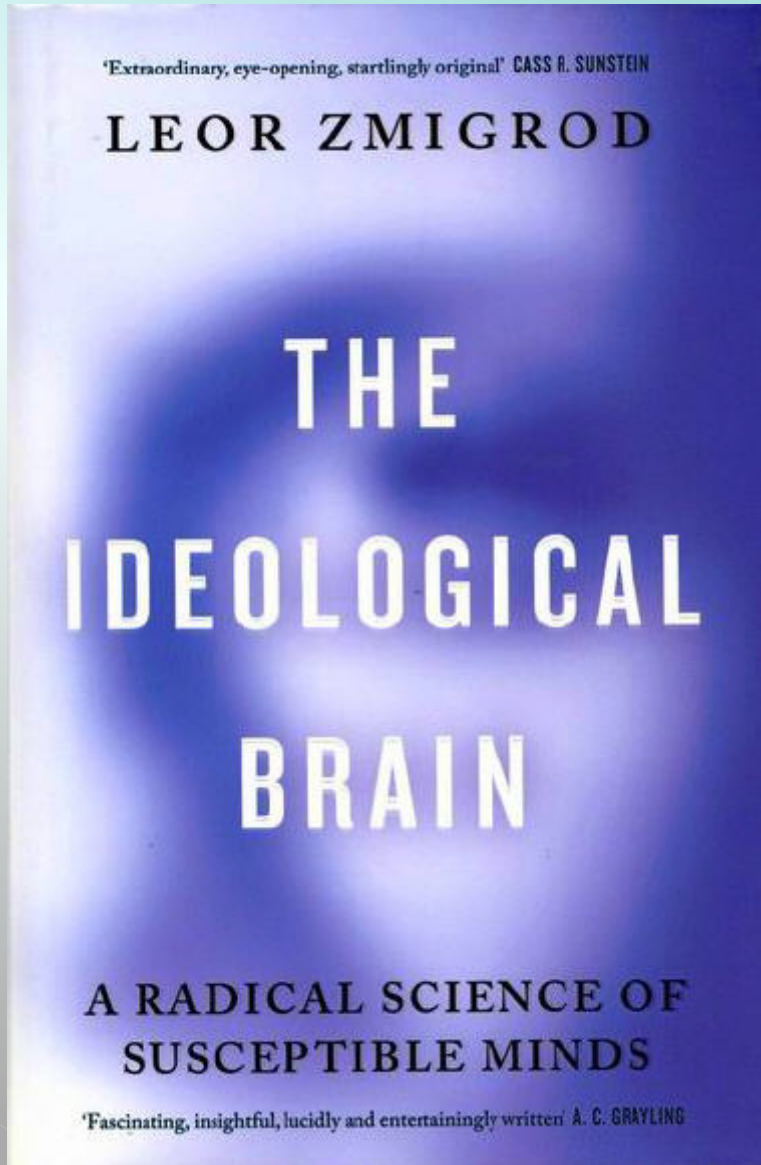


Cat's Eye Watch

No. 7

24th May 2025



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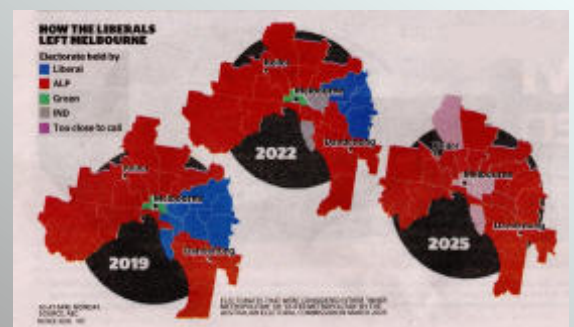
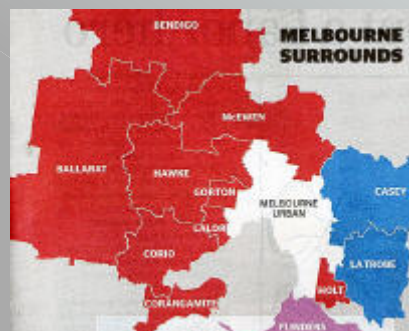
Israel & Palestine: The Holy and the Broken

Terrifying abuse of the Planet

It's not your responsibility.

The Rise of Islamophobia

Federal election results 2025 and what it means for Australia



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Any excuse for stirring up the universe

*Edited by
Graham Price*

Once was weekly now highly irregular in more ways than one

HIGHLIGHTS

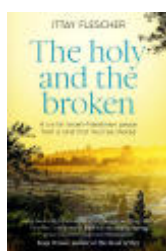
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The editor's desk



It's begun — government control of the media, just like in George Orwell's 1984. It didn't take Trump long to remove some of the news outlets he wasn't happy with — on Feb 16 he signed an executive order eliminating the US Agency for Global Media, which is the parent company of the Voice of America. VOA has been broadcasting to the world since World War II.

You didn't have to be blessed with a degree in psychology to see what was going to hit the fan and splatter all over — the second rise of Donald Trump has divided not only America, but the world, and given rise to far right extremism. Attempting to scare the wits out of America's enemies has only succeeded in frightening the living daylight out of friends. Trump's motto, alongside some of his adoring youthful millionaire's and billionaire's who hang around him like cockroaches drawn to rotting food, is "move fast and break things." See, that's how you get things done in this new Trumpish/Muskish mad hatter's world. If you hurt some of the less well off, the homeless etc., along the way, well that's too bad, isn't it? It's the big picture that matters, isn't it? Well, isn't it?

Seems I've heard all of this before — when Joseph Stalin took power and then there was that nasty bloke in Germany they called the Leader and another one down in Italy whom they called Il Duce (the Leader) — took some time to depose them did it not? Yes, the end justifies the means and if you break something along the way, well that's just too bad. It's all for the collective good. And that's how you breed dictators.

Remember, Trump voted with Russia, North Korea and several pro-Russian countries against the United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-11/8, 24 Feb 2025: "Advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine; calls for de-escalation, early cessation of hostilities and peaceful resolution of the war against Ukraine." That should make all good people in the world sit up and take notice. The motion was passed with 93 countries for the resolution and 18 against. Trump and his dictator friends voted against it. Now you know where this madman stands.

Australia's stance on the South Pacific is weak. Trump has taken away much support to those nations which traditionally looked to America for help and security. This is Australia's back yard and it doesn't take a genius to see that China is moving in where Trump has left a vacuum — it's China on our doorstep, for good or bad. Xi Jinping made his move some weeks ago when he visited a number of South-East Asian countries — showing the flag that is, and advising those countries that he will always be there for them, which should send shivers down the spines of our politicians in Canberra. So, who's in charge here?

We stand out like a moth to a flame, with our military weakened over past decades by both Labor and Liberal. Trump has made it very clear that we cannot rely on America coming

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**Feedback to Cat's Eye Watch
is always welcome.**

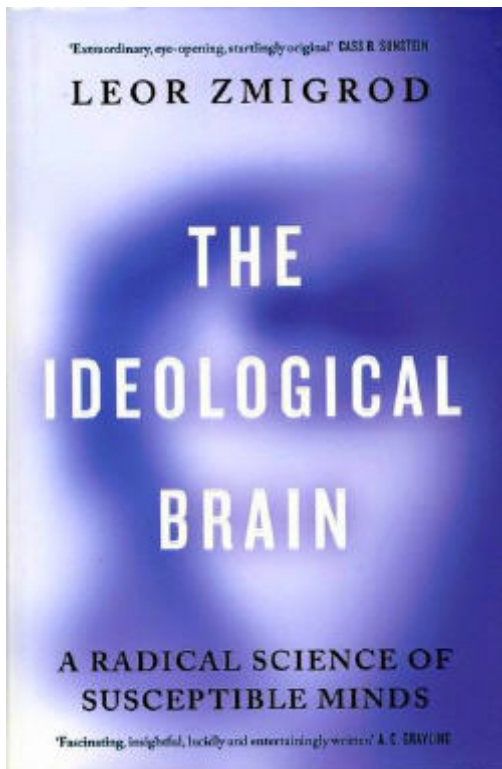
Click onto my purrfect nose!





The Age of Ideological nuance

Is your belief not really *your* belief?



All day long, all through the night
all affairs — yours, ours, theirs —
are political affairs.

Whether you like it or not,
you genes have a political past.
you skin, a political cast,
Your eyes, a political slant.

Whatever you say reverberates,
whatever you don't say speaks for itself.
So either way you're talking politics.

Wislaw Szymborska 'Children of Our Age'

All we need is conviction. Convictions offer us certainty — or at least, the *appearance* of certainty when we are in fact **unsure**. Convictions reveal our deepest passions — or at least, give us things to be passionate about. Convictions bring us together with other people through a common and dedicated purpose, creating a loving community out of mere strangers . . . Conviction is all we need. . . . Our

brain — an organ that constantly seeks to understand the world around us, to feel belonging with others — our brain is delighted by our newfound ideological possessions. *What could possibly go wrong?* [From the Prologue to *The Ideological Brain: A Radical Science of Susceptible Minds*].

Dr. Leor Zmigrod, a pioneer in the field of neuroscience, attended Cambridge University as a Gates scholar. She has held visiting fellowships with Harvard, Stanford and both the Berlin and Paris Institutes for Advanced Study. She has won numerous prizes, including the Women of the Future Science Award and the Glushko Prize. While at Cambridge, she became interested in why young British girls were being drawn to Syria to join **ISIS**. Her curiosity led her into combining her previous neurological experiments and methods with the psychology of politics. Why were some people susceptible to extreme world views and not others?

The Ideological Brain:pp4-6 “The young British adolescents who were radicalized in their bedrooms, at sleepovers, on smartphones, were extraordinary cases of ordinary processes — processes that every brain is susceptible to, and that some brains are more receptive to than others. The clues for the differences in risk between us lie in our cells, our bodies, our personal narratives . . . This book weaves together neuroscience and politics and philosophy to challenge our understanding of what it means to exist as human beings awash in dogmas, trying to stay afloat amongst raging orthodoxies. . . . It reveals that our politics are not superficial, our politics can become cellular. We will zoom into the ideological brain with a scientist's microscope, a philosopher's concern, a humanist's hope and an active citizen's empathy and imagination — hoping that in the contrasts of openness and hate, revision and tradition, evidence and composed fates, we will uncover what the free, authentic, and tolerant brain looks like too.”

So, what is your current ideology doing to your brain and how can it be altered? How can our rigid ideas be changed? Whether left-wing, right wing, far left or far right, Zmigrod shows us how we may break free and become more flexible in our thinking. And it doesn't require a doctorate in zoology, psychology, or anthropology to understand that flexible is the way to go for satisfaction and peace of mind. Rigid thinking is the calcium of the mind, to be avoided at all costs.

The age of illusions

Zmigrod uses Napoleon Bonaparte, Karl Marx and Freidrich Engels to illustrate how ideologists use their theories as gateways to power. Napoleon had a vision that was diametrically opposed to the liberal thinking groups that arose after the French revolution. Napoleon considered them to be dangerous dreamers. The problem for him was that they were not dreamers, they were firmly entrenched thinkers and were not going to go away. There were too many of them.



Zmigrod shows that Napoleon's personal ideology was firmly set in imperialism.: "Minds were meant to obey, not to express doubt. Minds should not frolic freely. They must be contained."

Then along comes Marx and Engels in 1846 with *The German Ideology*. *The Ideological Brain* pp50-59: "By the middle of the nineteenth century, in the hands of Marx and Engels, ideology constituted the beliefs internalized by human minds through coercion and exploitation. Ideology was far from science. Ideology was the set of illusions themselves . . . Marx and Engels believed ideology could be equated with *false consciousness*: 'phantoms inhabiting the human brain'. For them, ideology situates us in an Alice in Wonderland kind of world where distortions are everywhere. . . . To understand the dangerous liaison between minds and myths, we need to understand what propels each of them. What are their personalities and preoccupations? . . . How do ideologies snake into our fast-learning, dogma-loving brains — and what are the consequences?"

Zmigrod shares a chapter on the human brain, culminating with *The Ideological Brain* p69: "Ideologies are the brain's delicious answer to the problem of prediction and communication. Ideologies provide easy solutions to our queries, scripts that we can follow, groups to which we can belong, so that it is determined."

The rigid mind

After thousands of simple tests with willing people, such as how many uses can you put a brick to, Zmigrod and her fellow researchers found that the inflexible person struggles to see the plurality of functions a single object can possess, whereas the flexible thinker was linked to an opposition to dogmatism which builds walls around the self. Zmigrod poses the question 'Is it possible that the diehard Democrat and the unflinching Republican are more cognitively similar than they are different?'

In an experiment of 700 Americans carried out in 2016 Zmigrod discovered that the extreme right and the extreme left were cognitively similar to each other. "Both extremes struggled to adapt, to invent, to change mental schemas, even in neutral or non-political situations." Zmigrod studied thousands of British participants and came to an interesting conclusion. *The Ideological Brain* pp139-149: "I discovered that the most rigid individuals possess specific genes that affect how dopamine is distributed throughout the brain . . . I found that the individuals who are most cognitively rigid have a genetic predisposition that concentrates less dopamine in their prefrontal cortex, the decision-making centre of the brain, and more dopamine in their striatum, the mid-brain structure that controls our rapid instinct . . . Rigidity does not transpire out of thin air, nor does it originate from the wellspring of a metaphysical soul. Individual differences in inflexibility emerge from biological markers that interact with each other. No single dogmatic gene exists." Other neurological experiments of far-right Spanish people and Muslim immigrants who endorse militant jihadist causes has revealed the work of the pre-frontal cortex 'involved in the processing of sacred values, but not in the evaluation of non-sacred values. This is significant, and though there are other factors at work, the core result is that ideologies shape the way the brain functions. The brain, in return, shapes the actions of prejudice. •

The Ideological Brain By neuroscientist Leor Zmigrod Penguin/Viking 2025

Cont'd from page 2 >>>

to our aid as it used to long ago. America, though politically involved in wars of its own making, has often stood back from helping other nations until it was almost too late — viz. WWI & WWII — both times which had the UK government on a precipice and fearing the worst. The Commonwealth countries came to her aid while America sat and watched Hitler sweeping across Europe like a whirlwind, with the American Congress invoking "It's none of our business." Which is why in 2025 the UK government is sending its new dynamic aircraft carrier The Prince of Wales with supporting warships into our South Pacific.

Britain pulled back from much to do with South-Pacific islands during the 1960s-70s, but still maintained a light relationship with its commonwealth countries in the region. This return to the South-Pacific is welcomed by the nations that reside there as the UK government recognises the growing influence of China in the region. •



HMS Prince of Wales - image The Strategist.

"The general population doesn't know what's happening, and it doesn't even know that it doesn't know."
Noam Chomsky



2025: The election we had to have

From the Editor

Normally during election nights I watch the results coming in — this time I didn't bother because I, like many others, could see what was coming — it was so obvious. The coalition hadn't done their homework and their presentation was poor.

I didn't switch on until about 9.30 p.m. But back in time, you could see it spilling over all the polls during March and April, that Dutton was not going to maintain support. After riding high during February, with polling equal to Albanese or slightly higher, his first big mistake was to tell radio listeners on Ben Fordham's radio 2GB that he was pleased to see Donald Trump back in the White House. You see, we are Australians, not Americans — our Westminster political system is like a broad church compared to the American system where manipulation by the incumbent of the White House can occur and at present is occurring dramatically. The Westminster system prevents that. And we should thank God that it is so. Regardless of how much American culture we have imported over time, and how the US has been our ally in times past, we can never, ever, be the same as the US of A.

Dutton's second mistake was telling people that if he won the prime ministership he wouldn't be living in Canberra — he would live at Kirribilli House in Sydney with its carefully tended gardens, sweeping lawns and magnificent views of Sydney Harbour. To voters sitting in their Footscray or in the north western homes, with not much of a view except an asphalt road and look-a-like homes, together with renters struggling to manage ever mind boggling rising rents, this was a big no no. Again he blundered in opposing the RSL's commitment to *Welcome to the Country*. Another blunder was telling the electorate that he would close down working from home, but then fearing the backlash, mainly from female voters, apologized and said he'd made a mistake. Again, he informed voters that if elected he would remove 41,000 public servants from office, but then back-tracked on that promise. People were beginning to say 'Just what are your real purposes if you win? Show us something that is better than labor.'

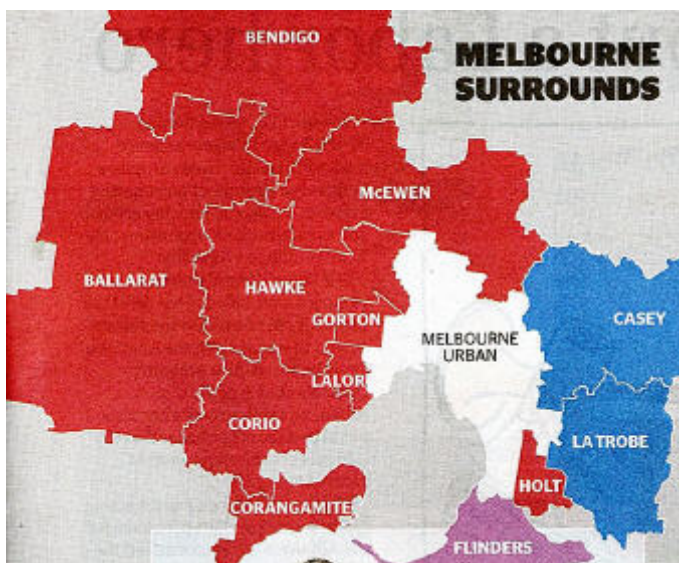
The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that in 2024 there were 2,517,900 public sector employees in the month of June 2024 comprising: 365,400 employees in Commonwealth government (including defence force personnel); 1,939,100 in State government; and 213,500 in Local government. Regardless, after smelling even a hint of those cuts you can imagine where most of their votes went, and it certainly wouldn't be to the LNP. Then there was his associate, Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, uttering a much cursed exhortation to "make Australia great again." Incidentally, Price's portfolio had suddenly become Shadow Minister for Government efficiency — shades of Donald Trump's folly of "Making America Great Again, together with Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency." How could the LNP not see that coming? It was like a blundering Hippopotamus bearing down upon them.

Dutton's fifth mistake was branding the ABC and The Guardian as 'hate media.' Well, we'll leave it there because Anthony Albanese with his 4.3 million home on the edge of a cliff, with magnificent sprawling views across the NSW Central coast, also made blunders leading up to the

election — telling Australians that he will place a tax on unrealised gains in superannuation funds. It is also known that there lies the possibility that in the not so distant future Labor will impose an inheritance or death tax upon Australian



Once was a sea of blue now a sea of red. As at May 6th. Tim Wilson, Liberal, was yet to win the seat of Goldstein. Pic Courtesy of The Melbourne Age/Australian Electoral Commission



A sea of red. Outer suburban Melbourne. Courtesy The Melbourne Age/Australian electoral Commission



citizens. But none of this seemed to faze the voters on May 4, in effect giving the Labor government the go ahead on these two life changing taxes.

Dutton's promise of nuclear energy? Well, the jury is still out on that with voters' concerns in relation to the Chernobyl and Fukushima's nuclear disasters and what to do with the radioactive waste, but the lie that came from Labor sources to the effect that those nuclear power stations would cost Australians \$600 billion, was a whopper, when the more authoritative CSIRO had quoted \$120 billion. It is not decisive, but the possibility of nuclear power stations with backing up by solar and wind renewables may be the way that Australia has to go, especially considering the recent crash of renewables in Spain and Portugal when total power was out for some considerable time on Monday 28th April. The two countries pride themselves that they have managed 80% power from both wind and solar, but it remains to be seen that the possibility of bad weather may have been the cause for the complete black-out of two countries. A disaster of epic proportions.

The Coalition floundered, and even deep-centred Liberal members acknowledge that. Those who saw much of the good management of the LNP during earlier decades are concerned that some of these values have been overlooked. In part, the charter of the Liberals reads:

We believe in the inalienable rights and freedoms of all peoples; and we work towards a lean government that minimises interference in our daily lives; and maximises individual and private sector initiative.

In government that nurtures and encourages its citizens through incentive, rather than putting limits on people through the punishing disincentives of burdensome taxes.

In those most basic freedoms of parliamentary democracy – the freedom of thought, worship, speech and association.

In a just and humane society in which the importance of the family and the role of law and justice is maintained.

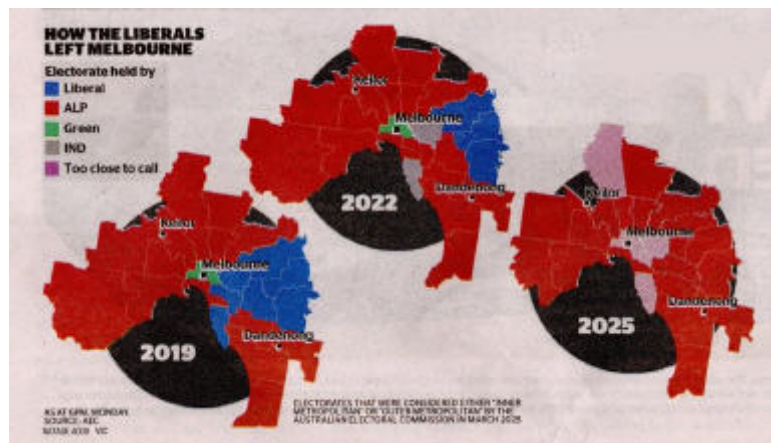
In equal opportunity for all Australians; and the encouragement and facilitation of wealth so that all may enjoy the highest possible standards of living, health, education and social justice.

That, wherever possible, government should not compete with an efficient private sector; and that businesses and individuals – not government – are the true creators of wealth and employment.

So, what went wrong?

The election centred around what the voters wanted or needed, and that was: 1. The economy. 2. Housing priorities. 3. Cost of living — not necessarily in that order. All three were the prime reasons the Australian public voted the way they did and these were not strong points in the Coalition's dream of the future, or at least did not come across to the public as a serious concern. Another factor that loomed large with women voters was that the Coalition was short on women in their team — something that has plagued them for some considerable time. Women voters won't stand for that in these days of equality. True, the focus should be on merit, but that doesn't mean the exclusion of many a good woman in politics. Again, there was the effect of the independents or teals — who had dramatically changed the way Australians voted in the 2020's.

Dutton, in his gracious losing speech on May 4th, gave full credit to Albanese and his associates for their win, thanked his own members for their support, gave heartfelt apologies for those who lost their seat and making mention of his seat of Dickson in Queensland that he had held for 24 years, said of Independent Ali France who now holds the seat—an amputee who had lost her son to leukaemia last year: “Her son Henry would be incredibly proud of her tonight and she will do a good job as the local member for Dickson and I wish her all the very best.” This was the Peter Dutton who seemed to be missing during the earlier stages of the election. If he had shown more of his humanity, the party may have had better results. But for decades, Dutton's humanity was hidden because he became convinced that he had to appear as a strong man with strong views. In the end it became his downfall — if he had shown to the Australian public what he really was like as portrayed in his gracious closing speech on May 4th, not only would he have been in



2019-2025 Melbourne electoral boundaries as of May 6th.. Pic courtesy The Melbourne Age



a better position to become a prime minister, voters would have thought, ‘Okay, here’s a man, a family man like us who has come up the hard day, who has tenacity but who also has feelings.’ Not to be.

The day the Greens almost died.

The loss was inevitable, considering the anti-semitism that arose within the ranks of the Greens during the past two years, including their leader Adam Bandt who had stood with a small group of Greens displaying anti-semitic posters. Even his deputy in New South Wales, Mehreen Faruqi, became embellished in a similar incident. To many Australian voters the Greens in their current format had outlived their usefulness; it was also time for the Teals to make their mark, and the Jewish population of Australia — a large proportion of which had almost always voted for the Greens — turned their backs on Bandt and his members for the disgraceful and hurt activities and the tawdry and slow apologies. It would never be the same for the Greens. The word for them is ‘tainted’. They had pressed the button of disintegration. Since the election of 2022 when the Greens picked up three seats in the House of Representatives, the Greens had been riding high, despite a ton of quarrels within the party. Now, they have lost that — two of those seats gone and one hanging in the balance, not to mention Adam Bandt’s own seat of Melbourne. Like so many others, the Greens leader is gone. So that it’s not only the LNP that needs to take a good look at itself, it is also the Greens. Another warning for the Greens — this is Australia. It is not America or Europe where Greens parties have agendas more suited to those countries. Your priority is to Australia, not to overseas majorities. Never forget that.



NSW Deputy Greens leader, Mehreen Faruqi with anti-semitic banner “Keep the world clean.”

The problem with Victoria

Jacinta Allen, the Victorian premier, is smiling at the election results, but she too needs to get her house in order because there are several critical seats that show an increased vote to the Coalition. These seats were held by Teals, but they are now on a knife edge. Victoria is ‘another country’ and Allen’s jubilation together with statements that she helped Albanese over the doorstep are simply untrue. She is totally wrong. At present she is showing a typical delusional Trump mentality that reality is not what she wishes to see or hear. This was a Federal election, based on Federal values. The Victorian state election is yet to come — gazetted for November 2026, and it will be assessed on different issues, one of them being the massive debt that the state finds itself lumbered with, together with the highest crime rate in Australia.

The swing away from the LNP was not as critical as it could have been, which hands out a warning to Allen that even though the voters in her state had swung to Labor, there was still a certain amount of uncertainty lingering in the community. You can’t fool the voters that there is no considerable difference between federal and state elections; history tells us that the states do not always follow federal electoral wins.

The Nationals maintain the rage

Numerous Liberal Party shadow ministers have lost their seats, but it is of interest to note that none of the Coalition’s Country Party/Nationals lost seats. Three Country Party leaders have become prime ministers in the past, each under difficult times: Earl Page in 1939, Arthur Fadden when Robert Menzies resigned in 1941, and John McEwen in 1967 upon the disappearance and death of Harold Holt. McEwen was in a more or less caretaker roll until replaced by the Liberal John Gorton in January 1968. From there the Coalition fell into disarray. Gorton was interested in making Australia a more independent nation, but lost support in the cabinet room. From there the slide continued downwards with the Liberals infighting and promoting William McMahon, a 63-year-old bachelor, to the post of prime minister. McMahon proved to be completely unsuitable for the role, even with his marriage to the glamorous blonde, Sonia Hopkins; he remained a less than colourful figure in parliament. The marriage was known to be a ‘political marriage’. The way was then paved for Labor to state “It’s Time” with the ascent of Gough Whitlam who formed government in 1972 with a majority of 67 seats to the LNP’s 56, not such a landslide as today’s 93 to 41.

The Nationals have always been known as the minor half of the Coalition, but this has changed dramatically with the sudden wipe-out of the Liberals. There were only two Liberals who increased their vote — Andrew Hastie of



Perth, shadow minister for defence, and Angus Taylor of Sydney, shadow treasurer. You can be sure that the Nationals will be pushing for radical change, but there is doubt that the Liberals will accept that.

The Liberal Party's future

Chip Le Grand, state political editor for *The Age*, Melbourne 8th of May, has some fairly good advice for the Libs.

1. Don't watch Sky News. 2. Don't watch Peta Credlin, especially. 3. Be like George Costanza. George is a fictional character in the American television sitcom *Seinfeld*, where according to Le Grand, George realises every decision and every instinct he has made is wrong. Solution? He vows to do the opposite. Le Grand hones in on Credlin with "Since she served as former prime minister Tony Abbot's chief of staff, [she] has been the George Costanza of the Liberal Party. Her every instinct is the opposite of what it needs to form stable government. So next time, do the inverse of what Credlin says." And she's not the only one that the Libs need to steer clear of. Sky News again, take no advice from presenters Rita Pahani of *The Outsiders*, together with her co-host James Morrow. The *Spectator* editor, Rowan Dean, often joins them in what reeks of Trumpism. In the main, these people are not qualified journalists with decades of experience, they are merely presenters; so why would you take your advice from a presenter? Even Donald Trump is a presenter. Would you take advice from him? Pahani, in particular, often gives a wave of the hand, muttering stone-faced "those lefties." If Liberal candidates take their information from *The Outsiders* of Sky News then they are clearing a path for their own further destruction. *The Outsiders* is simply a far right propaganda machine, still happy to endorse whatever Donald Trump says and does.

Aftermath: True colours showing

At the time of writing the Liberals are starting to infight, with Angus Taylor (where was he during the past three years?) and Jacinta Price — who has suddenly switched from the Nationals to the Libs — vying for leadership against the more moderate Sussan Ley. The knives are out with Machiavellian intent, but the blades are pointed in the wrong direction. The recent moves by Price appear to be more selfish than accommodating and can only bring the Liberals into further disarray. Factions will undoubtedly be the result.

Before the rush to elect a leader, the Liberals need to do their soul searching — all cards on the table — with sincere regrets about the past; where they originally went wrong during the 2022 election, and how the rot set in to culminate in the total write-off of 2025. Have the Liberals learned nothing from two election wipe-outs? Seems not. Somehow, the Liberals have strayed from their grassroots values and drifted into a kind of no-mans land, neither for this and neither for that. They seemed to forget that there were masses of city voters who had urgent needs about the cost of living, unobtainable housing, higher mortgage payments, rising rents, together with energy prices sky-rocketing, and while at this time of writing the Albanese government has so far failed on most of these, Labor ran a dedicated campaign with no loose ends — sometimes putting the fear boot in as well.

The fact is that the Liberals core values were not highlighted; left somewhere to gather dust it seems. It's a fact that the average voter today is more highly educated and if you don't stick to your core values you are not going to pull the wool over anyone's eyes. That might also apply to Labor within the next three years, if puffed up by their massive win they fail to address the needs of the average person in the street. It's the economy, stupid! The cost of living. High energy prices. Come good on your promises, Albanese, otherwise in three years . . . ?

A word to the Liberals. Keep your distance from social and cultural issues — these do not win elections, they merely cause factions and division within a party. Draw up a major uniform plan that will help this country to rise economically and to be more self-reliant. Diversify exports so as not to be focused almost entirely upon China. If some of your major donors, such as billionaire Gina Rinehart, want you to move even further right and follow Trump's lead, you are better off dumping such donors so as to be more honest with electoral voters. Moneywise, things might become a little lean, but at least you will have a conscience. If you won't follow this advice, then you won't come back. It is so simple. •

N.B. May 13. Since this article was written Sussan Ley has become the leader of the Federal Libs. We wish her well, perhaps it's also time for a more moderate Josh Frydenberg to return to the fold? •

The wound is the place where the Light enters you.

Persian poet and mystic, Rumi 1207-1273



The Murdoch Empire

When did Rupert Murdoch become close to being far right?

It doesn't really matter when. He's always been one for cozying up to political leaders. In fact, if he sees what he considers is potential in a leader he will pull out all stops in his newspapers and television broadcasts to ensure that certain leader becomes the president or the prime minister of his choice.

He always looks dapper in his very expensive tailored suits, which belies what lies hidden beneath. What he cannot hide is etched on his face; the years of wheeling and dealing, the years of angst and recriminations. His face is like one of his newspaper broadsheets, shouting out the good and the not so good in black and white — the lines and folds are like a scrunched up map of the world telling everyone what he did or did not do.

How he must long for the days of his youth, when he roamed the streets of his then quiet and almost rural hometown, Melbourne in the 1930s, without a care in the world, and then urged by his father was sent off to the prestigious boy's college, Geelong Grammar. Once there he knew he was in the select company of empire builders and the only way could be up. There was something of a snag however, because during his grammar school days he became a socialist — soon to be known as Red Rupert when he arrived at Oxford University. He became a member of Oxford's Labour Club and was quite sympathetic toward the Communist Party. He was known in Oxford for chasing fast women and drinking heavily. By the time he was 21 he was back in Australia, taking over his father's growing empire of newspapers. In time he would be given the nickname of 'The Dirty Digger,' by Private Eye magazine, as he began to buy up scores of newspapers throughout the world.

When the Labor Party leader, Gough Whitlam, came to significance in 1972, Murdoch threw all his energy into making sure his publications got Whitlam in as prime minister. Labor must win, regardless. The slogan 'It's Time' rang joyously across the nation and Murdoch pushed it for all its worth, exhilarating in being the powerful king-maker. Australians had seen nothing like it and enthusiastically joined in the portent mood that was sweeping the country. Sure thing, this was really, really big. It was time. Time for Labor to come out of the wilderness.

It all came tumbling down in a couple of years when the Whitlam government, after a huge spending spree and then unable to find cold hard cash, was caught with its pants down attempting to borrow money from loan sharks in Pakistan — one in particular was Tiraf Khemlani, a financial broker whose links were with Middle East cartels. But the money was not forthcoming, and even if it was, the interest rate would have been enormous. The loans scandal was eventually leaked which helped to bring down the Whitlam government, primarily because the Murdoch machine had been a major source; but then Murdoch pulled out all stops to disassociate himself from Whitlam and his Labor ministers. It was time to be rid of the Labor government of Gough Whitlam. Was this the beginning of Murdoch's turn to the right?

The Murdoch machine was growing fast. By 1974 Murdoch had 84 newspapers under his belt and television stations were next up. The spending continued; by 1984 Murdoch had added the prestigious Chicago *Sun-Times* which complemented his numerous American newspapers, including the New York *Post*. Meanwhile his holdings in the United Kingdom had grown to almost 40% of the country's media outlets. By then, Murdoch was wielding an enormous right-wing club with which to batter down election processes in many parts of the world. Could nothing stop this man? His wheeling and dealing came to light when he was found to be supporting the Conservative/Tory prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, but then he swung diametrically opposed to support the socialist leader, Tony Blair.

But it couldn't last. The high times were hit with scandals that rocked the newspaper world — the biggest being discovered by *The Guardian* journalists in the UK during 2010-11 when journalists of *News of the World* under Murdoch's watch authorised at least 5000 illegal phone hacks on British people. Metropolitan police revealed that they were aware of 4,744 victims. Murdoch's media had also illegally hacked the voice mails of a murdered 13-year-old girl, including the relatives of deceased soldiers. This resulted in a long and laboured court trial in which Murdoch was



Rupert Murdoch, image by Victoria Jones /PA



summoned to appear on several occasions. With investigations going back to the 1990's police arrested over 100 persons with connections to the *News of the World*. Numerous journalists and editors went to prison. After 168 years in print, Murdoch reluctantly shut down the newspaper, apparently later wishing that he had not.

For a time people thought they were free of the influence of Rupert Murdoch, but then along came Fox News and no one should be surprised to find that in 2016 and 2024 it was Murdoch who helped Donald Trump become president. Fox News saw to that. It is also no surprise to learn that Murdoch and Trump were in constant telephone contact with each other. Which brings us up to 2025 when Murdoch is seen in the Oval Office with Trump. Murdoch's media is an empire without peer — that's because it is the largest in the world. These days, some divisions of *Sky News* are out of kilter with most other news agencies, obviously because it is under the heel of Rupert Murdoch and its 'cousin' in the United States, Fox News. *The Outsiders*, a division of *Sky News* in Australia, co-hosts Rita Pahani and James Morrow, with Rowan Dean (editor of *The Spectator*) popping in at times. These presenters are simplistic in their coverage of the news, being adoring fans of Donald Trump. They're fantastic at pulling the wool over the eyes of the Australian public — groveling in populous news reporting without critical facts. They are not simply right wing — they are far right, bogged down in their worship of the Murdoch empire and people of utter poison like Donald Trump. •

Cry Beloved Country

How do you walk between two worlds and still maintain some sense of equilibrium? How do you take in the cruelty and suffering happening within two vastly opposed states of living — both torn and damaged by ideological warfare, where truth lost its way numerous decades ago — and still manage to call yourself an honest person?

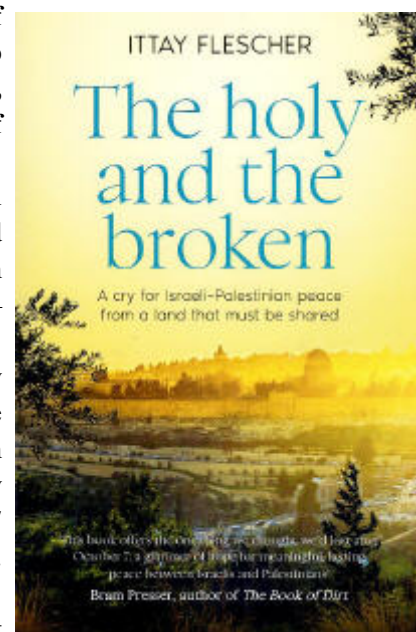
Melbourne author Ittay Flescher has done that — he knows Palestine as well as he knows Israel. Readers of *The Holy and the Broken* will find comfort and understanding within its pages because this author opens his heart to all caught up in the modern conflict which evolved following the October 7 massacre on Israeli soil — soil that ran with blood and flayed human tissue.

There were many who totally lost their belief in any peace process — simply shocked and devastated by the loss, rape, and murder of dear ones and other close relatives. Those sudden attacks by Hamas and co-joined Palestinians killed 1,200 with approximately 250 taken hostage. But there were other figures that were not universally revealed, because Israel also suffered 630 casualties hospitalised, broken down as 277 civilians and 353 soldiers; for civilians their ages began at one year old up to 88. Devastation. Babies shot and maimed. Some, disfigured for life.

The Holy and the Broken p19: "Jewish artist Anita Lester shared her dismay at the silence of Australian creative communities in the first week of the Hamas attack: Imagine if a Coachella, a Falls Festival, a Strawberry Fields, or a Glastonbury had been the subject of a massacre — can you imagine how the global creative community would rally around them? Remember the terrorist attack at Bataclan — every artist I know rallied in support. And wars and natural disasters provoked concerts and fundraisers. But when it's in Israel . . . This creative community has remained disturbingly quiet when it comes to supporting the Jewish people. This isn't about politics; it's about being an ally, and I fear this lengthy silence has broken our trust. This is something we will never forget." Yes, why the Jews?

Flescher continues: "On the other side of the Ocean, some prominent leftists didn't just remain silent, they justified the Hamas attack." Sadly, it is true. Harvard University students placed the blame for October 7 massacre upon Israel. Australian political leaders, even those in government, were silent. University students throughout the land were negatively linking practically all Jewish students with the right-wing government in Israel. In recent weeks students at the University of Sydney turned their backs upon Jewish students during a meeting, with the majority rejecting the anti-semitism code recently adopted by Australian universities. Again, there were highly vocal students supporting Hamas and issuing forth the terrorist propaganda that Israel 'has no right to exist.' The cry from the student body was 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,' which bluntly states that there will be no Israel. Full stop! Gone! Wiped out!

Suddenly, it is the 1930's-40's again when Hitler's brownshirts were out and about knocking on the doors of Jewish households. And the Australian government's initial response to earlier anti-semitic attacks — silence! So, what will be the Australian government's response to these Sydney students parroting terrorist slogans? Silence again?



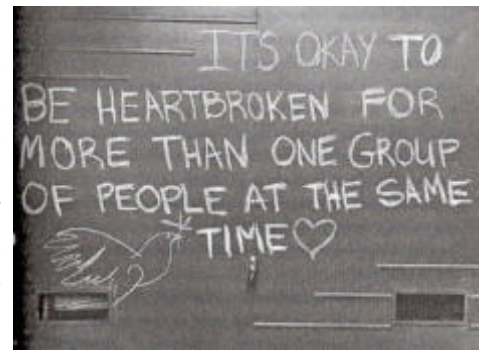


Which takes us back to Ittay Flescher's *The Holy and the Broken* p23: "Even before October 7, from Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem to Masafer Yatta and Al-Baqa'a in the West Bank, Palestinians in 2023 were facing displacement in a growing number of communities . . . For years I had heard from Palestinian friends that the Nabka [refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during 1948] was not a single event but an ongoing process. It was not exclusively the trauma of the 1948 refugees, but the emotional inheritance of all Palestinians. Ultimately, for both Palestinians and Israelis, the traumas of the Nabka and the Holocaust — two of the most foundational events in their respective histories — came back to life as horrific re-enactments." Flescher is mentioning here the flattening of whole buildings in Gaza "as if the roots of the conflict 75 years ago were coming back to haunt us. All who were privileged to live in this so-called holy land, as if we hadn't already suffered enough."

Flescher is totally aware of the suffering on both sides. He writes concerning who is there to replace Hamas when the fighting is over? There doesn't seem to be an answer to that because there is corruption and ineffectiveness throughout the land. The vision of re-building Palestine doesn't come, because there is no significant opposition party in Gaza. He is deeply saddened and discomforted. He knows there are no easy answers to this conflict. But we have to continue to try for the answers, regardless, and often one must look to the past for clues that will help.

Flescher digs up the long and burdensome history of Arab/Israeli conflicts and discovers some misconceptions. One is that only when the Arabs realise that the Jewish settlement is unassailable, further resistance by the Arabs is futile and there will be negotiations for permanent peace. So far, this has proven to be false. Secondly, Israel misinterpreted warnings prior to the 1973 Yom Kippur War, failing to anticipate attacks from Egypt and Syria, where 2,600 Israeli soldiers lost their lives. Thirdly, that Israelis can 'go back to where they came from and that Hamas can be bought'. *The Holy and the Broken* p32: "Both [conceptions] remind me that at the core of the 120-tragedy between the river and the sea is a deep and reciprocal misreading of the other. Too many Palestinians think Israelis are colonists who'll return to some imagined metropole in Russia if the violence is bad enough. Too many Israelis think Palestinians can be subdued, bribed, pacified or demoralised to accept anything less than freedom and equality." As Flescher illumines, these are lazy stereotypes and totally wrong in expression.

Flescher knows the sound of war. *The Holy and the Broken* p33: Under the heading of *The meaning of freedom*, he writes "On October 10, in an interview with Channel 7 in Australia, I described how the rockets from Hamas had been frightening my children and that my wife and I had a friend whose son had been taken hostage; it was an unthinkable situation causing immeasurable distress to his family. I then acknowledged that the suffering across the border in Gaza for innocent civilians was no less distressing. 'My war is with not with the Palestinian people,' I said. 'My war is with Hamas and the people who are trying to kill me and my family.' " Flescher continued with 'The people of Gaza have a right to be free. I want to see the Gaza siege lifted. I want to see a free Palestine, but not like this. Not by Hamas taking innocent people hostage.'



Flescher tries. He is one of the few who sees both sides of the coin with reasonable clarity. A teacher and educational director of Kids4Peace, Flescher writes how Arab citizens saved Jewish folk and others during the massacre of October 7. *The Holy and the Broken* p207-208: "Hamid Abu Arar rescued several soldiers from Hamas, immediately after Hamas operatives shot and killed his wife. Ismail Alkrenawi from Rahat saved the life of Aya Medan from Kibbutz Be-eri and the lives of 40 people fleeing from the Nova festival. Suleiman Shalibi formed a group of hundreds of volunteers from the Arab community, who put their lives on the line and, under fire, helped to rescue people they didn't know from certain death." And as Flescher points out "These names are largely unknown in the Israeli mainstream."

Flescher recognises the role women can play in bringing peace to the region. In the aftermath of the 2014 Gaza war that left 2125 Palestinians and 73 Israelis dead, there was founded Women Wage Peace (WWP), which has since grown into the largest grassroots peace movement in Israel, with 50,000 members. Likewise a Palestinian movement began: Women of the Sun, where 4 days prior to October 7 both movements met and called for peace. Sadly, a founding member of WWP was killed by Hamas, but those movements continue — each session begins and concludes with prayers both in Hebrew and Arabic. It is Flescher's hope that their leadership may one day "play a crucial role in future Israeli-Palestinian talks. Based on resolved conflicts, the potential involvement of these women-led organisations in negotiations could potentially lead to more favourable outcomes for everyone who desperately wants to end the war and build peace.

Under the heading of *So, what's your solution for Israel/Palestine?* Flescher writes *The Holy and the Broken* p212: "I support the vision of . . . 'Two States, One Homeland'. Under this model, Palestine and Israel will recognise one another, and their territories will be based on the 1967 borders but there will be no hard border. The two states would form a confederation within a single homeland, allowing citizens from one state to live as permanent residents in the other. There would be freedom of movement for everyone, and Jerusalem would serve as the capital for both states, but each national group would only vote in elections for its own state. Israel and Palestine would be jointly responsible for security and economic matters that affect both populations."



The Holy and the Broken is a cry from the heart, a voice struggling in the wilderness of fixed and mostly unchangeable minds. Ideologies rule here . . . ideologies long entrenched by history — the blind leading the blind. Flescher sees that both sides are contemptuous in using slogans: Zionist, anti-Zionist, Free Palestine. As I have written in past issues of CEW [specifically No.6, 1st March 2025], free Palestine from what? **It's not only Hamas — it's the many other armed brigades within Palestine that have to be dealt with.** But this, in general, is kept from the public who only see the one terrorist group as freedom fighters. No one answers the question 'who will rule when Hamas is gone?' Indeed, if the students' wish comes true and there is no more Israel, who will then rule Palestine? Will Palestine be free? I have to say to you, no it will not — it will disintegrate further into warring factions. Which one of the other nine militia groups or the eleven para-military sections within Palestine — some which were heavily active in the massacre of October 7 — will rule? In the light of that, the continuous call by university students 'Palestine will be Free!' seems shabbily unintelligent, even childish, and in some instances possibly uttered by damaged minds. As history reveals, it doesn't take much for people to forget past pogroms.

Flescher is unrelenting when it comes to research; digging out historical facts of Palestine Arabs and Israelite Jews. One fact that will surprise many readers is an incident that occurred in the late 19th Century. *The Holy and the Broken* pp77-78: "The first meaningful correspondence between a Palestinian leader and a Zionist leader happened in 1899. It was a pair of letters written in French and sent across an ocean . . . "Yusuf Diya al-Din Pasha al-Khalidi wrote the first letter. As the mayor of Jerusalem, al-Khalidi had firsthand experience of the tensions among the local population that had been triggered by the arrival of the first European Jewish settlers in the 1880s" He was writing to Theodor Herzl, the Viennese journalist who founded the modern Zionist movement. Part of the letter reads "Dear Theodor Herzl, I flatter myself to think that I need not speak of my feelings towards your people. As far as the Israelites are concerned, I really do regard them as relatives of us Arabs; for us they are cousins; we really do have the same father, Abraham, from whom we are also descended. There are a lot of affinities between the two races; we have almost the same language. Politically, moreover, I am convinced that the Jews and the Arabs will do well to support each other if they are to resist the invaders of other races. It is these sentiments that put me at ease to speak frankly to you about the great question that is currently agitating your people.

"You are well aware that I am talking about Zionism. The idea in itself is only natural, beautiful and just. Who can dispute the rights of the Jews to Palestine? My God, historically, it is your country! And what a marvellous spectacle it would be if the Jews, so gifted, were once again reconstituted as an independent nation, respected, happy, able to render services to poor humanity in the moral domain as in the past!" And Herzl replies in much the same vein. Oh, that it should have been so!

Flescher's book continues with further chapters — one in particular contains exceedingly emotional and brave thoughts to a) an Israeli teenager, and b) a Palestinian teenager. These letters are too large to fully include here, but they are full of words of wisdom — they speak to each teenager not only of the brutal history of their lands, but of the beauty and the treasures of the land built by both ancestors. They speak to these young persons in a language that teenagers can accept and approve of — a mutual language from the heart; the heart that bleeds for all. He tells these young folk of his sadness that we have so far failed them, and for his hope that one day they may each live in peace. He urges them to seek a new way, a way of understanding. To the Israeli Noa he says "As a beautiful and hopeful child of Jerusalem, you don't deserve to be burdened with the wars of your forefathers. There is this unwritten rule that our goal in life should be to leave a world for our children that is better than the one received. I am sorry, Noa, but we have failed at that mission. You were born at a time when our state is far more dangerous and tenuous than when I was born."

To the Palestinian Hamed, he writes "I can hear you asking, why should I respect or care for the Israelis and their pain, when they are my occupiers? How can I be friends with a Jewish child who will one day grow to be a soldier, who will one day stop and harass me at a checkpoint, or demolish my home or push the button from an F-16 that destroys an entire neighbourhood or university in Gaza? To this question I would say that believing in peace with your Jewish friends doesn't make you a traitor; it makes you a human. The greatest danger for us all is the loss of humanity. The loss of the ability to see that there are two innocents in two places . . . Until you are liberated, may your people find protection and safety in Palestine. May Allah ease your pain and suffering and help those who are in need and fortify their hearts and calm them like He granted Yousef's heart peace in the well." Buy the book — it may well change your mind about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. •



Today, the October 7 2023 fields of red within Israel are now covered in the Israel national flower, the buttercup.

The Holy and the Broken
By Ittay Flescher
Harper Collins Australia 2025

Ukraine war: Trump is not trying to appease Putin – he has a vision of a new US-China-Russia order

Published: February 24, 2025. Re-published in Cat's Eye Watch with permission under Creative Commons
Stefan Wolff, Professor of International Security, University of Birmingham



Potential Press Ltd/Getty Stock Photo

Russian president Vladimir Putin shaking hands with US president, Donald Trump, as they meet on the sidelines of the G20 in Japan, June 2019.

There has been much and justified focus on the [implications of a likely deal](#) between US president Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and the overwhelmingly negative consequences this will have for Ukraine and Europe. But if Trump and Putin make a deal, there is much more at stake than Ukraine's future borders and Europe's relationship with the US.

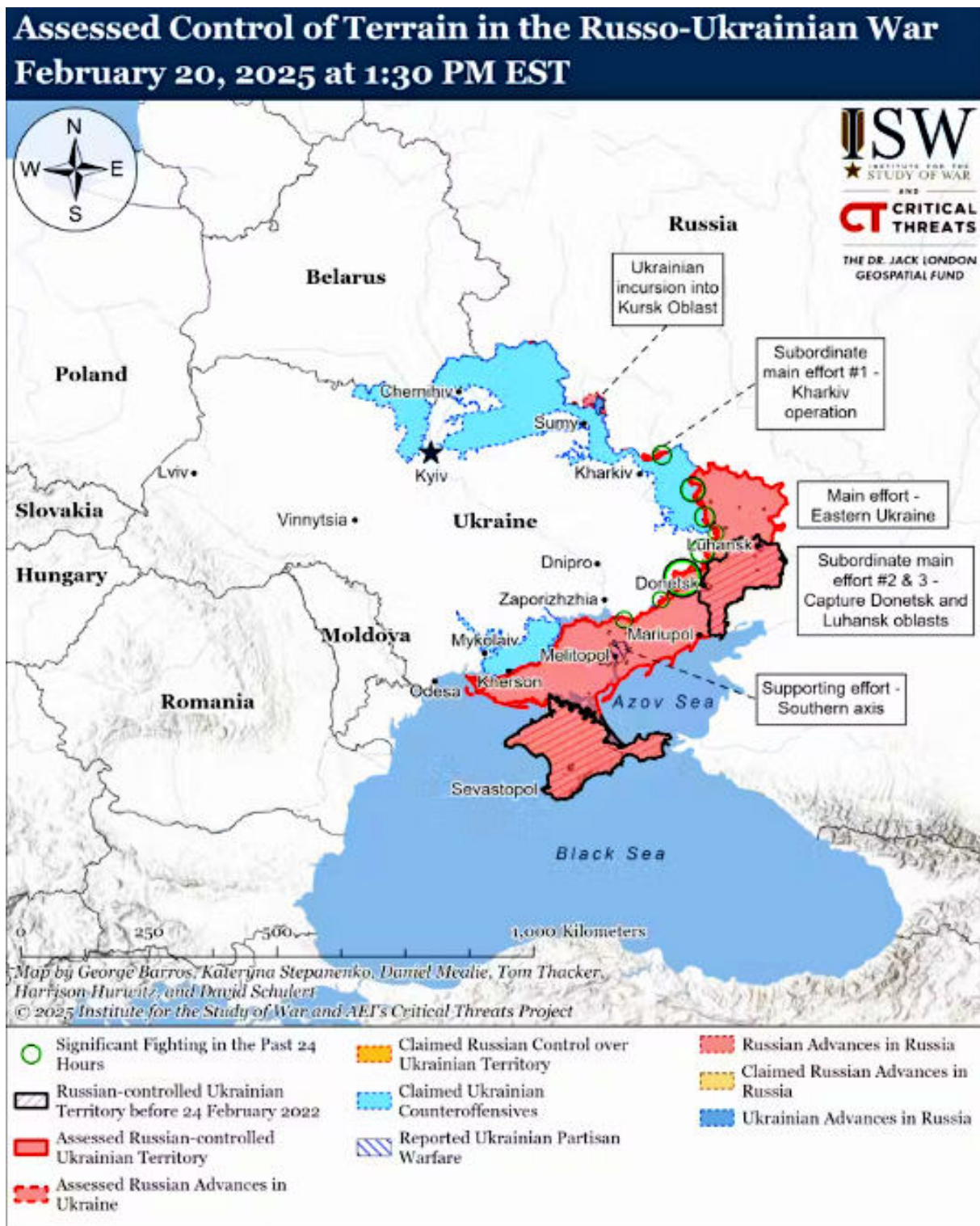
As we are nearing the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine's future is more in doubt than it has ever been since February 2022. For once, analogies to Munich in 1938 are sadly appropriate. This is not because of a mistaken belief that Putin can be appeased, but rather because great powers, once again, make decisions on the fate of weaker states and [without them in the room](#).

Similar to the pressure that Czechoslovakia experienced from both Germany and its supposed allies France and Britain in 1938, Ukraine is now under pressure from Russia on the battlefield and the US both diplomatically and economically. Trump and his team are pushing hard for Ukraine to make territorial concessions to Russia and accept that some 20% of Ukrainian lands under Russia's illegal occupation are lost. In addition, Trump demands that Ukraine compensate the United States for past military support by handing over half of its mineral and rare earth resources.

The American refusal to provide tangible security guarantees not only for Ukraine but also for allied Nato troops if they were deployed to Ukraine as part of a ceasefire or peace agreement smacks of the Munich analogy. Not only did France and Britain at the time push Czechoslovakia to cede the ethnic German-majority Sudetenland to Nazi Germany. They also did nothing when Poland and Hungary also [seized parts of the country](#). And they failed to respond when Hitler – a mere six months after the Munich agreement – broke up what was left of Czechoslovakia by [creating a Slovak puppet state](#) and occupying the remaining Czech lands.

There is every indication that Putin is unlikely to stop in or with Ukraine. And it is worth remembering that the second world war started 11 months after Neville Chamberlain thought he had secured [“peace in our time”](#).

The Munich analogy may not carry that far, however. Trump is not trying to appease Putin because he thinks, as Chamberlain and Daladier did in 1938, that he has weaker cards than Putin. What seems to drive Trump is a more simplistic view of the world in which great powers carve out spheres of influence in which they do not interfere.



The state of the conflict in Ukraine, February 20 2025. Institute for the Study of War

The problem for Ukraine and Europe in such a world order is that Ukraine is certainly not considered by anyone in Trump's team as part of an American zone of influence, and Europe is at best a peripheral part of it.

Trump-eye lens on the world

For Trump, this isn't really about Ukraine or Europe but about re-ordering the international system in a way that fits his 19th-century view of the world in which the US lives in splendid isolation and virtually unchallenged in the western hemisphere. In this world view, Ukraine is the symbol of what was wrong with the old order. Echoing [the isolationism of Henry Cabot](#), Trump's view is that the US has involved itself into too many different foreign adventures where none of its vital interests were at stake.



Restored hope: Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy with US special envoy Keith Kellogg in Kyiv, February 20. EPA-EFE/Sergay Dolzhenko

Echoing Putin's talking points, the war against Ukraine no longer is an unjustified aggression but was, as Trump has now declared, Kyiv's fault. Ukraine has become the ultimate test that the liberal international order failed to pass.

The war against Ukraine clearly is a symbol of the failure of the liberal international order, but hardly its sole cause. In the hands of Trump and Putin it has become the tool to deal it a final blow. But while the US and Russia, in their current political configurations, may have found it easy to bury the existing order, they will find it much harder to create a new one.

The push-back from Ukraine and key European countries may seem inconsequential for now, but even without the US, the EU and Nato have strong institutional roots and deep pockets. For all the justified criticism of the mostly aspirational responses from Europe so far, the continent is built on politically and economically far stronger foundations than Russia and the overwhelming majority of its people have no desire to emulate the living conditions in Putin's want-to-be empire.

Nor will Trump and Putin be able to rule the world without China. A deal between them may be Trump's idea of driving a wedge between Moscow and Beijing, but this is unlikely to work given [Russia's dependence on China](#) and China's rivalry with the US.

If Trump makes a deal with Xi as well, for example over Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea, let alone over Taiwan, all he would achieve is further retrenchment of the US to the western hemisphere. This would leave Putin and Xi to pursue their own, existing deal of a [no-limits partnership](#) unimpeded by an American-led counter-weight.

From the perspective of what remains of the liberal international order and its proponents, a Putin-Xi deal, too, has an eerie parallel in history – the short-lived [Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939](#). Only this time, there is little to suggest that the Putin-Xi alliance will break down as quickly. •

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Misha Ketchell



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America: The Enemy Within

Why the Trump administration has similarities to pre-war Nazi Germany

When a president of a western power votes with dictatorships such as Russia, North Korea, Iran and Belarus plus a few more Moscow-aligned countries at the United Nations, you have to wonder what went wrong.

Numerous US politicians and government officials have been very careful about comparing Trump to Hitler, but the seeds were there long before the 2024 election. The similarities are quite shocking.

Hitler: Charismatic

Trump: Charismatic

Hitler: Make Germany great again

Trump: Make America great again

Hitler: Narcissistic - the world revolves around him

Trump: Narcissistic - the world revolves around him

Hitler: Doesn't admit to mistakes

Trump: Doesn't admit to mistakes

Hitler: A master showman drawing crowds to him

Trump: A master showman drawing crowds to him

Hitler: Gift of derailing people during conversation - putting them down, over talking them

Trump: Gift of derailing people during conversation - putting them down, over talking them

Hitler: Vulgar denunciation of people he disagrees with

Trump: Vulgar denunciation of people he disagrees with

Hitler: Admires thuggish behaviour which leads to outcomes which pleases him

Trump: Admires thuggish behaviour such as his virtual endorsement of The Proud Boys who invaded the Capitol building in 2021 which caused the death of five police officers.

Hitler: Spins untruths into seeming truths that people will believe are true

Trump: Spins untruths into seeming truths that people will believe are true

Hitler: Called people who opposed him enemies of the state. Hitler used the word vermin. Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Pol pot used similar language

Trump: Called people who opposed him enemies of America and vermin

Germany 1930's - Blackshirts on the streets arresting people without trial

America 2025 - Hooded men dressed in black arresting people off the streets without trial

Germany 1930's - Hitler's blackshirts invading government departments

America 2025 - Trump's cronies invading government departments

Germany 1930's - Hitler's intentions to take control of other countries

America 2025 - Trump's intentions to take control of other countries

Germany 1930's - Hitler closing down of magazines and news outlets which he disagrees with

America 2025 - Trump shutting down the government radio 'Voice of America,' and banning numerous journalists from the White House.

Of course, Trump is not Hitler, nor Stalin. But the similarities are enough to make your blood run cold. Trump once told an interviewer "If you don't use certain rhetoric, if you don't use certain words, and maybe they're not very nice words, nothing will happen." And while he held a majority of supporters in his hand upon coming to power for the second time, there are deep rumblings within his own party, the Republicans. Naturally enough, Trump's rhetoric is much the same as that espoused by many dictators of the past with the same or similar retort "You don't re-build a country without breaking eggs." Sadly, any leader taking that viewpoint is not only breaking eggs but is on a crusade to eliminate certain sections of the intelligentsia together with many of the compassionate members of society.

At a rally in New Hampshire, Trump told a crowd: "We pledge to you that we will root out the communists, Marxists, fascists, and the radical left thugs that live like vermin within the confines of our country," And true to form, Trump has broken many eggs along the way, gathering up the innocent together with the guilty. •



Living in the time of Deepfake

If you haven't yet been cloned in a deepfake video, just wait a while. Most current political figures have been deepfaked with their moving heads placed upon other bodies, so that the deception simply cannot be picked. Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine has, president Putin of Russia has, Taylor Swift has, and Donald Trump of America has, in a video of him dancing with Vladimir Putin. There are countless videos hitting the internet which show these people getting up to all kinds of mischief — Zelenskyy in particular, in which some nasty person has added his head to a pornographic body. In another deepfake video he is shown imploring all his soldiers to lay down their arms and surrender — obviously a Russian ploy to fool Ukraine's brigades in the field.

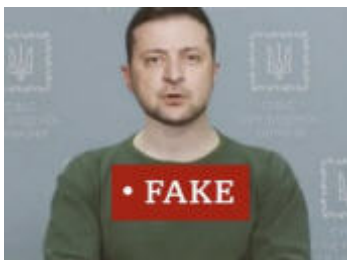
Hi tech applications make it easy for anyone with the required skills to deepfake any person, be it friends or enemies. These deepfake videos can be extremely damaging during election time, and what can be done is truly horrifying.

An article in *The Guardian* by Ian Sample 13 January 2020 reveals how easily the trickery is placed onto websites such as Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter, etc.

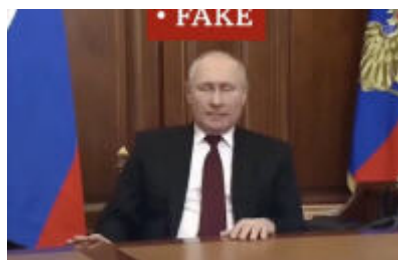
“What is a deepfake? Have you seen Barack Obama call Donald Trump a “complete dipshit”, or Mark Zuckerberg brag about having “total control of billions of people’s stolen data”, or witnessed Jon Snow’s moving apology for the dismal ending to *Game of Thrones*? Answer yes and you’ve seen a deepfake. The 21st century’s answer to Photoshopping, deepfakes use a form of artificial intelligence called deep learning to make images of fake events, hence the name deepfake. Want to put new words in a politician’s mouth, star in your favourite movie, or dance like a pro? Then it’s time to make a deepfake.

What are they for?

“Many are pornographic. The AI firm Deeptech found 15,000 deepfake videos online in September 2019, a near doubling over nine months. A staggering 96% were pornographic and 99% of those mapped faces from female celebrities on to porn stars. As new techniques allow unskilled people to make deepfakes with a handful of photos, fake videos are likely to spread beyond the celebrity world to fuel revenge porn. As Danielle Citron, a professor of law at Boston University, puts it: ‘Deepfake technology is being weaponised against women.’ Beyond the porn there’s plenty of spoof, satire and mischief.” Not surprisingly, it is extremely difficult to spot a deepfake.



Volodymyr Zelenskyy fake



President Putin fake



Hannah Grundy fake (nude airbrushed)

Australian schoolteacher, Hannah Grundy, has had hundreds of fake pornographic pictures of her put up on an internet website, together with many sent to her depicting apparent rape. She felt gutted — it drastically changed both her and her boyfriend’s lives.* The culprit was eventually caught. This was a friend who had taken liberties with photographs he had taken during a meeting with Hannah. The couple spent \$AUD20,000 over a short period of time for a forensic report and other security measures at their home. The culprit was sentenced to nine years in jail, but for Hannah and her boyfriend it is a life long sentence. "You post things on Facebook and Instagram because they're the happiest moments of your life. You get a dog, you buy a house, you get engaged and you post a photo. He had turned every single one of those moments for us into porn. And so when you see that photo... well, now I see myself getting raped." Because the internet is a massive place where images flourish, those photos of Hannah surface now and then. Indeed, a life sentence for two innocent people. •

From a video of actress
Rashmika Sandana entering
an elevator.
Courtesy Tech Authority
2024



Remember, this is taken from
a video — the deepfake body
moving and talking as the
normal body does

* Courtesy of the BBC

Teachers for Palestine: Challenging Anzac Day

At first glance this 40 page booklet would horrify many old soldiers. The publication has been made available to teachers of New South Wales and Victoria, with the sole aim of ‘correcting the Anzac myth.’ So what is this myth that apparently is summoned up each year on April 25th and perpetuated throughout the year in RSL clubs and organisations across the land ?

The authors—Teachers For Palestine— conclude that this myth is simply that Australia’s roll during WWI was tainted by Australians (and New Zealanders) massacring Palestinians and that uncritical reverence is given by the public on Anzac Day.

A quick search on the internet shows that “The Anzac myth is a powerful, though somewhat debated, narrative in Australian national identity, primarily centered around the exploits of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during the First World War, particularly at Gallipoli. It emphasizes the Anzac spirit, which is understood to include qualities like courage, endurance, ingenuity, and mateship.”

So, can this really be a myth when it is obvious that all these attributes did occur, not only during WWI, but also in WWII—particularly in Papua New Guinea, and South East Asia. There is evidence that the Anzac spirit *was* melded into a young country during 1914-1918, for who can deny the camaraderie, the heroism, the self-sacrifice that occurred? These attributes are not part of any myth. If a myth exists at all it will be but a part and not the whole; it will be that certain writers and publishers glossed over or actually denied, that our troops at certain times committed atrocities, much the same as the British did in Malaya in 1948 when a section of the Scots Guard murdered 24 males at the village of Batang Kali, or the Americans in Vietnam, killing the residents of the village of My Lai in 1968.

The authors of *Challenging Anzac Day* are quick to inform the reader of one particular atrocity in Palestine during 1918, at the village commonly known as Surafend. It is a known fact that this murdering of male villagers of Surafend by ANZAC troops did occur, but the authors are selective in their information, which immediately alerts one into suspicion of what lies within the further pages of this 40-page booklet. They leave out a very important point in the occurrence.

Challenging Anzac Day page 8: “What was the Sarafand Al-’Amar massacre? Still waiting for demobilization, the three brigades of the ANZAC Mounted Division remained in Palestine, close to the Mediterranean, when on the 10th of December 1918, after a bungled robbery, a New Zealand soldier was shot and subsequently died. Convinced that Palestinian people from the nearby town of Sarafand Al-’Amar (which they knew as Surafend) were responsible for the murder, a group of vigilante ANZACs surrounded the town and demanded that those responsible be brought to them. When town leaders denied any knowledge of the events the ANZACs cordoned the town refusing to let anyone leave.”

Although the authors acknowledge on page 13 their source, which is from the Australian war correspondent Henry Gullet, they doctor it to fit their argument. The factual rendition is “One night a New Zealander of the machine-gun squadron was disturbed by an Arab pulling at a bag which served him as a pillow. Springing up in his shirt, he chased the native through the camp and out on to the sand-hills, shouting to the picquets on the horselines as he ran. As he overtook the native, the man turned, shot him with a revolver through the body, and escaped. The New Zealander died as the picquets reached him. The camp was immediately aroused, and the New Zealanders, working with ominous deliberation, followed the footsteps of the Arab over the loose sand to Surafend.” There is no mention of any Australians being involved — in fact, the OIC of the 6th Light Horse regiment, Lt Col. Fuller, wrote on the spot in his own hand on his War Diary Army Form C. 2118 of December 10 1918 “2000 [hours] Disturbance in the village of SURAFEND at 2000, about 1/4 mile North of Camp. At 2215 the Regiment was ordered to “Stand To”. 1 Officer & 12 O/Ranks patrolled between Camp and village to prevent any 2nd Bgde men from joining in the disturbance.” This would indicate that all Australian regiments under the 2nd Brigade were prevented from joining in the disturbance. No doubt others will argue that Australians were involved. A member of the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, Edward Harold O’Brien, stated in a recording when he was 89 years of age, that some of the Australians were involved.

Another fact not mentioned is that the chase was in the sand hills, so quite easy for the Kiwis to follow the footprints back to the village. No mention of that in *Challenging Anzac Day*.

The booklet continues: Para 3 “Early in the evening around 200 soldiers entered Sarafand Al-’Amar, initially expelling some of the towns women and children, Armed with heavy clubs and bayonets so as not to accidentally shoot one another in the dark, the soldiers attacked the remaining townspeople. According to some accounts as many as 137 people were bludgeoned and stabbed to death.” The authors give as their reference Mulhal, A.S. In: Daley, P. Beersheba: Travels through a Forgotten Australian Victory. Centenary ed. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017. I am



HISTORY SOURCE BOOK: ANZACS AND SARAFAND AL-'AMAR صرفند العمار



concerned with the authors' word 'some,' which gives indication that there were still women and children within the village at the time of the attack. As far as I know, no other source gives that conclusion. Gulet states categorically that women and children were told to leave.

"One eye witness recalls 'it was a most gruesome sight the manner in which their heads were bashed and battered.'" Source given is Daley, as above.

"ANZAC soldiers then proceeded to raze Sarafand Al- 'Amar to the ground; the flames from the burning town 'lit up the countryside' and those nearby could 'hear the shouts of the troops and the cries of their victims'. The soldiers then proceeded to destroy an outlying camp and murder its inhabitants." The source here is Henry Gulet Volume VII of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Gulet did not mention any murdering of inhabitants: page 789: "The Anzacs, having finished with Surafend, raided and burned the neighbouring nomad camp, and then went quietly back to their lines." Again, this is selective editing by the authors of *Challenging Anzac Day*. The authors' version of confronting the villages is somewhat blurred. Re. Surafend, there is no mention in *Challenging Anzac Day* that the Anzacs asked for the one murderer to be handed over, to which the village elders refused. One can only wonder that if they had handed over the murderer and then given that the soldiers' superiors back at camp weren't particularly interested in arresting anyone from the village, the sacking of Surafend probably would not have occurred. However, the authors certainly have issue with the fact that much of the reporting of Surafend, and possibly other atrocities, was obscured and ignored by the powers that be. The embers of war run deep in the psyche of humans. War is horrific, bloody, unforgiving. •



Facebook page —
NSW Teachers for
Palestine

From Russia with ~~Love~~

Donald Trump said to the president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, "You should've ended it in three years. You should have never started it. You could have made a deal." How the bloated worm turns facts into fiction! Zelenskyy didn't start the war — it was Russia that invaded Ukraine and Trump knows that, but for populism's sake he prefers to blame someone else on a war that he said he could end in 24 hours of becoming president of the United States.

It seems that Trump takes his cue from president Putin, whom he has described in past times as a good friend. This puts Trump in the category of an autocrat talking to a friendly autocrat, but it fools no one. Putin is pulling the strings here. The ex-KGB agent knows all the tricks and turns, using his vast experience in espionage to handle Trump like a puppet.

In Russia's sight Trump is but a fool lumbering from one error to the next, one ideological falsification to the next. It is a game to Putin, even if it is at times a grim one. Putin recently sent Trump a picture by one of Russia's leading artists, Nikas Safronov, which shows Trump just after the assassination attempt where Trump was nicked in the ear by a bullet. The painting shows Trump with raised arm and clenched fist and a smear of blood across his face, with the Statue of Liberty in the background. It was designed to flatter Trump and puff up his ego; Trump was so impressed by the painting that he removed one of ex-president Obama's from the White House and replaced it with Putin's gift. That it was designed to curry favour with the United States president, there is no doubt.

Putin has made it very clear to Russia's media barons that Trump must be shown in a good light, while Putin's spys steadily infiltrate American media and election processes. Putin and Trump do have similarities; both are distrustful of democratic institutions. Both are terribly vain. Both are exceptionally good at turning fiction into seemingly fact, masters at distortion so that what comes out of their mouths is noted by adoring fans as being truth. Both take their revenge by firing administrators who have opposed or annoyed them — though in Russia (and China) the person generally disappears. •



It's not your responsibility

The is not one of those 'happiness' books — far from it! Mel Robbins reveals how she made numerous mistakes in life, how she was controlled by other people, or rather, how she *thought* she was being controlled, and how she overcame.

Everyone likes some praise for what they are doing, whether it be cooking delicious meals, working hard so that others don't have to, showing off the fruits of one's gardening efforts, helping with charity, driving those who cannot drive, and so on. A word of praise makes one's day.

But when the praises do not come, when people disagree with your choice of husband or wife, or your fiancée or work partner, and they DO let you know it, how do you face up to this?

You see, it's not your responsibility to try and change people who disagree with you. As Mel Robbins discovered, looking for approval from others, or wanting to change others, is holding you back. It's not your responsibility for what people say or do. Robbins has some specific tasks that you can carry out to help prevent this wasted effort in your life — the greatest of which is her 'Let Them' theory. And what this means is letting people be as they are; let them think what they like, agree or disagree with them as you please, but still love them and care for them. It's not your responsibility.

Let them do as they must, simply let them. Let them think what they must, just let them. Let them disagree with you, simply let them — as soon as you begin to 'Let Them' you are freeing up yourself, making your own life much easier. It's not your responsibility.

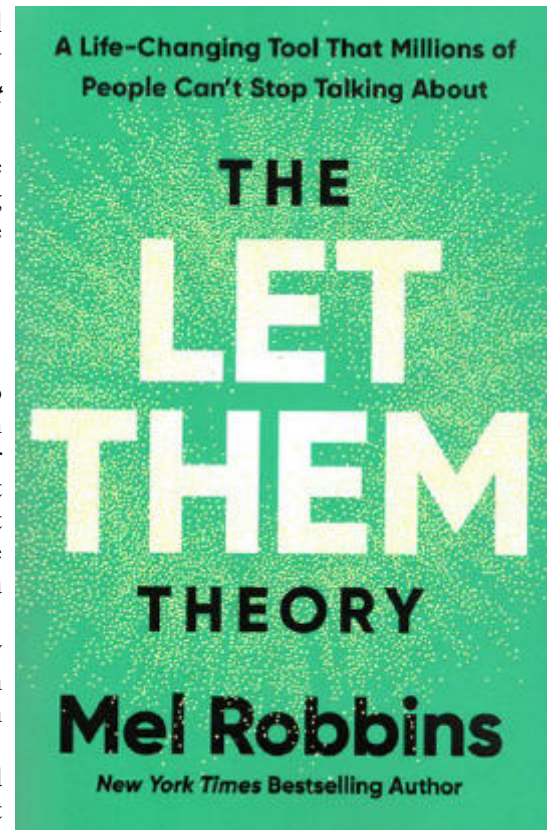
Sounds easy, eh? No, it is not. Robbins had been through hell and back before she discovered her 'Let Them Theory' and put it into practice. It changed her life. *The Let Them Theory* p10: "I didn't achieve success or financial freedom because of some secret. I did it because I was willing to do what most people won't: I woke up every day, and regardless of how I felt, I kept slowly chipping away at my goals for over a decade, a painstakingly slow process."

She and her husband were in massive debt—\$800,000; she was unemployed and her husband's restaurant business was crumbling—the alarm would go off every morning and she would just lie there "paralysed by my thoughts." What she discovered is so simple. She cottoned onto what she calls the five second rule, which at first she thought was quite ridiculous—but it worked! When she awoke each morning she would quickly count 5-4-3-2-1 and she was out of bed. *The Let Them Theory* p2: "I simply moved before my brain had a chance to talk me out of it."

But it was *The Let Them Theory* that had the greatest effect upon her life. Once things began to move in a more positive direction, Robbins was invited to speak on the TedX show. *The Let Them Theory* p7: "Once I started getting paid, I put every dollar toward chipping away at our debt. The first year I gave 17 paid speeches. The next year, it was 47, and I was able to quit my day job . . . By the third year it was 99 speeches plus a 24-city tour with JPMorganChase. I had become the most booked female speaker in the world . . . I found myself on the road 150 days a year, standing on stages teaching the 5 second rule and the science of motivation while my husband stayed home and took care of our three kids . . . When people asked if I had a ph. D. or if I was a therapist, I would say 'No, I learned everything the hard way—by screwing up my own life and then having to fix it.'"

It's not your responsibility—what other people think. Robbins successfully put her *Let Them Theory* to work, making it practicable. Let them think what they like, let them disagree, let them live their life the way they want because if you don't, you are trapped. You are at the mercy of other people's minds. But that's not all. Let them, but at the same time Let Yourself Be Free so that you are in control and not those who you thought were. Love them, but leave them to their own thoughts/disagreements/anxious deliberations and concentrate on being free from control, whether imagined or not. **Further chapters in Robbins' book are: Managing Stress. Fearing Other People's opinions. Dealing with Someone Else's Emotional Reactions. Overcoming Chronic Comparison. Mastering Adult Friendship. On Motivating Other People To Change/ People Only Change When they Feel Like it. Helping Someone Who Is Struggling. Choosing the Love You Deserve.**

The Let Them Theory is 325 pages of serious help to anyone willing to put the hard work in. It also has an extensive 14 page bibliography of psychology, neuroscience and human behaviour. *The Let Them Theory* is not a happiness book, but the story of a common struggle toward freedom. It is a beginning.



***The Let Them Theory* by Mel Robbins**

Hay House paperback \$AUD 26.99. Our copy: The Avenue Bookstore, Elsternwick



The Green Bottle

By the Editor

The four boys in the family were astounded when the eldest, Franklin at sixteen, took the stopper out of the green bottle they had found on the remote beach. A puff of grey smoke almost blinded them and they gasped to catch their breath. The smoke cleared to reveal a genie in a dark velvet suit with top hat and a bejewelled black cane.

"Hmm," said the genie. "I was just about to go out to the genie opera when you called. What is it you want? Hurry up now or I'll be late."

The boys were staggered. They could not find their voice until the youngest, George aged seven, spoke up. "Are you a real genie, a genie who can make wishes come true?"

The genie pointed his cane at the young boy. "I am anything you wish me to be . . . anything!"

Overcoming his fear of the apparition, the third eldest, Jack aged ten, said "Anything aye? Well, I'd have to think about that. Perhaps you could make us all disappear, but that wouldn't be nice. Or we could have the biggest ice-cream cones that ever existed, or a wheel-barrow full of jelly beans, or . . ."

Percy, the second eldest at thirteen, jabbed Jack in the ribs. "Don't be so silly. We can have much bigger and better things than that, can't we Genie? We can all be rich; we won't have to go to school anymore. We can travel anywhere in the world for as long as we want."

"Your wish is my command. But I must warn you that wishes can never be taken back. You will have your wish for the rest of your life."

"I want a house full of diamonds and other precious jewels," said Percy.

"Granted," said the genie, striking his cane onto the green bottle. There was an orange flash and a small bang. "The house you want is now in the same street as your parents." Percy clapped his hands in glee.

Franklin stepped forward. "I want to be surrounded by the most beautiful females in the world, forever."

The genie struck the green bottle again: "Your wish is granted. Wherever you go, females will follow."

Jack was scratching his head, trying to think up something more than ice-cream and lollies. Eventually he spoke: "I want a classic car from the 1930's."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Yes, very sure."

"Granted. The car will be in your home street waiting for you."

"And you, George?" said the genie, "What is it you want?"

George ran his tongue over his lips. "Well, the teachers say they have trouble reading my writing, so could I have a beautiful pen that will make my letters perfectly rounded and which will help me to write effortlessly? Oh, and . . . could you please make the pen write from my thoughts when my hand is tired?"

"Of course! Is that all you want, little George?"

George looked at his brothers who were smiling and jiggling about. "Yes, that's all. I am small, so I don't want big things that might be too heavy for me to control, and a nice pen that writes well will please my teachers. Mum and dad will also be pleased not to get those bad letters from school anymore."

"A pen such as you describe will be waiting for you on your bedroom desk when you go home." The genie then paused, taking in the faces of the four boys once more. "There is one small favour I may grant all of you . . . I will return in seven days just to see how you fared with your wishes. I cannot take them back or change them, is that clear?"

The boys nodded in unison. There was a strange screech and the genie slipped back into the bottle.

When the seven days were past, the boys came back to the beach and retrieved the green bottle from where they had buried it. Franklin gingerly handled it and with some difficulty pulled out the stopper. There was a whooshing noise, a puff of smoke, and the genie appeared.

"Ah, my little friends, welcome back. I cannot stay long and remember, I cannot undo what has been done. So, you are happy with your choices?"

They began to speak as one, their voices becoming a babble of confusion. "Please, please," said the genie, "one at a time. You first, Franklin."

Franklin's face was red with annoyance. "You didn't tell me that the females were all brightly coloured spiders! I cannot go home to my room, there are thousands of them there."

The genie smiled. "You didn't specify. And you, Percy, what about you?"

Percy seemed close to tears. "The house was there above an old mine shaft and I watched it disappear into the earth, into a bottomless pit."

The genie smiled, "You didn't specify. And you, Jack, how is your car?"

Jack shook his fist at the genie. "You didn't say it would be a rusted out old hulk of a car, did you? It's worth nothing!"

The genie smiled, "You didn't specify. And you, little George, how was your pen?"

George stepped forward and showed the genie his pen. "It is beautiful, see all that mother of pearl, and the nib always has ink on it, so I don't need an ink well. And, it writes so magnificently by itself when I am tired. It is truly a magical pen. You know what? I wrote a short story with it and my teacher said it was the best composition she had read in years. My school marks have gone up."

The genie smiled. "Well, you *did* specify." The genie cast his eyes on the group. "According to your thoughts, so it shall ever be. What you have wished for can never be changed." And he vanished. •



THE ANIMAL REHOMING SERVICE

For further information, please log onto <http://www.tars.org.au/>
The Animal Rehoming Service Inc. is a registered charity.
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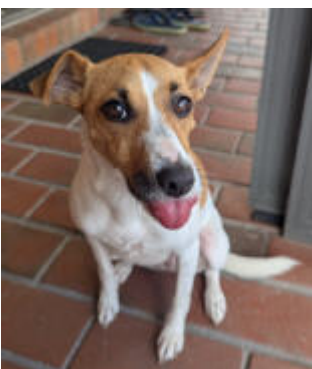


Gary is a 4 year old, desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 27kg male Kelpie x who's looking for a loving home. He's an active and smart boy with a very loving and loyal nature. He would suit an active family happy to exercise him at least once daily (he loves running, playing and spending time outdoors. He also has great recall which is a bonus).

An experienced all adult home or one with dog savvy teenagers would suit. He's not very trusting of younger children and also protective of his food. (He's fed separately outdoors to avoid any issues and needs to be left alone to eat).

Gary gets along well with other dogs, though his play style can be a bit rough at times (with a bit of a growl here and there). A home with another friendly, active dog would be ideal. He's not been tested with cats.

A large outer suburban block, semi-rural or rural setting, with plenty of space for him to run and explore, would suit him perfectly. Gary's recently had his teeth cleaned and had a benign fatty lump removed from his leg. He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Gary's adoption fee is \$450 Microchip Number: 956000013012495. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Malvern and Daylesford based, but we go to you).



Ava is a 3 year old, desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 7kg female Jack Russell Terrier who's looking for a loving home. She's a very affectionate girl once she trusts you but is initially quite nervy and occasionally snappy. Once relaxed though, she'll thrive as a treasured member of the family.

An all-adult home or one with dog savvy, older teenagers would be ideal.

She's also a playful and active little girl who would suit an active family, happy to exercise her daily.

Ava's fine with bigger dogs but tends to dominate dogs that are her size or smaller. A home with no other pets would suit, at least initially.

She enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Ava's adoption fee is \$550. Microchip Number: 956000014708323. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131. (Rowville based, but we go to you).

Re advertised: I'm still looking for a loving home!

Tux is a 2 year old, desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 25kg male short hair Border Collie who's looking for a loving home.

He's a loving and playful boy who would thrive as a much loved member of the family. He'd suit an experienced and active, all-adult family or one with active, dog-savvy older teenagers (he can be nippy towards younger children unfortunately).

Going on one to two walks a day would be ideal for Tux, plus the occasional game of fetch. Fetch is his favourite thing in the world, along with snuggling up to his favourite people. Tux has had basic training but given his



intelligence, further training shouldn't be a problem. He's great with other dogs, going on regular runs with some of the dogs he knows from the local park.

He's quite a needy dog though, so he'd suit being the sole pet of the home, at least initially. He's previously lived with cats.

Tux must have some Lab in him somewhere as he's quite food obsessed. He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Regular brushing would also be required. Tux's adoption fee is \$450. Microchip Number: 956000016557252.

Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Doreen based, but we go to you).

Tilly is a 5 year old, desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 5.6kg female Red Miniature Dachshund who's looking for a loving home.

She's a very loving and sweet natured girl, albeit on her own terms. She's currently medicated for anxiety with Fluoxetine and Clonidine. We're therefore looking for a calm and experienced all-adult household or one with dog savvy, gentle teenagers who'll help her feel safe and loved.

After an incident where she nipped a dog out of fear, Tilly now avoids contact with other dogs unless she's been introduced to them slowly. She would either suit being the sole pet of the home or she might enjoy the company of a small, calm and friendly desexed male dog, after being introduced slowly. (Tilly's not spent any time with cats.)

She enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Tilly happily uses a dog door and also loves snuggling up in her crate when she's home alone. A single storey home without staircases to tackle would be ideal.

Tilly's adoption fee is \$750 Microchip Number: 991003000591844. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Boronia based, but we go to you).





Once upon a time, children fought for control of the remote to the sole family television. Now the choice of screen-based content available to kids seems endless. There are computers, tablets, phones and gaming consoles offering streaming services, online content and apps.

Children also use devices at school, with digital literacy part of the Australian curriculum from the start of school. The speed and scale of this change has left parents, researchers and policymakers scrambling to catch up. And it has inevitably led to concerns about screen use, as well as guidelines about limiting their use.

Our new study looks at the links between digital technology use and young children's wellbeing, specifically for those aged four to six. Our comprehensive analysis shows children who spend longer periods using digital technologies are more likely to have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, we can't say at what age or level of screen use these negative effects are likely to become evident.

But for parents trying to navigate a world where technology is all around us, our study also shows there are things they can do to help their kids use screens in healthier ways.

Read more: <https://theconversation.com/why-parents-need-to-be-like-big-ted-and-talk-aloud-while-they-use-screens-with-their-kids-243357>

Our study

We carried out a systematic review of the research literature on children's use of digital devices since 2011 (after the Apple iPad was launched). This means we examined all the available peer-reviewed research on digital devices and their impact on wellbeing for children.

We also focused on ages four to six age as it is a time when children are developing rapidly and beginning school. Other studies have focused on particular types of device. But we included all kinds of digital devices in our search – from televisions to phones, tablets and gaming consoles – to make sure we could provide comprehensive analysis of what kids are using.

The studies came from 20 countries, including Australia, China, the United States, Turkey, Germany and Canada. They were almost exclusively based on parents' reports of their children and include more than 83,000 parents.



A young girl watches a program on the TV featuring the alphabet.

Our research also showed the the type of content children consume is important – not just the time it takes. Morrowind/Shutterstock



4 Areas of child wellbeing

From this, we analysed the relationship between children's technology use and the following four areas:

- 1 psychosocial wellbeing:** an overall measure that captures children's happiness, as well as social and emotional adjustment.
- 2 social functioning:** children's social skills, including how well they get along with their peers.
- 3 the parent-child relationship:** the level of closeness or conflict between parents and their children.
- 4 behavioural functioning:** the absence of behavioural difficulties such as tech-related tantrums, hyperactivity, depression or anxiety.

We did this with a meta-analysis – a statistical method that uses data from multiple studies to draw conclusions.

Read more: <https://theconversation.com/3-ways-to-help-your-child-transition-off-screens-and-avoid-the-dreaded-tech-tantrums-220138>

What we found

Our analysis found more digital technology use in young children was associated with poorer wellbeing outcomes across the four areas.

It is important to note correlation doesn't equal causation. The scope of the research means at this point, it is not possible to identify the exact reasons behind the negative relationships.

But we do know the more time children spent watching TV, playing on iPads or apps, the more likely they were to have problems with behaviour, social skills, their relationship with their parents, and their emotional wellbeing.

But tech use is more than just time

Our research also brought together emerging evidence which shows the relationship between digital tech use and child wellbeing is complex.

This means the type of content children consume, and the context in which they consume it, can also have a bearing on their wellbeing. The research shows there are several ways parents can guide their children to potentially mitigate the negative links with social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing.

With this in mind, how can you encourage healthier screen use?



Our research showed if parents watch with their kids, it can open up opportunities for conversation and interaction. Ketut Subiyanto/Pexels,

A woman and two young children watch TV on the couch.

Our research showed if parents watch with their kids, it can open up opportunities for conversation and interaction.

3 tips for kids and screens

1. Keep an eye on the clock

The research cannot provide a specific "time limit" for screen use. But you can still be mindful of how much time your child spends on devices both at home and at school – moderation is key. Try and mix screen time with other activities, such as time outside or time with friends and family, books or imaginary play.

2. Seek out quality

Research shows encouraging high-quality educational content during screen use may curb negative links between tech use and wellbeing.



Consider swapping fast-paced cartoons and time spent on lots of short clips with educational viewing, for example ABC kids programs that promote learning.

Introduce your child to age-appropriate educational and interactive games that challenge them and encourage them to be creative.

3. Use tech together

Tech time isn't just for kids – parents can also join in.

Solo tech use may reduce opportunities for positive social interactions. But watching or playing with friends or family opens up opportunities for conversation, working together and learning. This could include watching a movie together and talking about the characters, working on an online puzzle together or learning new coding skills together. •

Support quality media.

Around the world, democracy faces growing threats - declining trust, rising populism, and a flood of misinformation fueling division. But your support can make a difference. By backing evidence-based journalism, you are empowering informed, constructive public debate when it's needed most. Become a supporter

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The Aussie Butcher's Dilemma

With apologies to Punch

Butcher: "There y'go ma'am. The best sirlion steak. Forty bucks to you, cheap as."

Lady: "I can't afford that! Why is it so expensive these days?"

Butcher: "Ah well, you'd better ask that bloke in the White House, Trump or Frump is 'is name they say. It's all 'is tariffs ma'am wots doin' this. 'E doesn't seem to like us anymore."



Pet Medical Crisis

A not for profit fund to save pets whose owners cannot afford their emergency care.

www.petmedicalcrisis.com.au

Email: petmedicalcrisis@gmail.com

PMC is now on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PetMedicalCrisis/>

Also, a walking harness — 'Dog-A-Long' — is available to assist your dog to become more mobile — supports dogs with hind leg problems associated with ageing, arthritis, hip & spinal problems. For suitability check with your Vet.



Educational Disadvantage Can Begin as Early as Age Two



Research shows that 1 in 4 Australian children as young as two, who lack access to early learning are already falling behind before they even start school. That's the confronting reality highlighted in a recent ABC News article.

Which is why we are doing our best to change that.

Our Access to Early Learning (AEL) program is designed to ensure no child misses out on vital early education. Operating in the City of Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula Shire, OzChild facilitators work closely with families to build strong, supportive connections between the home, kindergarten and local services—ensuring every child is fully supported.

Each year, AEL supports around 16 families and children by:

Securing access to 15 hours per week of free or low-cost, high-quality kindergarten

Identifying and addressing barriers that prevent attendance or participation

Strengthening parents' ability to support their child's learning

Enhancing the home learning environment through in-home interventions

Providing mentoring and professional development to local educators

Programs like AEL are crucial in bridging the gap, offering children from disadvantaged backgrounds a better start in life. Because early learning isn't just about school readiness—it's about giving every child the chance to thrive, regardless of the challenges their family may face.

We believe access to quality early education shouldn't be a privilege. It's a right. And through AEL, we're making that right a reality—one family at a time.

Unfortunately, this program is only available in the City of Frankston and within the Mornington Peninsula Shire at the moment.

- Learn more about Access to Early Learning: <https://www.ozchild.org.au/service/access-to-early-learning/>
- Read the full story: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-10/child-care-deserts-cause-educational-disadvantage-for-children/105126094>

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Foster Care Enquiries: 1800 954 550



Mercury O’Proud Political Correspondent



Billionaire’s generally please themselves what they do with their money, but sometimes it is politics that rule where they put their long gotten gains. Take the Australian billionaire, Anthony Pratt, executive chairman of VisyAsia-Pacific, who donated \$15 million to Donald Trump’s election campaign. This is the man to whom Trump apparently disclosed American submarine security details. In 2023 Pratt was investigated by the CIA with the outcome so far not disclosed. And now that Trump has appointed his own person as director of the CIA, no doubt it never will be.

In earlier times Trump stated that Pratt was “a red-haired weirdo,” but since then Pratt has flattered his way into Trump’s closest community, together with the Australian born media baron Rupert Murdoch. Billionaire’s stick together because if one of them falls due to political process, then together they all fall.

So, what has Pratt been up to since Trump re-entered the White House? What favours can he bring to Trump now that he is one of Donald’s innermost friends? You may be surprised to learn that Pratt has announced a \$5 billion dollar investment in the United States, for purported ‘green energy’ activities. Pratt already owns 70 recycle and corrugated cardboard factories in America and is now a permanent resident, thanks to his friend Trump who has supplied him with the much vaunted Green card. Pratt also, would be eligible for Trump’s new Gold Card for anyone investing more than \$5 million. In October 2023 Fortune Media stated that “Pratt shelled out at least \$200,000 for a membership to Mar-a-Lago [Trump’s residence], once spent \$1 million to attend a \$50,000-a-head event where Trump was present.” Oh how the mega rich celebrate life!

No need to comment on the recent Australian election. That’s all been covered in other pages. But one must keep an eagle-eye open for the crime-ridden state of Victoria. The premier, Jacinta Allen and her new treasurer Jaclyn Symes, have come up with an idea designed to appeal to swinging voters . . . give under 18-year-old school children free rides on public transport but don’t tell anyone how you are going to replace that lost revenue. Simple, hit the residents of Victoria with a land tax followed by an emergency services tax, and make sure that the land tax is higher than those in Queensland and New South Wales. Meanwhile, the police in this crime-ridden state are allotted nothing further to handle increasing crime waves. •

Why should the mega-rich decide how we vote? Is Gina Rinehart going dotty?

Australia’s richest woman, billionaire Gina Rinehart, wants the Liberals to go further right and be closer to Donald Trump’s political activities — the most scatter-brained president the US of A has ever seen. That is one of the reasons for their failure, darlings. Wrong Gina, totally wrong. The reason for their demise is that they had gone a little too far right for the Australian voters. And, their election push was so untidy and fragmented. Now, Gina is said to be withdrawing her donor money unless the LNP follows orders. Sorry Gina, this is not a dictatorship and the Coalition would be better off without your tainted money. Next time bring your psychiatrist with you.

Then there’s Simon Holmes a’Court, nothing to do with courting or owning a tennis court, of course, simply a bloke who inherited his money from his good old Dad. Lots of it to fling around. He was expelled by the previous Liberal party’s treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, so, like Donald trump, using revenge with a capital R, he then pumped his non-earned cash into Climate 200 to help boost the Teals in the last two elections. Well now, so that is how the doubtful candidate Monique Ryan got over the line in the seat of Kooyong — mind you, with not much this election. Very much down to the wire, just a handful, could have gone either way.

Really, budding politicians, please steer clear of these ignorarmuses who have nothing better to do than to make a hobby out of certain political movements either for good or ill. Must be very dull and boring in their homes during eventide, especially when the cat ignores them. Anyway, Simon, let’s face it — you really were a bit mean; you could have shelled out the odd million or two, but you ended up only raising \$120,000. Peanuts dear sir. Tich tich, your Dad would be soooooo mortified. •



The Rise of Islamophobia

It began with social media, mostly with posts put up on Elon Musk's Twitter/X, but also on Tik Tok and a single posting on LinkedIn — misinformation which led to the Southport riots in England.

Three girls had been killed by a knife attack, aged six, seven and nine. All told there were thirteen people stabbed by a 17-year-old male, eleven of them being children. The mood around Southport and other towns was vicious—someone was going to pay for this. Fuelled by Conservative (Tories) government's advertisements re. Stop the Boats and exacerbated by over three million views on Elon Musk's social media platform X, riots broke out all over England, but mainly centred in Southport, a quiet town north of Liverpool.

The word had spread that an illegal migrant — undoubtedly Muslim — was to blame for the killings. The mosque in Southport, which had been there for 30 years, was targeted — the wall surrounding had been kicked down by an angry mob while there were people inside who locked the doors and fled to upper rooms.

And while anti-Semitism is rife in numerous countries within the western world, Islamophobia is not far behind. Europe, in particular, has become a firestorm of anti-Islamic activities. Thankfully, Australia doesn't have the same concentration, but if you are wearing a hijab (head covering) in certain districts, you are likely to bear the brunt of unfavourable comments. A recent check by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency has shown that Austria followed by Germany, Finland, Denmark, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, had the highest level of Islamophobia attacks — reaching as high as 71% of the Muslim population in Austria, while Spain, Italy, and Greece followed closely by Sweden have the lowest. Strangely, this discrimination is not by skin colour, it is mainly because of ethnic or immigration background together with religious belief. The report found that Muslims were three times more likely to drop out of school with 31 percent of Muslim households surveyed struggling to make ends meet, compared to 19 percent of all European households.

In Australia, the Islamophobia Register in conjunction with Monash University, shows that during the years 2014-2021 there were more than 930 Islamophobia incidents and were classified into 3 categories: verbal, property damage, physical harassment. Most of the incidents were in New South Wales where a greater proportion of Muslim folk reside, closely followed by Victoria. The *5th Islamophobia in Australia Report* was released on 13th March 2025, which coincided with the UN declared International Day for Combating Islamophobia as well as the 6th anniversary of the Christchurch Terror Attack.

"For both female and male Muslims, the street, driving, and parking was the location of the most incidents, being the site of a quarter of all reports to the Register (25.2%). Road rage in Australia has also increased since 2021, making these volatile and potentially risky sites for drivers to exhibit hostility and even violence towards Muslims. While this was the most common location to receive Islamophobia for males and females, the experience was quantifiably more serious for Shops and shopping centres again featured prominently for male and female Muslims. It was the third most common site of Islamophobia for female Muslims, and the fourth for male Muslims. Similar to discussions about the street, parking, and driving and the workplace, while the proportions were similar (shops made up around 9% of incident sites for both female and male Muslims) the actual number of reported incidents against female Muslims at shopping centres was nearly three times the number reported by male Muslims at shopping centres."

Recommendations:

Train police, social workers, and legal professionals to recognise Islamophobic attacks as potentially gendered Violence

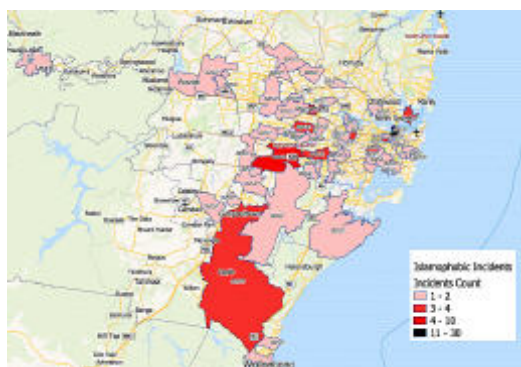
- State and Federal public awareness campaigns that challenge stereotypes about Muslim women and highlight
- Anti-gender based violence organisations to work with the Register to incorporate Islamophobia into their advocacy and support frameworks

- Ensure that Muslim women's voices are included in mainstream gender-based violence discussions

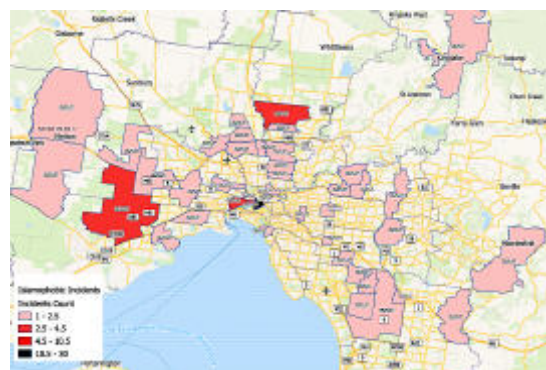
- State and Federal government commit to start regularly consulting Muslim women's organisations and leaders about their needs and suggestions
- Targeted funding and support for Muslims women's organisation, particularly those that focus on Islamophobia the gendered nature of Islamophobic violence



New
South
Wales



Victoria



The full report may be accessed online here: <https://islamophobia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Islamophobia-in-Australia-Report-5.pdf>



TERRIFYING ABUSE OF THE PLANET

You have made my paradise a wasteland. So says the Spirit of the Earth. You, human, have blasted numerous metallic and plastic objects into the atmosphere above the planet, so that now there are more than 130 million pieces of space junk floating in orbit. How could you do that to your precious atmosphere? Your use of plastics and your careless disposal of them has resulted in micro-plastics entering the food chain, not only entering fish and animal products, but causing havoc wherever plastics are burned and buried, particularly on farmland where these plastics release toxic substances and microplastics. They then enter the food chain.

A report by Damien Carrington in *The Guardian* 8 Dec 2021 reveals that adverse aspects of micro-plastics were seen on earth worms. Long term effects of these microplastics result in contamination of farming composts, which can never be eradicated. Eventually, microplastics clog the soil and lead to deformed roots which slow down the absorbent of nutrients to plants; in time the soil will become useless for growing and supplying the food chain. Microplastics have even been found near the summit of Mount Everest and in remote areas of the Swiss alps. Humans need to understand that their abuse of plastics contaminates to the far ends of the earth.

The effect of micro-plastics on suburban back yards is also dangerous. Imogen Napper, at the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom, has researched the contamination of micro-plastics upon the earth. She found that even in snow micro-plastics existed, and that even one cycle of a washing machine can release **700,000** microscopic plastic fibres into the planet.* Recent studies indicate that there are far more micro-plastics in suburban streets than in the ocean. The microplastics are then transmitted by foot or air into suburban homes. Sweden's research facility Kimo also found that many textiles in the home, when washed, release micro-plastics. "Research shows that using liquid detergent causes less friction in the wash, releasing fewer microfibers. However, while welcome, this kind of change alone is not sufficient. We need other measures too, including better designed clothes and for filters to be compulsory on all new washing machines."

Kimo: <https://www.kimointernational.org/news/kimo-report-on-microplastic-pollution-from-textiles/>

Already, microplastics in the atmosphere are affecting cloud formation. Nicola Jones of Yale University has a BSc in chemistry and oceanography, and a master's degree in journalism from the University of British Columbia (UBC). She

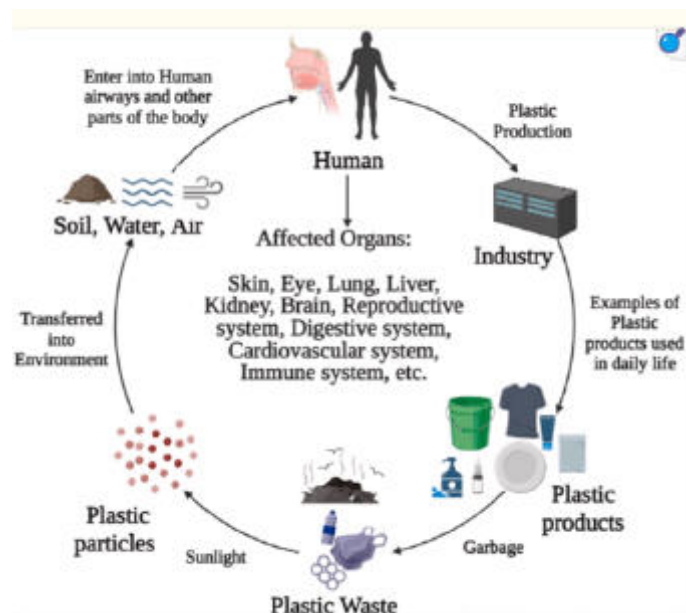
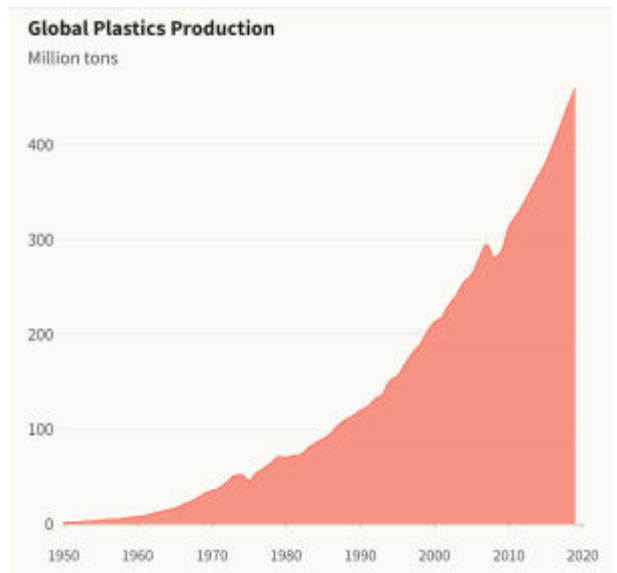


Diagram of microplastic contamination: Comprehending routes and hazards to human well-being.. Source: National Library of Medicine



Production of polymer resin and fibers. Source: Our World in Data

writes "Plastic has become an obvious pollutant over recent decades, choking turtles and seabirds, clogging up our landfills and waterways. But in just the past few years, **a less-obvious problem has emerged.** Researchers are starting to get concerned about how tiny bits of plastic in the air, lofted into the skies from seafoam bubbles or spinning tires on the highway, might potentially change our future climate . . . about how plastics can change clouds, potentially altering temperature and rainfall patterns . . . Plastic has been found in soils, water, crops, and on the ocean floor. And in recent years, several studies have suggested that micro-plastics (pieces less than 5 millimeters in length) and nanoplastics (smaller than approximately 1,000 nanometers) were being transported long distances through the air. In 2019, for example, researchers found microplastics in the Pyrenees that had arrived via rain or snowfall."

Cornell University's Natalie Mahowald states that **micro-plastics have been found in human lungs.** "While individual bits of plastic may stay in the air for only hours, days, or weeks, there's so much being kicked up so

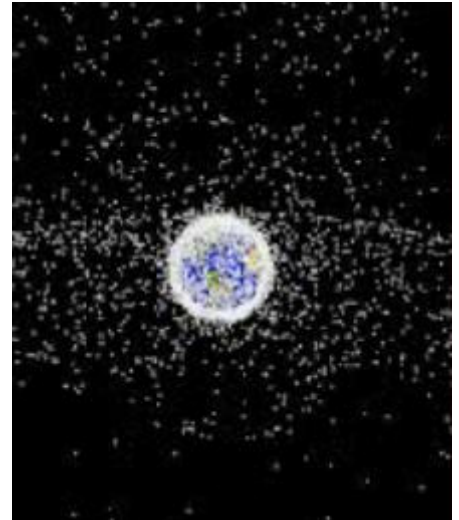


consistently that there's always some in the air: enough that plastic bits are now also found in human lungs. We're definitely breathing them right now."

Michael Todd, writing in *Pacific Standard* 20 September 2013 had a good name for plastics: "Know that the petrochemicals which provide the base stock for what we commonly consider plastic is made up of the carcasses of ancient micro-organisms." Carcasses, eh? How about that! Microplastics have even been detected in tap water. While there has not been a definitive study of the effect of tap water upon possible dementia in human beings, there is so far some evidence that it may occur in certain individuals. *The National Library of Medicine* concludes: Our analysis confirmed that microplastic is frequently present in freshwaters and drinking water. There is a high need to improve the analysis of very small microplastics, and to identify them in different water samples. Fragments, fibers, film, foam and pellets were the most frequently found microplastic shapes in surface water samples."

Microplastics are found in lakes and reservoirs, so to avoid ingesting microplastics in drinking water in some districts, it may be necessary to boil and/or filter tap water.

Christopher Roosen, writing in *Adventures in a Designed World*, mentions astrophysicist Donald Kessler, a scientist with NASA. In what has come to be known as the Kessler Syndrome of Space Debris, Kessler "Came to a startling conclusion about the ever increasing amount of material being left in orbit due to the increased frequency of rocket launches. After all, each rocket launch generates more objects in orbit including: discarded motors that don't fall back to earth, intentional payloads (e.g. satellites) and generalised debris that comes from the launch or breakup of objects already in orbit . . . In 1978, Kessler thought it would take about 40 years to reach the saturation where the so-named Kessler Syndrome became a problem. This takes us, ironically to about the 2020s. As yet, we haven't seen a triggering cascade, but estimates by NASA suggest there are more than 500,000 pieces of debris up to 10 centimetres long and more than 100 million (100,000,000) pieces of debris smaller than 1 cm. Each one of those flecks nearly equivalent, in kinetic energy at least, to a car rushing down the highway." So, if we keep on the way we are going with space exploration, the possibility of earth being uninhabitable is high. There is some hypocrisy here with Elon Musk building electric vehicles to reduce carbon and enable a lighter planet, when his rocket launches are intensively polluting the atmosphere. In a nutshell, space junk is not only that which can be seen by the naked eye, it is also microplastics.



Roosen re. space junk circling the Earth

Getting back to the microplastics that may enter the human body, Roosen continues: "Research has already shown that babies swallow extensive microplastics with their consumption of milk via plastic bottles. However, to imagine that these microplastics might exit the digestive system and enter the circulatory system proper is worrying . . . Just tinkering around the edges, like dealing with plastics via plastic bag bans, seems a little laughable when you consider each and every one of us might have a bloodstream full of plastic particles already. That isn't to say plastic bag bans aren't the right action, they absolutely are. But I'm not sure a plastic bag ban treats the plastics problem as hyperpervasive . . . To even begin to make an attempt to deal with problems at this scale, we're going to need solutions that can extend from the vast regions of space around our world down into our very smallest capillaries." Good luck with that! •

*The Guardian 21 Nov 2020.

The Council to Homeless Persons

Established in 1972, the Council to Homeless Persons is the peak Victorian body representing individuals and organisations with a stake or interest in homelessness. Our mission is to work towards ending homelessness through leadership in policy, advocacy and sector development.

<http://www.chp.org.au/>

See our Consumer Participation Resource Kit at:

http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/cpkit/index.shtml



The Colour Khaki

By the Editor

I wore the colour khaki once, though when I say once I mean for years, along with a medal or two. Funny that it seems only yesterday . . . the feel of the rough weave of the battle dress, the webbing, the gaiters, the blanco we generously applied in rookies and for ceremonial occasions. You never used that in battle. Yes, I was a wild army man shot through the right shoulder and the left leg, furious in my intention not to be the last casualty on the battlefield.

The khaki is a dirty colour — the master painters steered clear of it as best they could, but in reality they could not because of the wars, those never ending wars. A dirty colour, did I say? Yes, the colour of vomit, egg yolks gone mouldy, the colour of straw after it has been mashed about and shat on by broody hens. A dirty colour. But a proud colour, yes indeed. The colour of heroes. The colour of the ambo's who brought my mates, half blinded and bloodied of limb and face, back to the field ambulance. The khaki would protect you, but only in the summer when the fields were dry and the bracken was calling out for rain. You could hide then, smear your face and hands with mud that you made with the water from your flask, but not too much. In the winter you needed the colour white in the freezing snow-ridden fields of the north, and a camouflage colour for the other seasons. I never liked the camouflage, it reminded me of all those tanks careering around raising dust that half choked you to death. And the air force in later years have this blue camouflage pattern on work gear that simply makes one look silly. How is that supposed to protect you in the field? And if your plane ditched into the sea and you survived, how would you be seen from above? Just some kind of malleable blob within the swirling foam of the waters.

Now where was I? Ah yes, the khaki. It was the lack of Khaki that got Harry killed, I am certain of that . . . my old cobbler Harry. We'd been school pals together and ended up in the same regiment. I was lance corporal, but he'd made it to full corporal and you should have seen us at the local dances. Did I say the khaki was a dirty colour? Well, that's strange 'cos the girls liked it. They loved the sight of us as we entered, slipping our berets under the shoulder tab. Me and Henry, with the civvies blokes sitting it out while we danced with their gals. The power of the khaki. Oh yes, khaki had that power all right, don't you worry about that.

And when they lowered Henry's coffin into the ground they covered him with our nation's flag, but to my mind they should have draped his old khaki uniform on top, because it was the power of the khaki that had kept him alive all those years, until . . . well, until that sniper got him. And I sent that sniper to his own heaven or hell because of the way his helmet was glistening in the morning sun. You put the khaki netting over your helmet, but it seemed that Henry had lost his somewhere, somehow. The khaki would have saved him. As for the sniper, perhaps his army didn't issue them?

I wear my khaki every Anzac Day with pride, because I am convinced that the khaki saved my life. The wounds of long ago have healed and it's a great feeling to have those medals jingling about on my left breast, pinned snugly onto the khaki which has not faded from the days when foe met foe in the stinking trenches and on fields where the red poppies bloomed. So, when my time has come, wash me and dress me in my old khaki uniform and I will go to my maker, happily. •



the week that was



So, simply what most of us already thought, the Australian reserve bank governor has come out and said that Trump is bad news for the Australian economy. **We will feel it in our hip pockets.** Michelle Bullock says "We, like everyone else, were blown out of the water." So, the Coalition of Nationals and Liberals has split! Not the first time, and probably won't be the last. The State of Victoria's madness continues with a budget full of gimmicks to attempt buttering up of the voters for the 2026 election. Nothing much there for the police, just when they need a heavy injection of funds within a climate of rising crime. And the State debt has ballooned out to more than \$167 Billion, expected to grow to about \$194 Billion within three years. Perhaps premier Jacinta Allen should take a leaf out of Gough Whitlam's book and apply to a Pakistani loan shark for funds? Not! On a bright note, a Sydney man has put a free café/pantry outside his home for people to help themselves. Brilliant! •



Motoring Memoirs

**Morgan has re-designed and re-built its 3 wheeler of the 1950's
This 2011 model replicates the early days of adventurous motorsports**



Because of its low centre of gravity, it was quite scary to drive on the open road. The advertising media stated: "The Morgan 3 Wheeler harks back to a time when motoring was more involving, adventurous and carefree."

"This vehicle is fitted with a Harley-Davidson 1800cc Screaming Eagle V-Twin that produces an estimated 100 hp at the rear wheel. Power is transferred to the wheel through a Mazda five-speed gearbox. The interior of the Morgan was built to resemble the cockpit of an airplane. This bullet-shaped three-wheeler is reminiscent of the Morgan Super Sport Aeros built from 1927 to 1939." Details Autoweek

