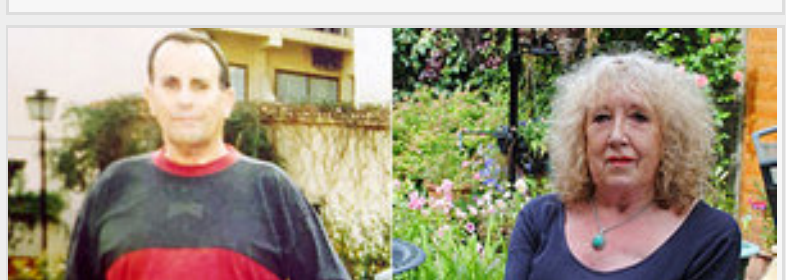
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