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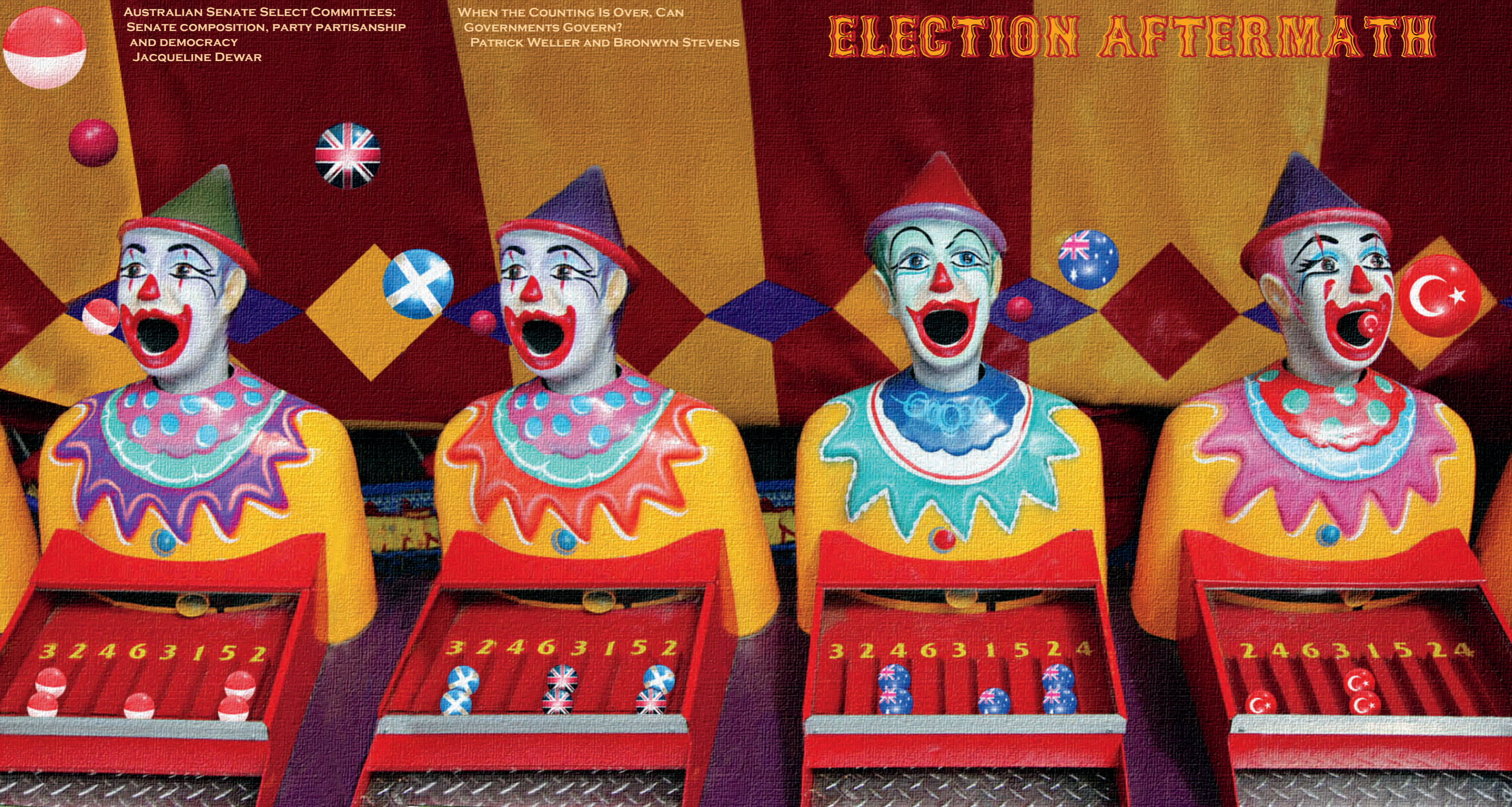
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GOVERNMENTS GOVERN?  
PATRICK WELLER AND BRONWYN STEVENS

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# SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES

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## ELECTION AFTERMATH



# SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES

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- abstract should be a maximum of 150 words
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## Election and Aftermath

BRONWYN STEVENS

The articles in this edition of *Social Alternatives* focus on elections – the lead-up to elections, election campaigns and the aftermath of elections as governments take up office and seek to implement their policies. The articles also examine different aspects of elections in different jurisdictions – elections conducted under different electoral systems that decide who can vote, how the votes are tallied and final electoral outcomes. They examine elections in jurisdictions with long-standing stable democracies and in countries where democracy has been overthrown and restored. In one case, the ballot is to decide not who will govern, but whether a new independent country should be formed. Some articles consider what happens after the election, including the impact of electoral change on parliamentary institutions and the importance of leadership style. Scrutiny is applied to the way elected governments go about the implementation of policy, whether they keep their promises and what ideological drivers affect their actions. The difficulties of translating the words uttered in election campaigns such as ‘balanced budgets’ and ‘renegotiation of European Union powers’ are analysed. Many common themes emerge in these articles despite the different jurisdictions considered and the diverse topics examined.

The first article ‘Campbell Newman and the Weaknesses of the Strong Leader’ by Todd Winther examines the comparative literature on leadership demonstrating the relevance of analysis from other democracies such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States to Queensland. In 2012, the Queensland ALP government suffered a resounding defeat retaining only seven parliamentary seats. The Newman LNP government took office with a huge majority. Yet less than three years later, in a major electoral surprise, it too was defeated. In analysing the reasons for this defeat, Winther allocates responsibility to the Premier Campbell Newman and the LNP’s reliance on his strong leadership. Newman had been put into the leadership of the party by the party machine following his successful tenure as Brisbane’s Lord Mayor believing that he was the strong leader the party needed to regain government. Strong leadership has been equated with successful leadership both in political practice and in theoretical literature. But as Winther explains, this analysis is too simplistic. Both the literature and political experience indicate that successful leadership requires more than strength. It requires the

ability to consult, to create consensus and persuade the voters. This, Newman spectacularly failed to do. He persisted with a confrontational style and unpopular policies long after it was clear they did not have electoral support. The result was the defeat of the government and the Premier losing his own seat.

‘The Voter ID Experiment: Reform or the Continuation of a Queensland Tradition’ by Tracey Arklay also looks at a Queensland issue set in a comparative perspective. She examines changes made to the electoral act by the Newman Government that required voters to bring identification to the polling booth. This occurred despite evidence from Canada and the United States that requiring voter ID impacts disproportionately on young voters, indigenous voters, elderly and remote voters. This legislation was particularly contentious in Queensland where there has been a history of distorting the electoral rules in ways that benefited the government of the day with dubious rationalisations. The justification for introducing voter ID requirements was to reduce fraudulent voting, but little evidence has been produced to indicate this is a serious problem in Australia. The voting groups expected to be most affected were more likely to be ALP or Green voters, which aroused suspicion of the government’s motives. The change was implemented despite vocal opposition and was used at two elections. As Arklay notes, evidence from the 2015 state election appears to substantiate the experience of other jurisdictions on its impact on voter turnout. The new Queensland Government has repealed voter ID requirements. However, the issue remains important because coalition members on the Commonwealth Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters have recommended its introduction for future Commonwealth elections.

Jacqueline Dewar examines a different electoral outcome – the effect changes of government and to the composition of the Senate have on Senate Select Committees. Legislative committees in many jurisdictions play an important role in scrutinising executive government, holding it to account and providing information otherwise unavailable to the media and voters. This is particularly true of Senate Committees, as Australian governments have rarely controlled the Senate since 1980. Senate Select Committees are particularly vulnerable to electoral change because they are established in each

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parliamentary term to deal with specific issues outside the brief of the Standing Committees. Select Committees have increasingly strayed from their intended investigative role, to be used as political weapons. In this article, Dr Dewar examines some particularly egregious examples of misuse of the Senate Select Committee system over the past decade and concludes that such overt politicisation undermines their scrutiny of government and their value to democracy.

In 'Neoliberalism, Auditing, Austerity and the Demise of Social Justice' Peter Khoury considers the effect a change of government can have on public policy. He argues that the Abbott Government was committed more strongly than previous governments to neo-liberal economic theories. He examines the terms of reference and the recommendations of the Abbott Government's National Committee of Audit. Dr Khoury concludes that its establishment and recommendations were used to provide justification for policies that were explicitly excluded by the Prime Minister before the election. Substantial cuts were made to government spending on health, education and welfare and more were proposed in the 2014 budget. These funding cuts fell most heavily on disadvantaged Australians while largely sparing the wealthy and the corporate sector. Khoury then examines the theoretical underpinnings of neoliberal economic policy and challenges its fundamental tenets, pointing to the adverse outcomes these policies have on the less advantaged. He concludes that the Abbott Government embodied a neoliberal vision and not one 'of a fairer society or a commitment to social justice'. There is now a new Prime Minister but whether this will mean any change to the government's economic policy only time will tell.

Neil McGarvey's article 'The 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum and Its Aftermath' examines the background to the referendum, the campaign and the vote. He analyses the results and considers the unanticipated ramifications from the referendum for Scottish and UK politics. The national parties lost so much support in Scotland at the 2015 general election that the Scottish National Party (SNP) now holds 56 of the 59 seats at Westminster. Labour went from 41 Scottish seats to one; the Liberal Democrats lost 10 seats. The Conservatives retained one seat as they have since 2001. Scottish voters are subject to policies made by a government that holds only one seat in Scotland. Commitment to Scotland was the dominant determinant of electoral success in 2015. Since the UK election, further tensions have arisen with the SNP claiming that the UK Government had failed to 'deliver the vow' of 'a modern form of home rule'. Exception was taken at the haste with which the government attempted to implement its English votes for English laws policy, particularly the attempt to do so administratively rather than through legislation. Dr McGarvey concludes that, although the referendum result looked relatively conclusive, Scotland's constitutional status in the UK remains an open question.

Sedat Mulayim has analysed the June 2015 Turkish election and concluded that the high voter turnout and willingness to support parties other than that of President Erdogan could indicate a Turkish democratic spring. As the article explains, the President was hoping to gain enough seats to allow the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to change the constitution to include an executive presidency, but the AKP did not even win a majority. This article identifies several reasons for the decline of the AKP's vote. The economy was languishing and corruption scandals were enveloping the ruling party. The government was becoming increasingly autocratic, censoring the press, stopping political rallies and intimidating critics. The President's vast new palace was seen as an example of his increasing arrogance. His foreign policy was seen as erratic and risky resulting in disputes with governments in several surrounding countries. The success of the moderate Kurdish-backed Peoples Democracy Party (HDP) was another factor. They had attracted votes from progressive voters as well as Kurdish support and crossed the 10 per cent threshold gaining 80 seats in Parliament, 38 of these being held by women.

After the election, Erdogan and the AKP made little effort to establish a coalition government, forcing another election. Violence between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the government has increased. Turkey faces an escalating influx of refugees, conflict spilling over the Syrian borders and domestic terrorism. Recently, suicide bombers killed more than 100 people at a peace rally in Ankara. So far the perpetrators have not been identified but ISIS is a prime suspect. The results of the November election will reveal the effect of recent events on Turkish voters.\*

In his article 'The 2014 Indonesian Legislative and Presidential Elections: Embracing Democracy', Aaron Hedstrom-Wiggins argues that the successful transfer of power following the elections demonstrates that despite its flaws and problems Indonesian voters are embracing democracy. The article briefly traces the vicissitudes of democracy in Indonesia before examining the outcome of the elections for the legislature. Two coalitions were formed to create blocks with enough votes to nominate presidential candidates. The two contestants were Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Prabowo Subianto. As the author notes, these two candidates came from very different backgrounds and had contrasting visions for Indonesia. Jokowi came from a poor background while Prabowo was part of the Indonesian political elite. Jokowi was committed to ending corruption and advancing democracy. Prabowo appeared to have a more ambiguous commitment to democracy. He portrayed himself as a strong leader capable of dealing with Indonesia's many problems. As the article explains, it was Jokowi who won the election, but he initially faced substantial difficulties as he attempted to take control of the government.

The final themed article in this issue is 'When the Counting is Over, Can Governments Govern?' In this article Patrick Weller and Bronwyn Stevens consider the constraints governments face when trying to implement their policy promises. Their analysis focuses on the Australian and UK governments. Once elected governments have to deal with reality. They have to try to meet costly promises in often highly complex policy areas without raising taxes. They are subject to continuous media scrutiny and constant opinion polls. Powerful interests oppose any change that might diminish their advantages. There is no training for government. They have to learn as they govern and inevitably mistakes are made. Prime ministers are not as powerful as they may appear. They have to keep the support of their colleagues; their positions are on leasehold not freehold. This poses special problems when parties are divided as the UK government is over its relationship with Europe or when the prime ministers are doing poorly in the polls as Tony Abbott was. Governments also face institutional constraints that interfere with their ability to attain their policy goals. The UK has to abide by its terms of entry into the EU. Australian governments have to get legislation through the Senate. Finally governments are affected by events over which they often have little control. The movement of asylum seekers, the global financial crisis, escalating conflict in Syria and climate change are all extremely complex issues that governments must respond to, diverting time and resources from policies they would prefer to focus on.

Elections play an important role in democracy by allowing voters to give their verdict on the performance and policies of governments. They facilitate the peaceful transfer of power from one government to the next, but as the articles in this collection demonstrate they are only one part of a democratic process.

#### **\*Afterword**

In a surprise result the AKP vote increased sufficiently for it to form government at the November election but the party did not gain enough seats to alter the constitution without support from another party. The votes of the opposition parties dropped but the HDP crossed the 10% threshold and retains representation in the Parliament. The high hopes for a Turkish spring held after the June election have not been fully realised but they have not yet been dashed entirely.

#### **Author**

Bronwyn Stevens lectures in Politics and International Relations at the University of the Sunshine Coast. She has published on Australian politics and electoral democracy. She is a co-author of *The Engine Room of Government: The Queensland Premier's Department 1859-2001* and *From Postbox to Powerhouse: a centenary history of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet*.

### **The Boy from Hope**

Between Texarkana and Arkadelphia  
Clinton's childhood home stands in Hope -  
unoccupied, boarded-up and run-down,  
with an overgrown backyard  
and views of a railway line,  
a busy four-lane highway,  
and a primitive convenience store.  
Still, one could imagine little Bill  
tottering about on the front porch  
taking the first steps towards  
a remarkable career, watched casually  
by his grandparents and widowed mother,  
none of whom could possibly have imagined  
what kind of man he would become,  
brilliant, feared, admired and flawed,  
shades of Hamlet and Macbeth.

The house next door to Bill's  
is now a visitor's center containing  
photographs and explanatory texts,  
plus the obligatory gift shop beside  
the exit. After checking out pictures  
of Bill as a child in Hope and Hot Springs  
and as a bearded, long-haired young man  
at Georgetown, Oxford and Yale, I passed  
on the souvenirs and crossed the road  
to buy a fifth of whiskey and a cigar.

NATHANAEL O'REILLY,  
FT. WORTH, TX, USA

# Campbell Newman and the Weaknesses of the 'Strong Leader'

TODD WINTHER

*This article argues that the significant reversal of fortune for the Queensland Liberal National Party (LNP) during its last term in government (2012-2015) was largely due to the political leadership of the Queensland Premier, Campbell Newman, whose leadership style exemplifies the theories of 'Strong Leadership'. It argues that this leadership style led to the defeat of his government. Throughout his term as leader, the LNP government focused on a single message, elevating the Premier's leadership style to the cornerstone of the LNP Government. His hard-working, decisive persona was emphasised to portray him and his party as 'strong'. However this message failed to resonate with Queensland voters. The outcome of the Newman Government's short term in office indicates that Strong Leadership does not necessarily translate into effective political leadership.*

## Introduction

The 54th parliament of the Queensland Legislative Assembly ended as it began, with a history-making result. When it was elected on March 24, 2012, Queensland's new Liberal National Party (LNP) Premier, Campbell Newman, was not a member of parliament. Instead he was parachuted into the seat of Ashgrove to lead his once flagging party after a successful tenure as Brisbane's Lord Mayor. Its opposition, the Australian Labor Party (ALP), was defeated after four terms in office, and was initially reduced to just seven members. It was, as commentators and the LNP alike labelled it, a caucus small enough to fit into a large family vehicle. Less than three years later at the 2015 election, the ALP improbably returned to government with the narrowest of majorities and, after losing his seat, Newman exited parliament, just as quickly and controversially as he had entered.

The following is an analysis of the 54th Queensland Legislative Assembly parliamentary term, and the election to commence the 55th that took place on January 31, 2015. This article will argue that the significant reversal of fortune for the LNP was almost exclusively due to the political leadership of Newman. It will contend that the techniques employed by Newman during his term as LNP leader align with the category of 'Strong Leadership' identified in the theoretical literature. To demonstrate this, the article will provide an overview of the Strong Leadership theory and apply it to Campbell Newman's performance as the LNP's leader during the 54th parliament and the 2015 Queensland election campaign, where the failings of his 'Strong Leadership' cost him his job and his party government.

## What Does the 'Strong Leadership' Theory Entail?

Debates in the literature on modern political leadership focus on the characteristics of good leadership and the question of whether political leaders have become more powerful. Various works on political leadership have noted the increasing importance of the leader's role, and their increasing influence, including Ludwig 2002, Ruscio 2004, Helms 2005, Miller and Mintrom 2006, and Rhodes and t'Hart 2014. The majority of such texts argue that the more successful the leader is the more successful their party becomes, whether this occurs through electoral success or contributing to the party's longevity. One of the most intriguing questions in this scholarship is whether 'Strong' or authoritative leadership ensures success and stability for both leaders and their parties.

A leading Australian scholar of political leadership, the late Graham Little, concentrated much of his research on answering this question from a psychoanalytical perspective. His 1988 book, *Strong Leadership: Thatcher, Reagan and an Eminent Person*, was based on his studies of the leadership of Malcolm Fraser, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Implicit in Little's writing is an acceptance of a growth in strong leadership. He argued that strong party leaders '... have become symbols of who we are, personifications of our way of life and our deepest beliefs' (Little 1988: 2). In arguing this, Little acknowledged a changing political environment in which a leader's personality and party ideology were becoming intertwined. Little also argued that 'a strong leader' must preserve his own thinking by insulating himself against other points of view. Above all, a 'strong leader' must trust in his convictions, often at the expense

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of others (Little 1988: 2-4). Little does not conclude that 'Strong Leadership' necessarily equates to effective leadership, but instead notes that the trend had become more prevalent. Campbell Newman's leadership of the Queensland LNP represents a personification of Little's theory twenty-five years after it was first articulated.

2007 marked a turning point when academic analysis of political leadership became more prominent in Australia. Though it was nearly twenty years after Little's initial work, the increasing power of party leaders appeared to validate Little's hypothesis. Both leaders who contested the 2007 Federal Election, the Liberal Party's four term Prime Minister, John Howard and the ALP's challenger Opposition Leader, Kevin Rudd, displayed such tendencies. The ALP, in particular, rode a wave based on highly personalised slogans like 'Kevin 07' (Jackman 2008: 159-160) and 'New Leadership' (Rudd 2007) to win that election. 'Strong Leadership' was at its apex:

The ALP's strategy was to personify Rudd as Modern Labor in every conceivable fashion. It achieved this by portraying Rudd as a master of new policy initiatives, the boy from country Queensland where the ALP itself had been born, and the man who understood the party's values better than anyone else (Jackman 2008: 159-163).

This appeared to be in marked contrast to Rudd's opponent, Howard. In examining his performance as Prime Minister throughout that same 2007 Federal Election campaign, Judith Brett extended and applied Little's work on strong leadership in *Exit Right: The Unravelling of John Howard* in which she identified potential weaknesses in the strong leadership model:

... sometimes Strong Leaders lose. All through 2007, as opinion polls gave Labor a minimum of a ten-point lead, and Howard was staring at defeat, we saw the inherent limits of this style of leadership. Strong Leaders can't last forever; they can't admit their mistakes; and they're not very good at policy (Brett 2007: 11).

Following the 2007 poll, other scholars have used the theoretical analysis established by Little's 'Strong Leader' argument, but they are applied under a different label such as 'command culture'. In 2007, James Walter and Paul Strangio's examination of Australian political leaders over the preceding 35 years suggested that Prime ministers demonstrated tendencies towards a 'domineering leadership model ... in a climate when the currency placed on leadership has become so pronounced, and where leaders are looked upon as transformative agents of politics' (Walter and Strangio 2007: 12). Walter later called this 'the command culture' of modern politics (Walter 2008: 189-201).

Walter, like Little and Brett before him, links this 'commanding' style of leadership to the skills required to attract voters. Walter notes that the 'command culture' of leadership is suited to the cutthroat nature of winning votes at elections (Walter 2008: 190).

However in 2014, Archie Brown examined the 'Strong Leader' thesis in greater detail and suggested that there were flaws in assumptions about the success of strong leaders. The principal one being to overestimate the power that the leader possessed and underestimate the dangers inherent in such a leadership style:

Only leaders of autocratic temperament, too sure of the superiority of their own judgment, will attempt to railroad a policy through against the wishes of a majority of their colleagues. Since heads of government usually have some discretion in deciding whether to promote or demote cabinet colleagues, they can, however, more often than not rely on the compliance of many of the latter who hope to earn points for conformity with the leader's wishes. That is a significant instrument of power, but it has its limits. A leader who loses the confidence of a large proportion of senior colleagues can hardly survive within a democratic political party (Brown, 2014: 18-19).

Brown therefore argues that a 'Strong Leader' can wield tremendous influence within the party, but like any other types of leader this power is contingent upon the support he has in the party room and with the public (Brown 2014: 18-19). Brown also notes that while some elements of the 'Strong Leader', such as clear decision-making are useful, leaders are both unlikely and unable to successfully make decisions which are not supported by the majority of party officials, and the wishes of the electorate (Brown 2014: 57).

The key difference in Brown's approach to the 'Strong Leader' theory compared to other authors is that while some such as Walter and Strangio stress that Prime ministers and Premiers have much more power than ever before, Brown suggests this increased authority is a misnomer. The case study of Newman supports such a conclusion. He clearly overestimated the power and support he possessed as a political leader. During his term as Premier, Newman positioned himself as the solution to all of the problems created by the previous Labor governments with the support of the LNP. Such apparent hubris alienated the electorate and led to his defeat at the 2015 Queensland election. Brown (2014: 57) argues that leaders in parliamentary democracies need to canvas opinions on policy and electoral matters from the party's rank and file membership, within the parliamentary party room, and on a constant basis with the voting public if they are to maintain their position as leader; something Newman clearly failed to do.



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## The 2012-2015 Parliamentary Term

When the LNP secured government in Queensland for the first time since 1998 at the 2012 election, the party won an overwhelming majority with 73 of the 89 seats in the legislative assembly. This was a momentous victory. Throughout the parliamentary term, the LNP government focused on a single message and pursued it with regularity. This was a message that elevated the Premier's leadership to the cornerstone of the LNP Government. Newman in particular sought to emphasise a hard-working, decisive persona in order to portray himself and his party as 'strong'. The LNP explicitly used this as an overt strategy by labelling the government's central policy program *Strong Choices* (Australian Associated Press 2014a). In the final half of its term, 'strong' consequently became the dominant theme used by the Newman Government in order to characterise itself. When the Strong Choices policy was marketed to the electorate, the Premier aimed to position himself as the man who would make the tough decisions in order to fix the economy (Australian Associated Press 2014a). The strategy therefore gave him the opportunity to promote himself as a leader of 'a strong team with a strong plan' for Queensland (Australian Associated Press 2014a). It was designed to remind voters of the previous Bligh Labor government, which the LNP repeatedly characterised as weak and reckless.

The LNP government would use this tactic of elevating Newman as a strong and decisive leader in other policy areas as well. Newman's approach to law and order issues aligned with this strategy. In particular his policies targeting bikie gangs again served as ground for the Premier to promote his 'strength' (Westthorp and Stolz 2013). When discussing these policies, the LNP would continuously categorise their opponents as 'weak' and 'soft', especially Annastacia Palaszczuk, Bligh's successor as ALP leader (Emerson 2015). Such measures were used as an attempt to highlight Newman's effective leadership through his ability to make decisions.

Other authoritative measures during Newman's term as Premier proceeded to alienate the electorate. The proposal to privatise assets and wide ranging job cuts in the State public service created the perception that both the Premier and his party not only had too much power (Ludlow and Wiggins 2014), but were also wielding it too harshly (Ironside 2013). This perception was reinforced when innocent motor cycle riders were harassed and bikie gang members were arrested (in one case for drinking with family members) under the anti-association provisions of the *Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment* (VLAD) legislation (Farr 2013). In another instance, the Government's attempts to change anti-corruption measures, first instituted after the Fitzgerald inquiry, included the dismissal of the independently chaired Parliamentary Crime and

Misconduct Committee and the appointment of a new committee dominated by government members. The controversial appointment of Tim Carmody as Queensland's Chief Justice (Australian Associated Press 2014b) was another decision that was implemented with strong support from Newman. This appointment led to acrimonious conflict with senior members of the Queensland judiciary and bar, many of whom felt Carmody was too close to the government and not adequately qualified for this role. Using these policy changes as examples, the ALP effectively contrasted Newman's theme of strength with their own characterisation of his performance to give credence to the claim that the LNP had become an autocratic party, subject to the whims and objectives of one man, the Queensland Premier (Hall 2014).

Due to this byplay from both the major parties and the leaders, the fate of Queensland's immediate political future and the outcome of the 2015 State election evolved into a referendum on whether the voting public supported Newman's leadership style.

## The Election Campaign

Newman became the sole focus of the campaign, and his destiny became tied to the LNP's. Many voters had already decided that they didn't like Newman (Reachtel 2015). As a result of the strategy of elevating Newman to the forefront of the LNP campaign, it also became harder for them to like the Queensland LNP much either.

With Newman so central to the campaign, the focus on the Premier's seat of Ashgrove became a serious distraction to the LNP campaign. For months prior to the 2015 election being called, opinion polls consistently pointed to Labor's Kate Jones snatching back Newman's seat of Ashgrove with a big swing (Reachtel 2015). Despite knowing it would be tough for Newman to hold a seat with a margin of only 5.7% (Green 2012), the Premier opted out of switching to a safer seat (*Sky News* 2014). Early in the campaign Newman pledged \$18 million worth of projects in his own electorate under his 'Ashgrove Plan', which was far more than any of the surrounding Brisbane seats had been promised (Remeikis 2015). Given his perilous position in the seat, the battle for Ashgrove quickly turned into a mini-referendum on the Premier's performance; whether he wanted it to be or not. Newman's response to queries of what would happen if he lost his seat did not help matters. At the election announcement, Newman rather pointedly said 'I won't be winning Ashgrove if we don't win the State ... and vice versa' (*The Courier-Mail* 2015). The LNP clearly felt the same way considering there was no contingency plan for what might happen if Newman lost his seat, but the LNP retained government (Small 2015). It was either Newman or bust. The LNP had tied its fate to its strong leader.

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Consequently, the LNP attempted to borrow from the success of the Howard government's election strategy in both the 2001 and 2004 federal elections, but failed to recognise, as Brett had indicated, that this same strategy did not work in 2007. In all three of these elections, the former prime minister built his campaigns on the theme of economic management in order to project strength of leadership (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2004). Newman used this strategy with the centrepiece becoming the leasing of government owned assets, which he reasoned would create a strong Queensland economy (Wardill 2014a). The government had switched its rhetoric from 'selling' to 'leasing' in the latter stages of 2014 because selling the assets outright proved to be an unpopular move (Wardill 2014b). However, both Newman and the government could not escape the criticism from the ALP that this change in policy was merely semantics (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2015).

Such definitive policymaking that had little regard for the public mood displayed one of the biggest weaknesses of Newman's 'Strong Leadership' style. The campaign strategy that placed Newman at the top of the campaign is the perfect illustration of Walter's categorisation of 'command culture' in which the party leader is seen as the ultimate arbiter of decision making authority, particularly during election campaigns. However, as Brown notes, such power requires a 'Strong Leader' to have excellent communication skills to articulate his vision for his government: '... the top individual leader ... [has] a responsibility to explain and justify why a particular action is being taken ... which does not fare well in opinion polls' (Brown 2014: 356). If a leader is unable to achieve this adequately, he risks accusations of being autocratic and 'out of touch'. Such causation aligns with Brown's earlier characterisation that 'Strong Leaders who have an autocratic temperament, too sure of the superiority of their own judgment, will attempt to railroad a policy through against the wishes of a majority ...' (Brown 2014:18). He could have been describing Campbell Newman's behaviour in government and his attempt to both dominate the LNP's campaign strategy and force the LNP's privatisation plans onto the electorate.

Due to Newman's 'Strong Leadership' campaign strategy, Labor was able to run a wholly negative campaign that focused on the twin pillars of Newman's autocratic behaviour and what they saw as a wrong-headed asset-leasing plan (*The Courier Mail* 2015a). They were able to run a populist and economically restrained campaign with Opposition Leader Palaszczuk telling voters that her future government would not privatise assets. She only promised a fraction of the LNP's 'Strong Choices' program, totalling what she referred to as a 'deliberately modest' \$1.6 billion (*The Courier Mail* 2015b). Such a strategy was not without risk. The LNP argued during the last week of the campaign that the ALP's economic policy was merely four pages long, and their policies

therefore lacked substance (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2015). It was a criticism not without merit, but as the final result would prove, the voters were more opposed to privatisation than concerned about the limited infrastructure plans.

### The Election Result and Its Aftermath

Several hours after the polls had closed on January 31, the outcome of the election was still unclear, although the defeat of Campbell Newman in Ashgrove was assured. The Premier labelled his political career as finished when giving a speech to LNP supporters. When the final results were tallied, the ALP had 44 seats, the LNP 42, the Katter Australia Party (KAP) had two, and the Independent MP for Nicklin (based in Nambour on the Sunshine Coast), Peter Wellington, one (Green 2015). When Wellington quickly committed to supporting Palaszczuk in forming a new ALP government (Hoffman 2015), it was confirmed that she and her party had completed one of the most stunning and unexpected electoral turnarounds in Queensland history.

Since the election, the LNP has been quick to place the blame for their election defeat on the now departed Newman and his leadership style. A report commissioned by the LNP as to the reasons for the election loss, authored by former National Party Leader Rob Borbidge and his Liberal Party Deputy Joan Sheldon, argued that the central reason for the party's defeat was Newman's leadership style:

Broad based disappointment has been expressed with the campaign and the election defeat. Undoubtedly, the leadership of the government contributed to the election loss including ...

- the perception of arrogance arising from not listening to the people;
- pursuing the large scale privatisation of assets to which the majority of voters opposed or had serious reservations;
- the alienation of key stakeholders in the decision making process;
- and the two year discordant relationship with the [LNP] organisational wing ...

Based on our experiences, we know that leadership is both important and difficult and should not be underestimated. The political tactics of importing a leader from outside parliament without parliamentary or state leadership experience and policy knowledge carried inherent risks which were not immediately apparent and in the short term worked well (Borbidge and Sheldon 2015: 2-3).

All of the deficits highlighted above, both fit the template of the 'Strong Leader' and demonstrate the weaknesses

in this leadership style. This ranges from the autocratic behaviour exhibited by strong leaders that Little highlighted in his original work (1988: 2), to the failure to be adaptable to new political circumstances as Brett claimed that Howard was unable to do (2007: 11). It also encompasses the unilateral decision making model that Walter (2008: 189-201) highlights when labelling it 'the command culture' of modern political leadership. Newman tried to adhere to the 'Strong Leader' model, but only succeeded in emphasising all of its weaknesses.

Immediately after the election defeat, the LNP returned to its past by re-electing a former leader and the victim of four electoral defeats, Laurence Springborg, as Newman's successor. In addition, John-Paul Langbroek was elected as Springborg's deputy. Ironically, Langbroek was the man Newman replaced as LNP leader as he was swept to the top job by the LNP machine in 2012 (Winther 2015). The return to these two leaders creates the perception that the LNP is attempting to re-establish itself as a political alternative by rejecting its earlier over-reliance on one strong leader ahead of a predicted 2018 election. It seems in retrospect that the LNP are blaming their election loss entirely on Newman while disregarding his leadership tenure and proceeding as if he was never drafted to the position of leader in 2012.

## Conclusion

Campbell Newman's tenure as Leader of the Queensland LNP lasted less than three years. During this period, Newman implemented a leadership style that is consistent with the 'Strong Leader' theory. This theory identifies authoritative and almost unilateral decision making. Newman personified these characteristics of leadership both when developing policies, and when promoting them to the electorate. This was no accident as he overtly labelled himself and his policy framework as 'Strong'. Unfortunately for Newman, he failed to understand the weaknesses of such a leadership style. The constant focus on him and his leadership style alienated him from the voters, particularly as he tried to implement unpopular or poorly implemented policies such as privatisation and tough law and order measures.

Newman seemed to accentuate his message of 'Strength' during the 2015 election campaign, but this only appeared to anger voters further. Given that the LNP election strategy focussed almost entirely on Newman's 'Strong Leadership', the LNP election campaign ended disastrously. As a result, the LNP lost government and Newman lost his own seat of Ashgrove. In the wake of the election, the LNP recognised that Newman's 'Strong Leadership' techniques were a significant factor in the party losing government. In doing so, they acknowledged that in adopting the 'Strong Leadership' model, the LNP exposed its crippling weaknesses.

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#### Meaning of life

After a day exploring Belfast  
with local friends aware  
of every boundary and rule  
whether visible or invisible  
spoken or unspoken  
I finally begin to understand  
the distance between  
Dublin and Sandy Row

NATHANAEL O'REILLY,  
FT. WORTH, TX. USA

# The Voter ID Experiment: Reform or the continuation of a Queensland tradition?

TRACEY ARKLAY

*In 2014 the Queensland LNP government introduced a new requirement, that voters must produce identification on polling day. Voter identification was required for two elections: a by-election in 2014, and a state election in 2015. Empirical evidence indicates that voter ID had a negative impact on voter turnout – particularly among indigenous and rural electorates. While the impact of voter ID needs further analysis, the initial research echoes international findings that voter ID is a method used by governments to suppress certain voter demographics from casting a ballot. This article argues that voter ID has serious implications for democratic principles, is at odds with Australia's compulsory voting system, and does not adequately address instances of voter fraud.*

## Introduction

In March 2012, the government of Queensland changed. After effectively twenty-two years in opposition<sup>1</sup>, the Liberal-National Party (LNP) was elected with an unprecedented 67-seat majority over the Australian Labor Party (ALP) opposition. Emboldened by this victory, the LNP moved quickly to place their mark on the politics and policies of Queensland. One of the changes it introduced was to the States' electoral laws. In a Green Paper introduced in 2013, the Attorney-General, Jarrod Bleijie, proposed a range of reforms:

enhancements to voter enrolment processes; the current optional preferential voting system; voting options and requirements (including: whether voting should be compulsory; the postal voting system; electronic voting; and opportunities for minimising voter fraud); and the laws governing political advertising and how-to-vote cards (Electoral Reform Discussion Paper 2013: 2).

The subsequent decision to demand a form of voter identification (voter ID) as a solution to voter fraud attracted media attention and is the focus of a concerted opposition campaign by GetUp!<sup>2</sup> is the subject of this article. One by-election and one State election were held after voter ID became law. While more analysis on the breakdown of data is needed, early empirical evidence supports international experience that the voter ID requirement affected turnout in rural and remote communities. This paper argues that voter ID is a form of voter suppression that does nothing to address voter fraud. In addition, by placing identification requirements on voters, the policy is at odds with Australia's compulsory voting system, which aims to allow voters to fulfil this obligation of citizenship with as few impediments as possible (Hughes and Costar 2006: 44).

This article initially provides a brief synopsis of the LNP's defeat in 2015 that was promptly followed by a review by LNP party elders Robert Borbidge and Joan Sheldon. They concluded that the LNP government had lost the trust of the electorate through its determination to implement reforms too quickly and without adequate consultation. The issue of trust is well canvassed in scholarly literature. A trust deficit has been observed across the Western world, and indicates that governments interested in radical change must first provide an adequate and plausible explanation to its citizens. This article then places in context Queensland's electoral history to highlight the way successive governments have manipulated the electoral system for their own benefit. The LNP's stated rationale for its 2014 amendments centred around Labor's earlier changes to The Electoral Act 1992 that it claimed were 'implemented with too little consideration and consultation' and which were designed to 'benefit political parties in Queensland' (Electoral Reform Discussion Paper 2013: 2). This article concludes with evidence that the 2014 introduction of voter ID adversely impacted on particular groups and communities in Queensland.

## Three Years and Out

The LNP government served one term in office. The 31 January 2015 election, which was hastily called over the Christmas holiday period, resulted in a minority Labor government being elected. This was both unexpected and somewhat remarkable considering the electoral drubbing Labor had received only three years earlier when it was left with only seven seats in the 89-seat State Parliament. Early explanations as to why the LNP performed so badly in 2015 (losing 36 seats) ranged from inexperienced leadership to hubris in the

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government's belief that it could so quickly and without much explanation implement far-ranging and often controversial reforms. The Borbidge Sheldon Election Review called after the shock defeat examined the actions and policy decisions of the former government, noting 'errors in policy and political judgment' and finding that the LNP had failed to build trust, by alienating 'almost every key interest group across the state' and displaying 'a dismissive arrogant approach' generally (The Borbidge Sheldon Election Review: 2015). While many issues were canvassed, the decision to alter political donation laws and introduce voter identification requirements went unremarked except perhaps by the catch-all phrase: 'In addition there were other distractions that unsettled voters. These served to fuel the impression of arrogance' (Borbidge Sheldon Election Review 2015: 4).

The 2015 election result provides a salient lesson that even governments with huge majorities can lose after one term. The old rules, written in the era of rusted-on supporters who could always be relied upon, need recasting. Voters, who only three years earlier had supported the LNP, had now overwhelmingly rejected it.

### **Trust – Hard to Build, Easy to Destroy**

There is a well-established international body of literature on the diminishing levels of trust from citizens in their political institutions (Dalton 2004; Stoker 2006; Fawcett 2014). An explanation as to why trust in the political process is waning includes the increasing influence of business and privileged interests (Beetham 2011, cited in Marsh 2014), along with the pressure exerted by a 24/7 media cycle. Both contribute to reactive decision-making and provide little time for considered responses to issues (Harris 2011; Kelly 2014: 77-78). While there are well-documented cases that highlight the extraordinary power of the media to influence agendas in Australia (Megalogenis 2012: 359; Chubb 2014: 187), in the case of the Queensland election, despite the support given to the LNP by the sole local newspaper, voters were not persuaded.<sup>3</sup> Marsh (2014: 42-43) argues that the distrust that ensnarls politics today has negatively impacted on both the quality of public administration (i.e. policymaking) and on representative democracy generally. The 2014 Lowy Institute poll found that only a slim majority of Australians still believe that 'democracy is preferable to any other kind of government' (Lowy Institute 2014). This finding explains the argument that due to Queensland's unique circumstances such as its unicameral parliament, a tendency for long-term majoritarian governments and a historic acceptance of executive government dominance, decisions regarding key democratic institutions, such as the electoral system, need to be strongly supported by evidence. Voters' continued faith in the electoral process is crucial to instilling trust in the system. Compulsory voting, an accepted norm in Australian elections, has been linked to increased levels of participation which in turn contributes

to political legitimacy and better accountability (Engelen 2007: 28). Voter ID undermines these advantages by providing an out for voters who could not be bothered or who misunderstand the laws regarding ID (see Orr 2015).

### **Lessons From History**

Queensland became the only unicameral parliament in Australia after its unrepresentative and belligerent Upper House was abolished in 1922 (Harding 2000: 162-168). In ridding itself of this legislative barrier the Queensland Government of the day ignored the 1917 referendum decision rejecting the abolition of the Legislative Council, which showed a majority of Queenslanders at that time supported the retention of the Legislative Council. The State's voting system changed periodically throughout the twentieth century, enabling first-past-the-post, preferential voting and optional preferential voting at various times. Arguably, all of these changes had opportunistic and partisan elements (Wear 2005: 87). The zonal system used in Queensland was honed by successive governments. Scholars have called the 'historical and policy justifications for zonal weighting' as 'a paradoxical merging of pretence and openness' (Orr and Levy 2009: 639). While the rationale for zones centred around claims of the need to maintain community of interest in electorates and ensuring rural voters were not disenfranchised, the result was that successive redistributions increasingly 'favoured rural electorates at the expense of urban' voters. This in turn had a negative impact on the Liberal Party in particular (Williams 2011: 113). When combined with 'a tolerance of plus or minus 20 percent ... and the loosest criteria for selecting electoral commissioners of any state in Australia' (Mackerras 1990: 340) criticism of the electoral system was inevitable. With mounting evidence of police corruption and compromised administrative processes, the calls for reform grew louder.

After decades of being told not to 'worry about that' by Premier Bjelke Petersen, Queenslanders became aware that the government had systematically 'worked the system' (Coaldrake 1989). The ensuing Fitzgerald Inquiry began as a response to evidence of police corruption, but its terms of reference were later extended to examine the political and administrative operations of the State more broadly. The final report included a section on electoral administration and warned that 'a government which achieves public office by means other than free and fair elections lacks legitimate political authority over that system' (Fitzgerald Report 1989: 127). As a result of the recommendations stemming from the Fitzgerald Inquiry, an Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, a Parliamentary Electoral and Administrative Review Committee and an independent State Electoral Commission were established to ensure the integrity of the electoral process in Queensland. It is in the context of Queensland's unique history that recent attempts to change the electoral process are considered.

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## Electoral Changes in 2014

The 'paradoxical merging of pretence and openness' applied by Orr and Levy to describe the zonal system could, without too much licence, be used in relation to the introduction of voter ID. In January 2013, the LNP released a Green Paper that canvassed a range of issues including the need to minimise voter fraud (Electoral Reform Discussion Paper 2013: 2). The Attorney-General encouraged Queenslanders to 'make their views known'.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee (LACSC) was charged with examining details of the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013. It received 180 written submissions. Changes to public donation laws, whereby the government proposed to remove caps on political donations because 'they unnecessarily restrict participation in the political process', were questioned in many submissions. The general tenor of the submissions was that uncapped donations allow 'wealth to buy an unequal share of political influence and voice... skew money to the governing party of the day... because private donations follow power' (Orr 2013: 1-2). Submissions also questioned the proposal to increase the candidate deposit retention threshold from four to ten per cent of the primary vote (in the end the government decided on six per cent) which most agreed could impose serious financial constraints on independent candidates and minor parties (see Williams 2014). Prospective independents also were likely to be affected by the proposal to decrease electoral public funding to non-aligned candidates, while at the same time raising the amount of public funding to a political party's candidates (see LACSC 2014: 12). The proposal to require voter ID had been the focus of campaigns by organisations such as GetUp!, other community based organisations and concerned individuals (Arklay 2013). One hundred and sixty submissions to the LACSC focused on voter ID (LACSC 2014: 22), with most arguing that the measure was unnecessary because levels of voter fraud were low.

### Voter Fraud – How Prevalent Is It?

In the LNP discussion paper that first mooted voter ID, the government itself warned that the proposal could be 'considered a disproportionate response to the risk'. Yet while Australian Electoral Commission data shows that not a single election result has been negated because of fraudulent voting practices, concerns over electoral integrity have long been a focus of some members in Parliament. In the past, debates over integrity have concentrated on the enrolment process. As in Queensland, the federal debate regarding the need to tighten the rules tends to split along party lines (Hughes and Costar 2006: 50).

There have been numerous inquiries into electoral integrity. At the Commonwealth level, the Joint Standing

Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) has produced a series of reports that since 2001 have considered the issue of voter ID (JSCEM 2001). In 2014, Brian Costar (2014) reminded the JSCEM that voter ID would not prevent multiple voting as it would not stop voters intending to break the law from going from polling booth to polling booth to cast multiple ballots. However, most voters who cast more than one vote do so in error. Costar's arguments are supported by a recent independent examination into multiple voting commissioned by the New South Wales electoral commission. Rodney Smith (2014: 9) reported that in regards to multiple voting, 'a large number of apparent but false multiple votes are generated by raw electoral commission mark-off data' which once removed indicates multiple votes total 0.08 per cent of total votes cast. Smith's report also confirmed that such a low percentage of multiple votes could not alter an election outcome. He found that multiple voting is 'not strategic', not directed at marginal seats and that it is strongly related to 'demographic factors such as fluency in English'. Even those who express concern about voter integrity agree that when instances of multiple voting occur they are most commonly due to memory loss or general confusion due to poor language skills (Turnbull 2013; see also Smith 2014: 17). Education might prevent some of these cases but requiring voter ID will not, and as such is 'a solution in search of a problem' (Green: 2014).

International evidence supports the view that enforcing ID laws could disadvantage particular groups in society, especially the elderly, indigenous, homeless and people living in rural and remote communities. Voter ID is seen increasingly as a means of voter suppression that does not enhance democratic principles (Askin 2015).

### Voter ID – The International Experience

At the international level, many nations use a form of voter ID. As Smith's (2014) comprehensive analysis shows, countries, particularly in Europe, use mandatory national identification cards, which are issued to all citizens of voting age. Carrying identification is a cultural norm and being required to show it is an accepted part of citizenship. This is not the case in Australia as demonstrated by the ill-fated attempt by the Hawke government to introduce an 'Australia Card' to reduce tax evasion (Fraser: 2014). In addition to requirements for ID, some countries such as Belgium, Finland, Indonesia, Singapore, Spain, Tanzania and Timor Leste require voters to vote in a prescribed polling place, which virtually eliminates the risk of multiple voting (Smith 2014: 52). This was one of the stated concerns that influenced the decision to introduce voter ID in Queensland. Australia's compulsory voting system makes it necessary to ensure an accessible voting process. But requiring voter ID undermines accessibility and this would be problematic when voting is compulsory even if voter fraud was a problem. All evidence indicates it is not.

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Although voter ID does not appear to change the level of fraud, it can change voter participation. For example, Canada has low levels of voter fraud (Neufeld Report 2013) but requires ID at elections. However, since its introduction, approximately 10 per cent of Indigenous Canadians have either been disenfranchised or have opted out of voting (Burgmann 2013, cited in Smith 2014: 72). In the United States, voter suppression policies that include voter ID have become intensely partisan and racially charged. Republicans have enabled 'strategic demobilization efforts in response to changing demographics, shifting electoral fortunes, and an internal rightward ideological drift among the party faithful' (Bentele and O'Brien 2013: 1088 - 1116).

Thirty-four American States currently use a form of voter ID. The types required vary from State to State but the trend has been to introduce increasingly restrictive ID requirements (Brennan Center for Justice 2013, cited in Smith 2014: 60). In voluntary voting systems like the US and Canada, voter turnout takes on special significance. Evidence suggests a trend of more restrictive voter ID measures being introduced following elections in which a high percentage of minority groups have turned out to cast a vote. Bentele and O'Brien (2013: 1103) argue that 'restrictive voter access [is] influenced by the intensity of electoral competition' between candidates. There is evidence that in the US, poor and Native American voters find it more difficult to obtain suitable ID (The *Economist* 2012), but there is a push to reduce some of the harsher criteria. Judge Posner, who sits on the United States Court of Appeal, is one influential voice who has publicly regretted his earlier support for voter ID and now admits that rather than preventing voter fraud, voter ID works to 'suppress the vote by denying people who have a legitimate entitlement to vote access to the ballot box' (Howie 2013).

### **Election 2015: Voter ID Put To The Test**

Despite the concerns expressed in submissions to the LACSC, the Newman Government legislated for voter ID in May 2014 and it was tested in one by-election in the seat of Stafford and at one full state election. These were the first elections in Australia to require voter ID and are the only examples of the measure in practice. In both instances, voters who did not bring a form of voter ID with them to the polling station were able to cast a declaratory vote.<sup>4</sup> The process involved in casting a declaratory vote added another layer of complexity to the voting process. These votes were treated differently from normal ballots in that they were placed in a signed, sealed envelope and counted separately. In the lead-up to the poll, questions were raised about the way these votes would be treated and the impact voter ID requirements would have at polling booths. Would casual electoral commission staff (around 10,000 are employed for state elections) all have the same training? Would voters be informed as to the status of their vote? Would there be additional queuing

to vote because of potentially large numbers who would be required to cast declaratory votes?

There were no reported issues with voter ID in the Stafford by-election, an inner city Brisbane electorate. However, preliminary results for the state election in 2015 seem to substantiate many of the concerns that were raised when the measure was first introduced. According to the Electoral Commission Queensland's (ECQ) data, the number of 'uncertain identity' declaration votes was approximately 16,450. Orr (2015: 3) notes that this is the equivalent of one electorate's worth of voters presenting without identification. In addition, voter turnout was lower in 2015 than in previous elections. This may have been due to the surprise nature of the election, called during the summer hiatus. However, considering the 'unprecedented' number of pre-poll enrolments (up from 23,000 in 2012 to 60,000 in 2015), one-third of whom were younger voters under the age of 24, empirical evidence suggests many voters wanted a chance to have a say in the January election (Branco 2015). If early evidence is correct and voter ID did affect turnout, then close to 'two electorate's worth of electors had issues with ID' (Orr 2015: 3). The Queensland election of 2015 indicates that the voter ID effect observed overseas applies equally here in that where there are more indigenous voters in an electorate there are also more ID-less voters. There is also a distinct correlation between rural and remote seats and more ID-less voters (see Orr 2015: 4). While more research is needed it seems fairly conclusive that voter ID disadvantaged indigenous voters and those people living in rural and remote areas.

### **Where To Now?**

One of the first actions of the new Queensland minority Labor government was the repeal of voter ID and the reduction of the donation declaration threshold back to \$1,000. But at the same time, the federal government's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (2015) recommended implementing voter ID for future federal elections. This 'solution in search of a problem' continues to fascinate some in the Parliament. The dissenting report issued by the Federal ALP and Greens on the JSCEM argued 'if such a drop in turnout [as occurred with the Queensland election] were to result at the next federal election, more than 165,000 Australians may be excluded from the electoral contest' (2015: 163). Advocates for voter ID continue to insist that it makes elections fairer by reducing fraud. In continuing this argument, they ignore the evidence that voter ID disenfranchises voters while at the same time does nothing to solve any of the problems it is meant to address.

### **Conclusion**

The Queensland experiment with voter ID seems at an end. It is too soon to tell if the Commonwealth Government will implement ID for future federal elections



as recommended by coalition members of the JSCEM. Early evidence suggests that it did influence the decision of some otherwise eligible voters to turn up and cast a vote in Queensland. In a pattern that is reflected overseas, the voters most affected by the ID policy were indigenous citizens and people living in remote electorates. This article has argued that voter ID solves none of the problem it sets out to address. Rather it reduces the likelihood of certain voters casting a ballot – thereby rendering them silent on a crucial decision – namely the opportunity to influence who governs. In a system that enforces participation through compulsory voting, this takes on even more significance. There is an inherent disconnect between the logic of compelling people to vote while at the same time making it harder for them to do so. Just as in overseas jurisdictions, it seems conservatives are more in favour of ID, while the ALP and Greens dislike the measure.

Voting is one of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and Australia has historically placed great value in the trust system in place on polling day. Abuse is rare and when it has occurred is for the most part accidental. Fraudulent voting has not influenced any election outcome. The trust principle is supplemented by a rigorous registration and electoral roll oversight process, which is managed by the independent Australian Electoral Commission. Abandoning this trust principle for little to no advantage is something that we should not take lightly.

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#### End Notes

1. After the Mundingburra by-election in 1996 the Goss Labor government was replaced with an interregnum National-led government. Labor regained the Treasury benches in 1998.
2. An example of one GetUp! campaign waged against voter ID can

be found at: <https://www.getup.org.au/campaigns/voter-suppression/voter-id/free-and-fair-vote-for-all>

3. In the lead-up to the poll the sole State newspaper, The Courier-Mail editorial (15/12/14) wrote in glowing terms about 'Newman's A-grade result for Queensland'. Not long after the election was announced, The Sunday Mail (25/01/2015) declared that the 'LNP deserves chance to finish the job'. The Courier-Mail's election eve editorial once more reminded readers that the 'Newman-led LNP the only credible choice for a prosperous Queensland' (Margo Kingston Blog: <http://nofibs.com.au/2015/01/24/an-archive-of-the-courier-mails-front-pages-during-2015-qldvotes-qldpol-qldaah/>).

4. Voter ID requirements in Queensland were very broad and could include the notification form sent out by the electoral commission, a driver's license, passport, or indeed any government issued account that contained a name and address.

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#### Sacred observations

She ordered a Special cup

In her religion, the cup must be broken on a special day

It is symbolic of —

Special cup arrived by post

Already broken

She returned and replaced

For another Special cup

One that she can break to make

the special statement about broken things

MONICA CARROLL,  
CANBERRA, ACT

# Australian Senate Select Committees: Senate composition, party partisanship and democracy

JACQUELINE DEWAR

*Senate committees play a valuable role in the development of policy and the scrutiny of executive government. However, over the past decade Senate committees, and particularly Senate select committees have become increasingly politicised. After each election, as the composition and control of the Senate has changed, Senate majorities have been assembled to establish select committees for partisan political advantage undermining their value to democracy.*

Committees in the Australian parliament have increasingly played a valuable role in the development of policy, legislation and in the accountability of executive power. In particular, Senate committees, whose members are less restricted by the pressing requirements of electorates and are more frequently hostile to the government, play a crucial role in the process of parliamentary democracy. However over the past decade, changes to the Senate's composition following elections have resulted in the development of a political climate within the Australian parliament that undermines the operation and value of Senate committees. Senate select committees are particularly symptomatic of this shift and decline.

In September 2014, the Palmer United Party was successful in establishing a Senate select committee and parliamentary inquiry into *Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government Affairs* (Select Committee on Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government Affairs, 2014). The establishment of this select committee drew wide media attention and public criticism that parliamentary committees were more about party partisanship and personal vendettas than effective and informed government. The inquiry into the administration of a state government raised important questions as to how Senate select committees are established and what impact the Senate composition had on these usually little known Senate entities.

Academic inquiry has focused on standing committees within the Senate because of their longevity, high public profile, and demonstrations of parliamentary accountability and scrutiny. However, alongside standing committees<sup>1</sup>, the Senate has the capacity

to establish *ad hoc* select committees in response to contemporary, often highly politically charged issues. Little consideration has been given to select committees and in particular the way after each election, the changes to the political composition of the Senate shapes the function, characteristics and effectiveness of these *ad hoc* entities. The Senate elections of 2004, 2007 and 2013 produced three distinct periods of Senate control. Each has had major implications in the establishment of Senate select committees and the types of inquiries they undertook.

The election of 2004 resulted in government control of the Senate. During this Parliament, the government used their numbers in the Senate to block the establishment of any select committees. The election of November 2007 resulted in a change of government but also an extended period in which the previous coalition government controlled the Senate. During this time, three highly political select committees were established. The election of 2013 delivered the greatest number of independent, minor and micro-party senators. Hence, the crossbench in the Senate became a powerful space. In this Parliament, the establishment of select committees became a form of political currency that could be traded for political support.

## Senate Committees

The Senate committee system is an important aspect of modern parliamentary practice because it is both a mechanism for democratic participation by citizens in the parliamentary process and for scrutiny of government (Holland 2009; Grant 2009). As Stanley Bach has argued:

The Senate is proud of its committee system, and justifiably so ... The importance of these

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committees can't be over-stated. In fact, it may not be an exaggeration to say that no parliamentary body can be taken seriously unless it has a functioning committee system that's well-designed for the constitutional and political context in which the committees operate (2009: 15).

The modern Senate committee system, established in 1970, underwent major restructure in 1994 to establish eight paired standing committees in the current portfolio areas of:

- Community Affairs
- Economics
- Education and Employment
- Environment and Communications
- Finance and Public Administration
- Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation
- Legal and Constitutional Affairs
- Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Senate parliamentary committees act as an extension of the chamber undertaking detailed examination of both policy issues and legislation, which the chamber in its totality would be unable to discharge efficiently. Committees are valuable institutions for any parliamentary body '... because they create a system of division of labour. Instead of all the senators having to meet together to do everything, they have created a collection of workgroups that can take up different tasks at the same time' (Bach 2009: 18).

Established at the beginning of each Parliament these committees undertake 'inquiries into specific matters, related to development or scrutiny of policy, proposed legislation or Bills and public administration' (Evans and Laing 2012: 443). This is done by inviting interested parties or witnesses to appear before the committee at public hearings and/or via written submissions. At the conclusion of an inquiry, a report is written and the findings are tabled in the Senate. The production and tabling of these findings assists the Senate more broadly in the acquisition of specialist knowledge to inform debate and decision making. These reports also provide authoritative information for journalists, scholars and the general public.

However, Senate committees also serve a number of important secondary roles. For example, they facilitate access for wider participation by citizens and interest groups, beyond the immediate parliament, in law making and policy review. They also allow individuals or interest groups to air grievances about, or to, government (Marinac 2004: 2). Committee involvement provides the

opportunity for senators to develop special interests and build up expertise in aspects of public policy, which may effectively enhance the quality of debate and provide a grounding for backbenchers who may go on to more senior roles within the parliament (Evans and Laing 2012: 444). Parliamentary committees bring together political opponents and require negotiation at every stage of a committee's inquiry in order to maximise the political outcomes (Marinac 2004: 2).

### Select Committees

As standing committees are established for the life of a Parliament, they develop both expertise in subject areas and in the conduct of the inquiry itself (Monk 2012). While the political nature of Senate parliamentary committees is well recognised (Holmes 1966, Weller 2006), greater multi-partisan approach to the inquiry is possible. In contrast, Senate select committees often emerge as a result of a 'hot' political issue, or as the result of perceived political gain (Kernot and Bartlett 2010: 79). Examples include: Senate Select Committee for an Inquiry into a Certain Maritime Incident 2002; *Senate Select Committee on Ministerial Discretion in Migration Matters 2004*; *Senate Select Committee into the Abbott Government's Commission of Audit 2014*.

Select committees differ from standing committees, as they are *ad hoc* bodies established by resolution of the Senate at any time during a Parliament, but which cease to exist at the completion of the inquiry. The formation of any select committee is never guaranteed. It requires significant negotiation by political parties and interested senators around the terms of reference, the timeframe, its membership and a motion passed in the Senate for establishment. Therefore, it is the political composition and 'will' of the chamber that ultimately determines the establishment of any Senate select committee.

Select committees can be nimble vehicles in the democratic process by pulling together a small group of interested senators to investigate an issue or event of importance to the Senate, such as the *Senate Select Committee on Cyber Safety* (2013). In this regard they are valuable tools to democracy. However, evidence suggests that they have been increasingly used to corrode democratic principles (Capling and Nossal 2003: 850) and are now a means by which senators promote their own political agendas. Central to this process is the composition and control of the Senate. The elections of 2004, 2007 and 2013 demonstrate how different Senate compositions affect what select committees are established and why.

The election of 2004 resulted in government control of the Senate. The government used their numbers

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in the Senate to block the establishment of any select committees during this period. The election of November 2007 resulted in a change of government. However the previous coalition government controlled the Senate for a further seven months, during which time three highly political select committees were established. The election of 2013 was notable as it delivered the greatest number of independent, minor and micro-party senators. Both government and opposition require the support of the crossbench to pass legislation and therefore, in the current Senate, the crossbench has become a powerful group. In this Parliament, the establishment of select committees has become a form of political currency that can be traded for political support.

After each federal election control of the Senate was used, often with alarming speed, to shut down Senate select committees with their possibility of scutinising the Executive or to prevent their establishment, motivated by purely political intent and with limited or no readily identifiable democratic outcome.

### **When the Government Controls the Senate**

In October 2004, the Howard Liberal/National Party Coalition was returned to government. Significantly, in the Senate, the coalition won 38 of the 76 seats, winning control of the chamber for the first time since 1980 (Barber and Johnson 2014: 13). After the election victory, Prime Minister Howard said that the Senate outcome was good for his government, and that his government would not abuse the privilege to undermine parliamentary democracy:

... I want to assure the Australian people that the government will use its majority in the new Senate very carefully, very wisely and not provocatively ... We certainly won't be abusing our newfound position (*The Age* 2004).

However, after gaining a Senate majority on 1 July 2005, the Howard government moved to control inquiries by Senate committees and in particular the establishment of select committees:

During the Parliament of 2001 to 2004, seven select committees were employed. After the government gained its majority, no select committees were appointed. In effect, the government did not permit any special inquiries by the Senate into matters of public interest. It is difficult to believe that there were no matters worthy of such inquiries (Evans 2008: 5).

Opposition and minor parties were reluctant to seek to establish committees under the Senate composition

during this period, as such proposals would not receive a majority vote:

Of course, there were not a lot of motions put forward to establish select committees, so in that sense I suppose the coalition might try the furphy that there was [sic] only a few actually proposed: 'You didn't try.' But the reason why people did not try is that they knew it would not succeed. We could not even get references up to the existing standing committees half the time, let alone set up select committees (Bartlett 2008: 359).

The lack of government support to set up select committees during this period denied the Senate the opportunity to undertake inquiries that might 'cause political difficulty or embarrassment for the government' (Evans 2008: 6). During this period, the mandatory detention of asylum seekers was a key policy of the government. The policy was widely criticised following the wrongful detention of over 30 people and that of Cornelia Rau, a German citizen holding Australian permanent residency, who had been unlawfully detained for 11 months. However, the Senate was unable to inquire into these and other matters that were highly embarrassing to the government. It was prevented from any degree of scrutiny or the ability to 'throw light into dark corners' (Ludwig 2008: 368).

The Australian Labor Party was elected to office on 24 November 2007 for the first time since 1996. In the House of Representatives, Labor won 83 seats, the Liberal Party 55 and the Nationals secured 10 seats. 'The Coalition lost control of the Senate, but still held 37 seats – five more than the Government. The Australian Greens increased its seats to five, though it lost a seat in New South Wales. Independent South Australian senator, Nick Xenophon, won a seat. The last four Australian Democrats left the Senate' (Barber and Johnson 2014: 13).

These changes to the composition of the Senate did not come into effect until 1 July the following year. Therefore, for a period of seven months after the November 2007 election, the Coalition still maintained control of the Senate. While no Senate select committees had been established under the previous Coalition government, Coalition senators now moved to establish three select committees on the first full sitting day after the election. These select committees had both Coalition chairs and majorities. Significantly, two of these committees inquired directly into the affairs of ALP State governments. These were the *Senate Select Committee on Housing Affordability in Australia* and the *Senate Select Committee on State Government Financial Management*. Senator Chris Ellison sought and gained the Senate's approval for the establishment of these committees. The senator

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argued that an inquiry into state government financial management was urgently needed:

This is an extremely important issue for the economy of this country. We have state governments around this country racking up debt and affecting this nation's economy. No matter what good policies there may be at a federal level, we have state governments which are running up debt and mismanaging their finances to such an extent that this requires particular scrutiny from this chamber (Ellison 2008: 355).

The highly political nature and the timing of these inquiries raise questions as to the underlying intent of establishing these committees. The Australian Democrats senator, Andrew Bartlett, saw it as 'an exercise in state government bashing' (2008: 363) because it gave the Commonwealth government quasi-authority to investigate a state government with the sole intention of highlighting administrative and political failures of an opposition party. Labor Senator Ray challenged the entire committee selection process and timing, questioning why Coalition Senators sought to establish these committees when in the previous parliament they opposed their establishment altogether:

Every time we put up a proposal for a select committee it got smashed by the government majority of the time ... And here we are two days into the sitting and ... the coalition are demanding that three committees be set up (2008: 358).

Central to the Labor government's opposition was even the perceived financial advantage non-government senators would receive for chairing these committees. As Senator Ray argued:

'This is a matter of Senate scrutiny': nonsense it is! Nonsense it is a matter of Senate scrutiny. It is a ruthless exercise in the numbers to line your own pockets (2008: 359).

Coalition Senators maintained the seeming hypocrisy of the new government who previously had managed to oppose the committee establishment (Ronaldson 2008: 364). However, both the ALP and Australian Greens Senators argued that the establishment of these select committees by the Coalition, just prior to the new Senate, was motivated primarily by political malice (Forshaw and Polley 2008: 336).

I feel as if I am in the twilight zone – truly! It is as if the last 2½ years did not happen. This morning

I went into my concerns about the coalition having amnesia. They have forgotten how they opposed virtually every committee that we tried to get up last year ... All of a sudden they have a road to Damascus experience, over the last couple of months ... (Siewart 2008: 366).

It must be noted that not all select committees established during this period were established for the same reason. While only two other select committees were created, these sought to address public interest issues, such as the *Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities*.

Majority control of the Senate following the 2004 election effectively constrained the establishment of Senate select committees. This did not allow any scrutiny of the executive and government on *ad hoc* political issues. In contrast, during a brief period after the 2007 election, Senate control was used to establish a number of Senate select committees whose task was exclusively to embarrass and highlight political and administrative failings of their opponents. This was significant as it occurred in a period when 'nearly half the Senate ... have no recollection and no corporate memory of the long history and tradition behind the Senate committee processes and why it often works so well' (Bartlett 2008: 360).

In this period select committees were used as a political tool that fell well short of the useful democratic functions these committees were intended to fulfil.

### **A Senate of Independents, Minor and Micro-parties**

The election of November 2013 was notable for, among other things, the preference deals between many of the minor and micro parties for Senate seats. The strategy of 'gaming' votes for this group was successful, with numbers on the crossbench reaching a record high of 18 (Barber and Johnson 2014: 14).<sup>2</sup>

A hostile Senate is nothing new in Australian politics, and governments are used to having to negotiate with the Senate crossbench (Weller 2006). However, the increased number of independents and micro-parties with diverse political agendas has resulted in a less predictable Senate, where major parties cannot be guaranteed consistent support. In this new Senate environment, select committees have become a form of political currency, whereby both major parties are supporting micro-party and independent senators' select committee formation and control in exchange for political support.

In September 2014, the Palmer United Party (PUP) successfully established a Senate select committee and

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parliamentary inquiry into *Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government Affairs*. The select committee and inquiry was driven by Clive Palmer MP, leader of the PUP, who was involved in a long running personal feud with the LNP Government in Queensland over Palmer's business and political interests in Queensland. Like the earlier inquiries into state governments, the inquiry was seen by the media and the Queensland LNP as an attempt to 'embarrass Queensland Premier, Campbell Newman, and his LNP government in the lead up to the 2015 Queensland state election' (Grattan 2014: 1). Liberal Senator George Brandis argued:

We know it comes from the member for Fairfax's vendetta against the Queensland government and we know the commercial interests he seeks to protect. And we must wonder why it is that he has put up those senators, whom he controls, to perpetrate upon the Senate the imposition of creating a constitutionally improper inquiry to serve his commercial interests and to prosecute his political vendettas (2014: 6817).

In seeking to have the select committee established, PUP senators negotiated with both the Greens and ALP. This process ran for over a month, during which time the motion for the inquiry was deferred and required several amendments. PUP Senator Lazarus argued that there was a need for this select committee inquiry because

... serious issues have been raised across the community regarding Queensland government appointments, judicial appointments, project approvals, use of funds, policies and practices, environmental degradation and various other matters (2014: 6817).

Debate to oppose the motion in the Senate was fierce. Coalition heavy weights Senators Abetz, Brandis and MacDonald all argued against the motion in that it was

... unlike any motion that has ever been moved in the 113-year history of the Senate ... The reason is that the motion is a gross abuse of the process of the Senate, is probably unlawful and is likely to attract a constitutional challenge in the High Court (Brandis 2014: 6818).

This was an argument that was highly questionable given the actions of the Senate in February 2008.

PUP secured the support of both the Greens and the ALP, Senator Lazarus was appointed chair of the

committee with an ALP and Green majority, with only one government senator appointed. Committee membership was contested by the government as it did not reflect the proportional composition of the Senate (MacDonald 2015: 47), thereby reducing government influence on the committee.

On 24 November 2014, the Senate resolved to establish a second select committee. This select committee was tasked to inquire into the regulatory governance and economic impact of wind turbines. The inquiry was unusual, as ordinarily this topic would be referred to the Senate's Environment and Communications References Committee. Additionally, this inquiry was moved by independent and micro-party senators<sup>3</sup> and proposed that both chair and deputy chair be nominated by the minor parties and independent senators (*Senate Select Committee on Wind Turbines 2014*). The government supported the establishment of the committee. No member of the Australian Greens was appointed.

The proposal for this select committee was uncommon because establishing a select committee has financial implications for the Senate and because the major parties in the Senate prefer to refer inquiries to an established standing committee over which they have control. The ALP and Green senators voted against the select committee; however, the motion was passed by a majority of one with the support of Coalition and cross-bench senators.

The political calculation involved in the establishment of this committee was criticised. Like the Inquiry into *Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government Affairs*, the *Inquiry into Wind Turbines* was established to exercise malicious political damage (Urquhart and Marshall 2015: 13-19). In particular, the terms of reference for the inquiry were premised upon the assumption that wind turbines had a significant detrimental effect on human health and the inquiry chose not to consider the broader environmental or economic benefits of wind energy. Further, the majority interim report gave significant weight to evidence provided by those parties opposed to wind farms, and little to peer-reviewed scientific evidence which found no negative health implication against wind farms (Urquhart and Marshall 2015: 14).

In light of the two select committees established in the current Senate, the ability of micro-party and independent senators to carry significant influence has caused concern. However, as Patrick Weller reminds us:

Some question the democratic credentials of a system that allows a small number of senators with limited electoral support to determine the future

legislation. But the response to that is that power can only be exercised by a minority if combined with the major political bloc (Weller 2006: 16).

Nonetheless, in the current climate where select committee establishment and control appear to be the 'gift' of major parties to senators with narrow political agendas, this influence is problematic. The use of power by the major parties is based upon a political patronage that does not challenge or seek to establish the democratic benefit of such political favour.

## Conclusion

This paper has argued that the past decade has seen the establishment and effectiveness of Senate select committees undermined. The composition of the Senate during this period has provided the environment in which this corrosion has occurred, resulting in a changing parliamentary culture and a weakening of democratic scrutiny. The election of 2004 was a catalyst for the decline in select committees, under a government that chose to use its majority to minimise scrutiny. The election of 2007 allowed the politically malicious use of select committees. In a Senate in which half the members were new, a void in knowledge of corporate history allowed a diminished opinion of select committees to be formed (Bartlett 2008: 360).

It is apparent in the current parliament that Senate select committees are political currency paid for the support of micro-party and independent senators. In addition the lack of a historical understanding of the role of these committees has rendered these *ad hoc* entities ineffective and a waste of Senate resources.

The nexus between Senate composition and select committee formation illustrates that a function of parliamentary democracy is increasingly being appropriated by political players to legitimise their own political priorities and silence diverse and constructive voices in the democratic dialogue. The current 'short-sighted' political culture of the Senate has undermined the value of Senate select committees, which ultimately will lead to a weaker democratic society.

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#### End Notes

1. Each portfolio area has a pair of standing committees. A legislative committee, tasked to review referred bills and a references committee, responsible for inquiries into broader policy matters. For more information see Evans and Laing 2012: 461.
2. The composition of the current 2015 Senate is: Coalition 33; ALP 25; Australian Greens 10; Palmer United Party 1; Independents 4; Liberal Democratic Party 1; Family First 1; Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party 1.
3. Senator David Leyonhjelm (Liberal Democratic Party of NSW); Senators John Madigan (Independent, Victoria), Senator Bob Day (Family First Party, South Australia) and Senator Nick Xenophon (Independent, South Australia) and Senator Chris Back (Liberal Party, Western Australia).

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# Neoliberalism, Auditing, Austerity and the Demise of Social Justice

PETER KHOURY

*The policies and strategies adopted by the conservative Abbott Liberal Coalition Government in its first two years in office embody stringent aspects of neoliberal ideology and practice. These include auditing, austerity and cost cutting measures that heavily weigh on the most vulnerable sectors of Australian society. This paper examines the 2014 National Commission of Audit as a preamble to and ideological blueprint for the austerity and budget measures of the Abbott administration. Particularly significant are the increasing inequalities engendered by neoliberalism, the attack on social welfare, far reaching cuts in government expenditure and the failure of the Abbott Government to act on tax reform resulting in the demise of social justice.*

## Introduction

This paper examines the role of the under-examined 2014 National Commission of Audit (NCOA), which was a preamble to, and ideological blueprint for, the austerity measures that were to be proposed in the 2014 and 2015 federal budgets and that characterise the first two years of the Abbott administration. It charts these developments followed by a discussion and analysis of the broader context of neoliberalism and austerity. The practical application of neoliberalism espoused in the NCOA's recommendations that provided the government with justification have seen public service and government cutbacks and a move towards a more residual form of welfare. One of the notable outcomes of neoliberal ideology and practice has been an increase in social and economic inequality.

Neoliberalism, both as an ideology and a set of practices, has been institutionalised across the broad spectrum of government finance and public administration over a number of decades by successive Labor and Liberal Coalition governments (Deeming 2014; Pusey 2010). A key feature of the Abbott Government is that it has prioritised facilitating the conditions for maximum capital accumulation and the promotion of private sector interests ahead of any detailed, long-term commitment to addressing poverty and inequality or a pronounced social justice agenda. Social justice in the context of this paper refers to distributive measures that ensure equitable access to rights and opportunities and a fairer redistribution of social and economic resources. The role of government is seen as pivotal in initiating reform and protecting the vulnerable. The central principles of social justice involve equity, access, participation and rights.

The neoliberal model positions the market (and not the state) as the key institution in society in meeting people's

needs and aspirations and distributing resources. At the core of neoliberalism is a business model of society (Connell and Dados 2014; Cahill et al. 2012).

Indeed, the scope and reach of neoliberalism has extended far beyond the domain of economic policy. It has involved the extension of market mechanisms to wider social and cultural realms, and not merely the allocation and distribution of economic resources. Brown (2015: 10) argues that neoliberalism has created a society where 'All conduct is economic conduct; all spheres of existence are framed and measured by economic terms and metrics, even when those spheres are not directly monetized'. Crouch (2014: 114-115) similarly argues,

Neoliberalism's central positive contention is not just that the market is always a better guide to public welfare than anything that can be attempted through political action, but also that values, interests, prejudices should only be expressed in ways that can be realised through the market.

The neoliberal framework has been imposed on a wide range of areas that historically have operated as not-for-profit entities: universities (Giroux 2014); public housing (Seth 2014); local government (Newman 2014); health care (Navarro 2007); Indigenous organisations (Khoury 2015); disability (Parker Harris et al. 2014); multicultural policy (Walsh 2014).

In its first two years in office, the Abbott Government has created the conditions for increasing economic prosperity for corporations and the wealthiest sectors of society.

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Couched in terms such as expanding markets, freedom of choice, curtailing government power, removing red tape and economic growth, the Abbott Government has embarked on a deregulation and marketisation agenda to a much greater and expanded degree compared to the Howard, Rudd, and Gillard administrations. Deregulation aims to enable business to operate with less restrictions and more freedom. It is based on the practice of reducing government regulation of anything that could diminish profits or hinder the expansion of business interests. Marketisation involves the promotion and transfer of economic activity from the public to the private sector. Such strategies invariably involve privatisation; the sale and outsourcing of state-owned enterprises and goods and services to private investors. As Funnell et al. (2009) and Aulich and Wettenhall (2008) have demonstrated; privatisation has resulted in significant loss of revenue for governments without any evidence of any greater efficiency, accessibility or affordability of services.

### **The 2014 National Commission of Audit**

One of the first initiatives of the Abbott Government upon being elected to office in 2013 was the establishment of a national commission of audit (NCOA 2014). During the 2013 election, the twin themes of self-reliance and government withdrawal of services permeated the neoliberal view (Abbott 2013a). Slogans such as 'the end of the age of entitlement' and the promise of an economic system that is free of 'red tape', 'government interference', and 'lower taxes' were presented as the salvation of a nation stated to be deeply in debt and crisis. Treasurer Hockey (2012: 3) stressed 'As a community we need to redefine the responsibility of government and its citizens to provide for themselves, both during their working lives and into retirement'. This market rationalism was strongly advocated by the National Commission of Audit and underpinned the 2014 budget and policies that followed. The terms of reference were couched in neoliberal monetary terms of thrift, restraint and fiscal discipline. Its aims were to 'ensure taxpayers received value for money from every dollar spent'; to 'eliminate wasteful spending'; the 'privatisation of Commonwealth assets' and the 'increasing contestability of services'. The Commission was asked to identify duplication and ascertain if the business sector could provide more efficient services than the public sector.

Commissions of audits have been used by conservative governments as a preamble to and ideological blueprint and legitimisation exercise for their preferred policies. The federal Liberal Coalition Government of John Howard held one in 1996. The Queensland state Liberal National Government of Campbell Newman introduced one in 2013 followed by unprecedented cuts to the public service, health and education (Colton and Faunce 2014; Jericho

2014; Marston 2014; Quiggin 2014a). The reports by previous commissions were centred on an agenda of government withdrawal, cutbacks and the shrinking of public services.

In reference to the ideas and targets put forward by commissions of audit, Colton and Faunce (2014: 561) point out, 'The policy directions they advocate, unlike election policies, have not come under the intense scrutiny, wide public debate or the opportunities for (dis) endorsement afforded by the electoral process'. Prior to the 2013 election, Australians were assured that there would not be any cuts or diminishing of services. Indeed on the eve of the 2013 federal election Tony Abbott (2013b) was specific in this reassurance, stating that there would be, 'No cuts to education, no cuts to health, no change to pensions, no change to the GST and no cuts to the ABC or SBS'. However, such a promise was not honoured when the Liberal Party coalition assumed office.

The Commission was presented as 'an independent body' yet the public profile of its committee members was clearly aligned to business, banking, finance and the conservative end of politics. The Chair of the Commission was a former President of the Business Council of Australia and the head of a large multinational corporation. Other commissioners had backgrounds related to their work in the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, Department of Treasury, and other senior positions in the financial sector and the Liberal Party. Notably, there were no representatives from the community sector in the Commission despite the vast majority of its recommendation having major ramifications for these sectors compared to the corporate and business sectors. For instance, there was a notable absence of representatives from the trade union movement, social welfare agencies, Indigenous bodies, the disability sector, and pensioners or any other social justice organisations in the Commission's membership.

The recommendations of the Commission suggested far reaching restructuring of government services and resources and represented a clear agenda of austerity. Austerity involves a set of policies that involve drastic spending cuts that aim to reduce government budget deficits and government expenditure. The Commission's report, *Towards Responsible Government*, was published in two parts and made a total of 86 recommendations across most areas of government spending and infrastructure. The report was very strong in its promotion of neoliberal principles of privatisation and marketisation. In part one of the report (NCOA 2014: xxviii) the committee noted, 'Within government, there is also scope to make better use of market mechanisms to drive efficiency and effectiveness, including outsourcing, competitive tendering and procurement'.

A select example of the report's recommendations in key areas included: the introduction of a Medicare co-payment of \$15 for GP visits; encouraging states to introduce co-payments for public hospital emergency ward visits; and increasing co-payments by \$5 for all medicines in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. In the area of education, the Commission recommended a decrease of commonwealth contribution to higher education costs from 59 per cent to 45 per cent, the deregulation of university fees, an increase in interest rates on the student (HELP) debt scheme and not proceeding with the final two years of the Gonski model of equity schools funding.

In the area of aged care, the Commission recommended increasing the eligibility age to seventy for the aged pension and including the value of the family home in assets tests for pensioners. The commission also argued for removing the national minimum wage. Unemployed people aged 22-30 were to be expected to relocate to 'high employment' areas or lose access to government benefits. Further, it recommended the introduction of tougher means testing of the Disability Support Pension. Targeted for privatisation were the Australian Hearing Services, Defence Housing, Australia Post and a host of other government bodies. The Commission recommended that 35 government bodies be abolished and 150 Commonwealth Indigenous programmes be consolidated into no more than seven as a cost saving measure. In the domain of public broadcasting, the Commission recommended benchmarking the ABC and SBS against each other and against commercial broadcasters. The introduction of 'efficiency dividends' for the ABC and SBS was expected to open them up to competitive market forces.

Elsewhere, the report was characterised by its many internal contradictions. For example, in several sections it advocated principles of good government, which were stated as 'Government should protect the truly disadvantaged and target public assistance to those most in need' (NCOA 2014: 8). Yet the overwhelming message and implications of the report suggested otherwise. Moreover, while it recommended major cutbacks and restructuring of major entitlements and institutions in Australian life, inserted throughout the report were statements such as 'Fairness and equity also matter a great deal to Australians and we accept government has a role to play in redistributing income' (NCOA 2014: 10).

### Do We Have a Budget Emergency?

Many of the recommendations of the Commission were echoed a few months later in the 2014 budget although some were slightly watered down. For example, the Medicare co-payment was reset at \$7.00 compared to the \$15.00 suggested by the Commission. The Australian

electorate were constantly reminded that, 'we are a nation of lifters, not leaners' and that sacrifices were needed for the good of the economy (Hockey 2014). However, the budget targeted low and middle income earners while the corporate sector and high income earners were spared parallel cuts and austerity measures. Indeed, its overwhelming dominant narrative, as opposition party and later as the incumbent government, has been an unsubstantiated negative campaign concerning dire threats to the Australian economy. Fiscal discipline and self-reliance were seen as the solution to what the government termed a 'fiscal crisis', and 'budget emergency'. Such a narrative, as seen in a number of overseas countries, fits well in a neoliberal strategy of austerity and government withdrawal.

One of the consistent arguments put forward by the government as a justification for its cuts in funding for health, education and social welfare has been the 'unacceptable' level of government debt. Government ministers, pre-election, made daily pronouncements that Australia was in the midst of a 'fiscal crisis' and the nation was embroiled in a 'serious debt problem'. However, such claims are not substantiated by existing fiscal evidence. These assertions are considered highly exaggerated and not backed-up with evidence as Frankel (2014), Quiggin (2014b), Marston (2014), Lewis (2014) and others have argued. This claim is also refuted by Stilwell (2014) who comments, 'The budget's central assumptions are the existence of a budget emergency and the need for major cuts in government spending. But the posited fiscal crisis is bogus: the Australian government's debt is one of the lowest of all the OECD countries'. Moreover, as Table 1 clearly illustrates, the national government debt in Australia is one of the lowest among comparable nations.

**Table 1.**

### Net Government Debt as Percentage of GDP: Selected International Comparisons 2012-2013.

Country	Net Govt. Debt
Greece	155.3
Italy	103.2
USA	87.8
France	84.0
United Kingdom	82.7
Spain	71.9
Germany	57.2
Canada	34.5
New Zealand	26.4
Australia	11.6

Source: International Monetary Fund (2015)

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The challenges to improve and balance government finances have been presented as out-of-control expenditure problems rather than revenue problems. Many authors have argued that the problem is not due to government debt but rather to untapped sources of taxation. Instead of focusing on tax revenue, the government sought to address the fiscal problem by targeting government spending through cutbacks and austerity measures. Grudnoff (2015: 4) explains 'The deficit exists not because spending has grown excessively, but because tax revenue has not grown to match spending requirements'. As will be discussed later in this paper, there appears to be a lack of political will by the current government to act on this anomaly.

Another key narrative used in the government's campaign to justify its austerity measures has been the international standing of the Australian economy but existing evidence does not substantiate such a claim. According to the Australian Trade Commission,

Australia's strong credit rating and impressive economic performance over the past decade has been the envy of many economies in the world. Australia remains one of only nine countries rated AAA with a stable outlook by the three major international credit rating agencies ... (Austrade 2014).

Such an endorsement signifies a solid and robust economy. Apart from challenging the government's assertion of a fiscal crisis and budget emergency, further evidence refutes the rationale for austerity. Australia, unlike most other nations, survived the 2007-2008 global financial crisis without the need for austerity measures, or a recession or an economic meltdown. In 2015, Australia maintains a comparatively low unemployment rate with increasing workforce participation and job growth. The government's twin arguments of debilitating government debt and a threatened economic standing remain unsubstantiated.

### **The Politics of Austerity**

Austerity measures serve a dual purpose: they are geared to reduce government spending while simultaneously facilitating government withdrawal from key responsibilities. Clarke and Newman (2012: 300) point out that austerity has been constructed and transformed from a crisis in the international banking and financial services industry to a public spending crisis problem centred on government debt. They note that austerity has been ideologically reworked from an

... economic problem (how to 'rescue' the banks and restore market stability) to a political problem (how to allocate blame and responsibility for the crisis): a reworking that has focused on the

unwieldy and expensive welfare state and public sector, rather than the high risk strategies of banks, as the root cause of the crisis.

Austerity has been ideologically reimaged and reduced to a technocratic and financial bookkeeping problem that can be solved by substantial government cutbacks in public spending using market metrics and other auditing techniques and rationalities (Denniss 2015; Power 1999). Absent from this strand of neoliberal rationality is the fact that public sector and social service resources are an integral component of community wellbeing and social inclusion and cannot be reduced to mere financial calculations. As Browne and Susen (2014: 221) stress, 'in times of crises, those who impose programs of austerity tend to present them as technocratic solutions to merely financial problems; rather than as social processes shaped by struggle and contestation'. This is also reflected in the protests, public opposition, poor government polls and attempts by the Senate to block many of Abbott's austerity measures. Similarly, Marston (2014) has illustrated how an austerity regime in Queensland was met with resistance and government attempts at restricting public debate, silencing dissent, increasing police powers and invoking law and order moral panics.

A consistent narrative of the Abbott Government has been the need to curtail welfare spending, reduce benefits and tighten eligibility conditions for the most disadvantaged groups: the poor, the elderly, unemployed youth, and the chronically sick. Levitas (2012) argues that austerity has become a mantra used by conservative governments against the allegedly excessive privileges emanating from an over-generous welfare state. It shifts responsibility back onto the individual instead of the state. As a result of austerity measures, many groups have lost benefits and access to services to which they were once entitled. Dominelli (2014: 83) notes, 'The age of austerity undermines universal rights and disempowers people as welfare claimants and as citizens holding their government accountable'.

Austerity measures and other forms of government withdrawal facilitate the way for privatisation and shift resource allocation and access from the public to the private sector. Giroux (2015) has forcefully argued that austerity measures produce massive disparities in wealth, income and power and impose constraints on well-being and freedom while serving to undermine faith in government. Paradoxically, austerity measures have not increased economic growth as shown in the illuminating studies by Schui (2014) and Blyth (2013). They conclude that, as a strategy to revitalise the economy or restore business confidence and entrepreneurial initiative, austerity has markedly failed. Cuts to government

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spending as a solution to budget deficits have largely penalised workers and increased unemployment.

### **Neoliberalism, Tax Reform and Rising Inequality**

In most Western democracies neoliberalism has become entrenched in the schemes and frameworks of government blueprints, operational guidelines, planning and evaluation goals at all levels. As Manne and McKnight (2010) have clearly demonstrated, it has largely reinforced, indeed exacerbated, a range of social inequalities. Other authors have shown that inequality worldwide has increased under neoliberalism. Where neoliberalism has been applied, upward social mobility in those nations has significantly decreased in recent decades (Tcherneva 2014; OECD 2010).

Supporters of neoliberalism promote its virtues by arguing that it has generated enormous wealth and national prosperity. However, the overwhelming counterpoint to this line of argument is that the wealth and prosperity generated through neoliberal policies have not filtered down to the rest of the population. In Australia, national wealth has remained concentrated among the wealthiest 10 per cent of individuals and corporations. As Richardson and Denniss (2014) have shown, the wealth of the seven richest individuals in Australia is greater than the nation's bottom 1.73 million households combined. They note that the bottom 20 per cent of households own roughly \$54 billion in wealth while the seven richest individuals in the country own more than \$56 billion in accumulated assets. Moreover, as Stilwell and Jordan (2007) have substantiated, there has been a substantial shift of income from labour to capital over the last quarter century. These trends are further reinforced by the notable research of Piketty (2014) and Stiglitz (2013) who have highlighted the growing social and economic inequalities in advanced neoliberal economies.

While the 2014 and 2015 budgets focused attention on cuts to public spending, there has been little focus on how corporate financial and tax practices perpetuate and reinforce current inequities. Research conducted by The Tax Justice Network (2015) examined taxes paid over the last decade by the top 200 companies on the Australian Stock Exchange. The findings show that the leading companies pay an average effective tax rate of 23 per cent, which is well below the current corporate tax rate of 30 per cent. The data also reveals that 29 per cent of the companies have an effective tax rate of 10 per cent or less; and 14 per cent have an effective tax rate of zero. This represents the loss of an estimated \$8.4 billion in annual public revenue. Other research by the Parliamentary Library (Aston 2015) reveals that the five largest pharmaceutical companies in Australia paid a combined total of \$10 million in tax from earnings of

\$5 billion. These figures represent one per cent in tax for every dollar earned by these companies.

Even though these growing tax revenue inequities have been belatedly acknowledged, there have been no attempts by the Abbott Government to redress this lost revenue or introduce legislation to curtail such corporate practices. The government has favoured the neoliberal strategy of cutting social expenditure rather than broadening the tax base. The loss of potential tax revenue from these and other corporate sources has provided the Abbott Government with another rationale for reduced welfare spending.

Parallel to the creation of wealth and privilege under neoliberal regimes, poverty and other social disadvantages are on the increase in Australia (ACOSS 2014: 8-11). The Committee for Economic Development of Australia (2015) reported that an estimated four to six per cent of the population experience chronic or persistent poverty or deprivation. The report noted that current policies that are mainly designed to get people into, or back into, the labour market are not sufficient on their own. From a social justice perspective a wider range of social services and community resources are needed to address entrenched structural disadvantage.

Market orientated policies have shifted the burden from the corporate sector onto individuals and families. While wages have increased they have had to cover the many new and increased expenses and fees that were once borne by government benefits, subsidies and services. The expansion of privatisation, outsourcing, competitive tendering, and user-pay schemes has meant that families have to pay more for health care, education, transport and other basic amenities such as gas, electricity, telephone costs, and other expenses (Saunders 2011; Murphy et al. 2011; Masterman-Smith and Pocock 2008; Pusey 2003). Furthermore, the most recent gender indicators by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) reveal that women remain disadvantaged in income levels, employment participation rates, access to superannuation and a host of other social and economic indicators. The Brotherhood of St Laurence (2015) also report that almost one million people experience deep social exclusion. The above themes and findings are also echoed by Morris and Wilson's (2014) study of living on the Newstart unemployment benefit. Their study illuminates the increasing range of hardships that unemployed people encounter while living on Newstart. The low level of disposable income has major ramifications for housing, health and social isolation. What is also distinctive about Newstart and other restructuring of welfare entitlements is that they have adopted a punitive approach to social welfare.

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Analysis of both the 2014 and 2015 budgets indicates that inequality will grow and contribute to ongoing disadvantage. Budget analysis by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) 2015 and the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (Taylor 2015; Hutchens 2015) reveals that the poorest 20 per cent of households will lose up to 7.1 per cent of their total disposable income over the next four years. By contrast, the wealthiest 20 per cent of households will see their disposable incomes increase over the same period. The figures below illuminate what austerity looks like. According to ACOSS (2015) the combined cutbacks in the 2014 and 2015 budgets include:

- \$126 million cut from child dental programmes
- \$1 billion cut in health funding
- \$6 billion cuts to family payments
- \$80 billion cut over 10 years for hospitals and education
- \$1 billion in cuts to essential community services
- \$674 million from affordable housing and homelessness programmes
- \$500 million cut from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and programmes.

### **The Demise of Social Justice**

Neoliberalism fosters a culture of individualism as opposed to a collective responsibility for social wellbeing. Its notion of a fair society is diametrically different to a social justice perspective. For neoliberalism, a fair society centres on self-reliance and opportunity in a competitive marketplace. Failure to achieve economic prosperity is seen as the fault and responsibility of the individual and not the system. At the core of neoliberalism is a view of society powerfully encompassed by Margaret Thatcher's famous phrase 'There is no such thing as society' – only individuals pursuing their economic interests. This idea, reinforced and echoed by self-made millionaires, right-wing think tanks and the bastions of commerce and industry, fails to acknowledge that individuals are not just 'economic units' as neoliberalism constructs them. They are also 'social beings' that are intrinsically interconnected with others in family, work, and social networks, community associations, political struggles, national identities, collective aspirations – and a shared humanity.

Davies (2014) and Harvey (2007: 64-86) have argued that, contrary to the popular view, neoliberalism is not totally against state intervention and state provision of resources. Its contradiction is that on the one hand it calls for cutting expenditure on social welfare, health care and government withdrawal from essential services. It sees

these as a threat to specific understandings of 'freedom', 'individual choice', 'self-reliance', 'autonomy' and as a form of state coercion. Paradoxically, on the other hand state intervention is called upon (when capital interests require it) for corporate welfare, rescue plans for ailing companies, company bailouts, tax exemptions, fiscal incentives, financial subsidies for job creation and other economic stimuli. Indeed, as witnessed during the global financial crisis of 2007 and 2008, the state was called upon to preserve and salvage the corporate *status quo* and banking and investment interests.

The post-WWII development of the welfare state in Australia engendered redistribution and had a wide-reaching vision of state financed entitlements and resources. The role of welfare moved beyond helping those in need to general citizenship rights, universal entitlements to healthcare, universities, schools and other support mechanisms for the wider society (Jamrozik 2009: 75-100; Bessant et al. 2006). What changed in recent decades has been a transformation from a welfare state to a neoliberal state in Australia. Neoliberal policies began undermining the social democratic policies of the 1970s. As many studies have illustrated, the gap between rich and poor has intensified, and poverty and social disadvantage are increasing (ACOSS 2014; Murphy et al. 2011).

Another significant ideological myth propagated by neoliberalism and its adherents is that the provision of social welfare creates dependency and lack of thrift and self-motivation. On the contrary, from its post-WWII origins, the welfare state in Australia and other advanced economies was designed to address a myriad of social and economic exclusion. Benefits and services were geared to enable the most disadvantaged to acquire skills, training, education, employment and income support that would lead to self-sufficiency and independence (Jamrozik 2009; Rothstein 1998; Pierson 1998; Esping-Andersen 1990). The welfare state was never designed to encourage dependency or withdrawal from society. At its basic level it was seen as partial compensation for those who miss out on opportunities, life chances and other resources that are enjoyed by many. It was geared to provide social protection and enhance citizenship while counteracting some of the harsh inequalities of industrial capitalism (Kennedy 1989). The argument that welfare creates a culture of dependency has been used as a powerful ideological tool of victim blaming and a justification for austerity (Mendes 2008: 42-65; 2012).

Contrary to neoliberal ideology, social justice is best achieved through state forms of redistribution, mainly through the taxation system and the provision of social resources and benefits (Jamrozik 2009; Stilwell and

Jordon 2007: 203-222). The evidence presented in this paper shows that the current government has disregarded these two target areas as effective avenues to achieve redress and social amelioration. On the contrary, there has been an attack on welfare spending and a reluctance to act on tax reform.

## Conclusion

Stiglitz (2014) reminds us that 'inequality is not the result of inexorable laws of economics but rather of policy; and that countries that adopt policies that lead to high inequality pay a high price – inequality not only leads to a divided society and undermines democracy, but it weakens economic performance'. The Abbott Government has embodied the neoliberal vision to a large degree without counteracting its significant shortcomings. It has created conditions that have largely favoured the corporate sector and the wealthiest groups. Nowhere in the calculations and financial restructuring of state resources and benefits has there been any vision of a fairer society or a commitment to social justice.

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#### ***harrington tricolour negates: a suite of bankstown poems***

i.

serpentine veneer of brain  
that virus mob  
sneakers for function  
victorious as air

ii.

fo' shorty, deep  
fried wayside orange  
sweetstrip, slo' drive

iii.

brick blob parrot  
parenthetical micro  
cede guide loam  
ochre, remorse of residence

*R. D. Wood,  
PERTH, WA*

#### the kangaroo hunt or a ute, 2 cartons and 3 dogs

silhouette chase  
at sunset  
had come to this

and knowing  
it had lost

the kangaroo  
turned its head

one ear  
already hanging jagged  
like a snapped branch

- at what point  
did it choose  
to accept the jaws  
  
and not judge  
the menace of teeth  
  
to catch at final breath  
and fold to landscape?

they could have shot

but left it  
for the ripping of dog

*ADRIAN FLAVELL,  
ADELAIDE, SA*

# The 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum and Its Aftermath

NEIL MCGARVEY

*The 2014 Scottish independence referendum was a truly historical vote with the future of Scotland's union with the rest of the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) being placed in the hands of the electorate of Scotland. This article is divided into three parts. The first outlines the underlying political processes that led to the 2014 vote. The second part examines the referendum itself, assessing both the campaign process and the vote itself. The final section explores the unanticipated aftermath of the 'No' vote. Overall it is suggested that, despite the relatively conclusive 55-45 per cent vote against independence, the landslide 'victory' of the Scottish National Party at the 2015 UK General Election suggests that the issue of Scotland's constitutional status in the UK remains an open one.*

Despite the relatively conclusive 55-45 per cent vote against Scottish independence in September 2014, initial notions that this would put the issue to bed 'for a generation' have proved to be wrong (see Withnail 2014). The political fall-out that has succeeded it has been profound and, most importantly, it has not removed the issue of Scotland's constitutional status from the UK political agenda. Indeed, the election of 56 Scottish National Party MPs at the 2015 UK General Election planted it in the heart of Westminster.

The 2014 referendum is likely to be viewed historically as a critical juncture in both Scottish and UK politics. It has also had a rippling impact in other arenas of UK and European politics that may just be at their initial stages. This article reviews the referendum's impact and is divided into three parts. In this first part we examine how Scotland arrived at the referendum, why it was called and what processes led to it. It is only by appreciating these processes that the legacy of the referendum can be understood. Since the emergence of the SNP as a force in Scottish politics in the 1970s, it has been underlying political processes, as well as electoral outcomes, that have shaped the trajectory of politics.

The second part will look specifically at the referendum itself – the campaign and the vote. It is suggested that the campaign process, rather than the referendum result, is the main legacy of 2014. By having the referendum, the SNP placed Scotland's constitutional question as the question in Scottish politics.

The final section will focus on its aftermath. It was always assumed that a 'Yes' vote would have obvious far-reaching consequences (the break-up of the 1707 Union, the creation of a new European state etc.), but

no one quite considered just how seismic the impact of a 'No' vote would be. The process of having the referendum has fundamentally realigned the political preferences of a large segment of the population in Scotland. Politics by its nature tends to be a tribal and partisan based activity with an 'us' and 'them' mentality that is an almost natural consequence in any political system. The referendum process has solidified unionist (a belief in the UK union) and nationalist (a belief in an independent Scotland) tribal divisions in Scotland. Although the referendum did not change Scotland's constitutional status, it did, however, significantly change perceptions, frames of reference and the overall agenda of Scottish politics. In essence the actors, arena, backdrop and stage on which Scottish politics takes place in 2015 have all been altered by the legacy of the 2014 referendum.

## Scotland and the Union 1707-2014

Prior to devolution in 1999, the UK was often labelled as a unitary state because of the dominance of the institutions of the UK state in Westminster and Whitehall. However, viewed from Scotland it was more accurately perceived as a union state (see Mitchell 2014). The 1707 Acts of Union between Scotland and England left distinct features of Scottish governance in place. The 'holy trinity' of a separate legal system, religion and education arrangements were left in place. Through these, and the development of its own governing arrangements through the creation of the Scottish Office in 1885, over the course of the 20th century Scotland developed its own distinct civil society which over the decades gradually evolved into a distinct polity and political system. Scotland had separate educational and sporting institutions, media, professional associations, trade unions, voluntary agencies and the like (see Brown et al. 1998: 27-46). These organisations, combined

with Scottish Office civil service assumptions about policymaking based around pluralism, consensus and compromise led to the evolution of distinct Scottish policy processes (see Cairney and McGarvey 2013: 154-170). The extent of the autonomy of these processes from the UK was debated prior to devolution (see Kellas 1989; Mitchell et al. 1991). Since the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 there has been increased scope for autonomous policymaking.

When a party emerged committed to Scotland's independence it could point to pre-existing policymaking institutions as evidence of Scottish capacity for home rule and independence. The Scottish National Party made an electoral breakthrough at UK General Elections in February 1974, doubling their vote and increasing their seats from one to seven. Their rise coincided with an erosion of support for the two main parties across Britain.

The Labour UK Government responded to the rise of the SNP by passing legislation to create a new Scottish Assembly, subject to a referendum in 1979. Despite a majority voting for that Assembly in 1979 (see table 1) it was never created due to a spoiling amendment to the Act that required over 40 per cent of the registered electorate to vote Yes (effectively those who did not turnout became No voters). There then followed 18 years of UK Conservative Government that failed to respond to increased demands for governing autonomy in Scotland, despite the party collapsing in support there.

**Table 1: The 1979 devolution referendum result**

	% of votes	% of electorate
Yes	51.6	32.8
No	48.4	30.8
Turnout 63.6%		

Scotland was perceived to suffer from a democratic deficit. Political parties such as Labour and the Liberal Democrats and institutions drawn from Scottish civil society established a Scottish Constitutional Convention (SCC) in 1989 for the purpose of enabling a blueprint for devolved governance to be drawn up. The SNP was not part of the SCC but was by then gaining increased support after a decade-long slump, by sharpening its social democratic profile. Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s constitutional preferences, national identity and party choice became linked in the voters' minds (see Bennie et al. 1997). The hard-line unionist Conservative Party went into decline and lost all of its Scottish seats in 1997.

The SCC influenced the parameters of the eventual devolved arrangements established in 1999 (see table 2 for details). This was after the 1997 UK General Election

when Labour won a landslide victory. The inflexibility and declining support of the Conservative Party in Scotland whilst in power in the UK (1979-1997) was a significant factor in mobilising support for the creation of a Scottish Parliament. As Michael Gove argued, 'You could only be a good Scot if you were pro-Scottish Parliament and anti-Thatcher: the three became one' (Hassan 2012: 85). As Keating (2010: 97) correctly asserts, the pre-devolution unity in Scottish politics arose because parties and groups were united *against* something (the Conservatives) rather than what they were *for*.

**Table 2: Reserved and Devolved Policy Areas 1999-2015**

Policy Areas Reserved by the UK Parliament	Policy Areas Devolved to the Scottish Parliament
International relations	Health
Defence, national security	Education and training
Fiscal and monetary policy	Economic development
Immigration and nationality	Local government
Drugs and firearms	Law and home affairs
Regulation of elections	Police and prisons
Employment	Fire and ambulance services
Company law	Social work
Consumer protection	Housing and planning
Social security	Transport
Regulation of professions	
The civil service	Environment
Energy, nuclear safety	Agriculture
Air transport, road safety	Fisheries
Gambling	Forestry
Equality	Sport
Human reproductive rights	The arts
Broadcasting, copyright	Devolved research, statistics

Source: adapted from: Cairney and McGarvey (2013: 197)

Elected by a landslide, the Blair-led Labour Government immediately called a referendum at which the creation of a new Scottish Parliament was overwhelmingly endorsed (see table 3). The Scottish Parliament was re-convened in 1999. For its first eight years the Labour-Liberal Democrat administration formed from it, the Scottish Executive, pursued a rather unambitious agenda careful not to 'rock the boat' in relations with the Labour-led UK Government. That all changed in 2007 when the SNP became the largest party in the Scottish Parliament. They immediately changed the title of the Scottish Executive to 'Government', signalling their intent. The SNP Government sought to project itself as standing up for the people of Scotland. However, the Parliament still had a majority of unionist members (MSPs from the UK's three major parties that are opposed to Scottish independence

– Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat) so the SNP could not hold the constitutional referendum they desired.

**Table 3: The 1997 referendum result**

	% Yes	% No
Support for a Scottish Parliament	74.3	25.7
Support for taxation powers	63.3	36.4
Turnout 60.2%		

That all changed in 2011 when the party gained a majority in the Scottish Parliament. In the aftermath the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron and Scottish First Minister, Alex Salmond signed the ‘Edinburgh Agreement’, which reflected their negotiation and agreement on the terms of the referendum that was to be held in 2014. The Conservative PM was in a weak position to block the perceived mandate the SNP achieved at the 2011 election – their manifesto had included a commitment to an independence referendum. Thereafter, the constitutional issue became the key issue and dominated the agenda of Scottish politics.

### The 2014 Referendum

The 2014 referendum campaign was vibrant, lively and engaging. Officially the campaign only started in April 2014, but in reality it started when ‘Yes Scotland’ and ‘Better Together’ launched their respective campaigns in early summer 2012.

The turnout of 84.5 per cent reflected a level of political engagement not seen for decades. 16 and 17 year olds were given the vote for the first time. The constitutional future of Scotland superseded sport, celebrity, TV and any other form of gossip both in the real world of conversations in town halls, cafes, bars and streets as well as the online trending world of twitter, social media and live streaming.

**Table 4: Scottish Independence Referendum Result**

Should Scotland Be an Independent Country?		
No	2,001,926	55.3%
Yes	1,617,989	44.7%
Turnout 84.6%		

Outside Scotland, the referendum only really grabbed the headline attention of the UK and overseas media when, 11 days prior to the poll, the first opinion poll predicting a Yes victory was published. Panic in the Better Together campaign led to the cancellation of House of Commons Prime Minister’s Question Time and visits north by the Prime Minister and unionist party leaders as well as the rather unique event of a former UK Prime Minister

(Labour’s Gordon Brown) announcing a timetable for a new union in a closed doors Labour Party meeting in Midlothian, apparently with the consent of David Cameron! In a vow displayed on the front page of *The Daily Record*, a leading tabloid newspaper in Scotland, the three UK leaders of the unionist parties pledged to give ‘extensive new powers for the Scottish Parliament’ if the No vote won (*Daily Record* 2014). Effectively, the *status quo* was no longer an option – both Yes and No voters were voting for change and more powers for Scotland.

The final result reflected a substantial shift in Scottish public opinion over the course of the campaign. In December 2013, the average poll was 63 per cent No, 37 per cent Yes (see <http://whatscotlandthinks.org/>). There was general agreement that although the Yes side lost the vote it had ‘won’ the campaign in terms of shifting more ‘don’t know’ and ‘no’ voters into their camp over the course of it. The 45 per cent vote Yes achieved would have been viewed as more credible if polling day had not been preceded by a narrowing of the polls in the final days of the campaign. Generally speaking, the more affluent areas of Scotland had higher No majorities while the four areas with Yes majorities were the areas of former heavy industry and mining with larger incidences of deprivation. Only four of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas voted Yes.

Other features of the differences between the No and Yes vote are worth noting. According to the official Scottish referendum study (Henderson and Mitchell 2015), a majority of men – 53.2 per cent – voted Yes, while a majority of women – 56.6 per cent – voted No. The older were more likely to vote No – 65.7 per cent of over 70s voted No, while 62.5 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds voted Yes. There were also differences in terms of religious denomination – while 56 per cent of Catholics voted Yes, only 40.9 per cent of Protestants did so. However, perhaps the most striking figure is the fact that a majority of those born in Scotland voted Yes – 52.7 per cent. It was the weakness of the Yes vote amongst those from outside the UK – 42.9 per cent – that meant that No was in the majority.

The Yes Scotland message of a positive and progressive vision for a future Scotland stood in contrast to the more negative tone of the unionist Better Together side with prediction of disinvestment, currency chaos and separation. In a sense, Yes Scotland were outlining the benefits of divorce – a fresh start and the possibility of redefining the relationship – while Better Together were outlining its negatives – cost, finality and pain.

### The Aftermath

Just an hour after the official declaration of the victory for the Better Together unionist campaign, David Cameron

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linked English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) with plans for further devolution to Scotland. It was nakedly party political – over 97 per cent of Conservative MPs were drawn from English seats. The unionist language pre- and post-referendum significantly changed in tone. Unionism has been in retreat in Scotland for a number of years. If anything, this retreat has gathered pace despite the referendum victory in 2014. The SNP's party membership has increased from around 25,000 to over 100,000, and it now holds 95 per cent of Scottish seats at Westminster with its support in opinion polls continuing to grow. For a period during the 2015 UK General Election campaign it looked as if the SNP could hold the balance of power in the Westminster Parliament, but the Tories emerged with a slim majority.

The UK Government's EVEL reforms will see the Speaker of the House of Commons certifying that Bills or parts of Bill 'relate exclusively' to England (or England and Wales) and these Bills will have to receive the explicit consent of a new Legislative Grand Committee that will exclude Scottish MPs. English-only Bills will now require a double majority of both the whole House and English-only MPs. Controversially, this change was introduced via an amendment to House of Commons standing orders rather than new legislation. The clear demarcation of 'English'-only legislation may inject more nationalism into the UK chamber. The unionist former Secretary of State for Scotland Alistair Carmichael suggested that the new threat to the Union came from English rather than Scottish nationalism (Maddox 2015).

All the mainstream parties in Scotland (including the SNP) engaged with the Smith Commission, which was established in order to ensure that the UK unionists' party leaders' vow was translated into actuality. In order to translate the vow into effect there was a rushed timetable with symbolic Scottish dates – St Andrews Day, 30 November 2014 and Burns Night, 25 January 2015 – the respective deadlines for draft proposals and draft legislation. All of the unionist parties committed to introducing a new Scotland Bill after the 2015 UK General Election.

The Smith recommendations included allowing the Scottish Parliament power over the basic income tax rate and bands (but not allowances), to receive a proportion of VAT, new borrowing powers, new welfare powers and a hotchpotch of other new devolved powers. Predictably the SNP, although participating in the Commission, argued it failed to deliver the vow and was not the promised 'modern form of Home Rule'.

They did have a point in that it reflected a new incremental extension to devolution based on the evolutionary path

pursued since 1999, rather than any dramatic departure from it. Post-devolution, successive UK Governments have established a new territorial governing code. After centuries of UK unitary state constitutional conservatism, there has been much post-devolution flexibility – the UK is gradually becoming an ever-looser union with successive UK Governments accepting asymmetrical devolved arrangements (see McGarvey 2015). Territorial constitutional tinkering is now established as part of mainstream politics in the UK. There is usually little effort to identify any underlying principles when constitutional politics are discussed – party interests rather than principles have been more evident. Until the 1970s, the number of constitutional referendums held in Scotland was zero. Since then there have been five with another one on the horizon – a referendum on EU membership. Referendums, alien until the 1970s, have quickly become conventional custom and practice in the Westminster constitutional order (McGarvey 2015).

The 2015 UK General Election campaign was notable for the centrality of 'The Scottish Question' (see Mitchell 2014) all the way through it and the demonisation of the SNP outside Scotland. The SNP were what social psychologists would term 'othered' – they were the bogeymen (and women) from Scotland who were threatening to govern the rest of the UK through propping up a potential minority Labour administration (they had ruled out supporting a Conservative Government).

The 2015 UK General Election results signalled a fundamental shift with 56 of Scotland's 59 MPs being Scottish nationalist with UK General Election voting preferences in England and Scotland increasingly diverging since the 1960s. The Labour Party's recent demise in Scotland mirrors that of the Conservative Party from the 1960s, albeit within a much shorter time frame. The Liberal Democrat collapse (almost wholly due to their decision to enter into coalition with the toxic Conservatives at Westminster in 2010) meant that the three main Unionist Parties now only have one MP each in Scotland (see table 5). Party preferences in Scotland and England bear little resemblance, with the rising United Kingdom Independence Party gaining 12.6 per cent at UK level but only 1.6 per cent in Scotland.

In terms of seats gained in Scotland, Labour did not lose a UK General Election between 1959 and 2015, and until 2007 were Scotland's 'establishment party'. The Scottish Labour Party leader, Johann Lamont, resigned after the referendum citing UK Labour interference and the treatment of the Scottish party as a 'branch office' by its UK headquarters. Lamont was replaced by Jim Murphy, the Westminster MP and former UK Defence Minister. He lasted only a few months, resigning after the party's

routing in Scotland at the 2015 General Election. The party has had six leaders in Scotland since 2007, which is an indicator of the turmoil it has gone through.

The partisan realignment of the electorate in Scotland towards the SNP was a process established in 2007 but the referendum campaign effectively crystallised it, with the 2015 Westminster election result affirming it (see table 5). The referendum established the constitution as the most salient issue in Scottish politics, polarising it with the SNP key beneficiaries. Yes voters aligned with the nationalists (with small minorities from the Scottish Green Party and socialist parties). In contrast the No vote was split amongst the three mainstream unionist parties.

**Table 5: General Elections in Scotland 1979-2015**

	Labour	Conservative	SNP	Lib Dem <sup>1</sup>
	Vote Seats	Vote Seats	Vote Seats	Vote Seats
	%	%	%	%
1979	41.5 44	31.4 22	17.3 2	9.0 3
1983	35.1 41	28.4 21	11.8 2	24.5 8
1987	42.4 50	24.0 10	11.0 3	19.4 9
1992	39.0 49	25.6 11	21.5 3	13.1 9
1997	45.6 56	17.5 0	22.1 6	13.0 10
2001	43.2 55	15.6 1	20.1 5	16.4 10
2005	39.5 41	15.8 1	17.7 6	22.6 11
2010	42.0 41	16.7 1	19.9 6	18.9 11
2015	24.3 1	13.9 1	50.0 56	7.5 1

Devolution and governance by a nationalist administration since 2007 has shifted perceptions amongst the Scottish electorate regarding where political power and authority is and should be. Prior to 2014, intergovernmental relations were cordial with each side according the other a degree of respect oiled by the diplomatic skills of the UK civil service. However, there are increasing signs of strain. In the aftermath of the referendum, constitutional politics in the UK have shifted to questions of European Union (EU) membership and EVEL. Both signpost potential, what Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon referred to as, 'changes in material circumstance' that, according to her, would justify a new independence referendum. The looming EU referendum signals the possibility of the whole of the UK opting to leave, whilst Scotland votes to stay (opinion polls hint that this *could* happen). Sturgeon has suggested that, in recognition of the UK as a partnership of nations, all four – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – should be required to vote in unison if the UK is to withdraw.

This is another tactic in the overall SNP strategy of being seen to be Scotland's party and standing up for the national interest. Successive Scottish Election studies (see Johns et al. 2010; Carmen et al. 2014) show that a

party's capacity to 'stand up for Scotland' is an important factor in determining vote choice. The SNP have replaced Labour as the party perceived by most to be best placed to do that. The referendum, by increasing the saliency of the constitutional status of Scotland, has meant the issue that is the *'raison d'être'* of the SNP remains at the forefront of the agenda of Scottish politics.

## Conclusion

Scotland is a rather unique international case. Contrary to central assumptions of modernist social and political theory, state, society and nation are not aligned in Scotland. The past half-century of Scottish politics has been a story of their realignment with both unionist and nationalist forces playing their part. Much of political association, organisation and opinion formation in Scotland has been about Scottish distinction and difference vis-à-vis the rest of the UK. Deference and commitment to the UK political system has declined sharply.

The UK has shifted in just two decades from the label 'unitary state' to a 'state of unions'. Since 1999, it has been evident that Scottish devolution is an incremental process, with polls consistently showing majorities in favour of more governing autonomy. While independence was judged a step too far in 2014, the unionist parties have struggled to devise a formula for stable devolved governing arrangements. The Smith Commission, which was established to ensure UK unionists' party leaders' vow to devolve more power to Scotland, provided proposals, reflected in the Scotland Bill 2015-2016, that do not look like a recipe for stability.

The Scottish nationalists are rather like the orphan child in *Oliver Twist* and have become the cheerleaders for 'more, more, more' autonomy. In 2015, the slogan became Full Fiscal Autonomy – a watered down version of independence. If the SNP continue to be in the ascendancy then the issue of the Scottish constitution and a new referendum is likely to remain at the forefront of politics.

Devolution in Scotland is now 16 years old. It has come of age. Its future trajectory and direction are not yet clear. However, a key factor in determining its path remains the Westminster Parliament. Scotland's immediate future remains inextricably attached to the UK. However, despite the referendum result in 2014, question marks remain whether its ambitions can be accommodated within the union. To date, the unionist parties' response to the SNP has been a series of grudging incremental adjustments without any clear principles underlying them. The Smith Commission and the subsequent Scotland Bill (going through the UK Parliament in 2015) are the most recent chapters of this story.

A key legacy of the referendum is the elevated level of political engagement, interest and participation. There is a real sense in Scotland that the referendum has fundamentally changed Scottish politics. The grassroots mobilisation of the referendum campaign was a glimpse into political processes that change the notion that elected politicians and institutions are the sole source of power and authority. Effectively, the sovereignty of Scotland passed over to the people of Scotland for one day on 18 September 2014. The old politics of apathy, ritualistic Labour party voting and Westminster rule by either Labour or Conservative are now being seriously questioned. What is ironic is that much of this is in an effort to retain the 'old' politics of social democracy, government intervention, welfare and social justice. There remains a commitment to a traditional, universal, comprehensive and free-at-the-point-of-use Scottish welfare approach by the SNP.

However, I remain sceptical of claims by Scotland as a nation experiencing a democratic awakening and a haven of progressive politics. The record of Scotland's post-devolution Governments since 1999 when set against indices of poverty, deprivation, social exclusion and the like remains patchy at best. The largesse of state grants and subsidies reflected in new policies such as free personal care for the elderly, free prescriptions, the freezing of council tax and free university education has benefitted 'middle' Scotland rather more than those in lower classes (who had previously received many of these public services free in any case). The myth of Scottish social democracy is a classic example of 'words that succeed and policies that fail' (Edelman 1977). The post-devolution Scottish public policy-making process has been as much about symbolic as substantive outcomes. The assumptive world (Young 1977) of Scottish politics – the stage directions, lines and cues that guide action – is dominated by the notion of Scottish difference and social democracy. Scottish politicians like to talk the language of social democracy and progressiveness, but in actuality still preside over a society that resembles that of a 'neo-liberal' state.

Post-2015, the lingering question of the political legitimacy of the Conservative UK Government in Scotland has been questioned. Although its governing authority cannot be questioned under existing constitutional arrangements, its electoral weakness means it lacks political legitimacy. This is the weapon that the SNP are likely to use going forward, especially if they gain another majority in the Scottish Parliament in 2016. Further devolution to Scotland also has the obvious, 'what about us?' effect in the other countries of the UK (and to a lesser extent the regions of England). The current territorially asymmetrically devolved arrangements are likely to come under increasing strain. So too is the traditional (and to a degree on-going) British

conception of statecraft based on strong, centralised Westminster governance.

The Scottish question has not been definitively resolved by the referendum. The fluidity of the UK's constitutional arrangements is likely to remain for the foreseeable future, with Scottish independence a medium term possibility despite the 2014 Referendum result. Scotland remains something of a comparative curiosity on the international stage – clearly a nation, but even more clearly not a state. The referendum was definitely an important event – the latest staging post on Scotland's journey towards enhanced governing autonomy. Whether it is part of the process towards Scottish independence remains an open question.

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#### End Notes

1. The Liberal Democrat vote in 1979 refers to the Liberal Party, and in 1983 and 1987 the Liberal/SDP Alliance.

#### Author

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#### *A Poet Makes the News*

I receive the news from Dublin  
while eating breakfast:  
Seamus Heaney is dead.

Thoughts turn to "Casualty,"  
"Digging" and "Mid-Term Break,"  
Shelley on Keats, Auden on Yeats.

Driving to work, the radio on,  
I catch Heaney reading the last  
line of a poem I am too slow

to recognize. His voice, unexpected,  
alive just hours ago, evades  
my guard. The tears come,

oozing uninvited for a man  
I never met. All morning,  
articles, obituaries, videos

of the poet reading his work  
arrive in my office, sent  
from Europe, Australia, North America.

A colleague tells a grand tale  
of Heaney teaching her to dance  
a reel at a céilidhe in North Carolina.

Every major English-language  
news organization in the world  
reports Heaney's passing.

Syria is bumped.  
Obama can wait.  
Poetry is world news.

I lunch alone, raise a pint of Guinness  
in Seamus' honour, read "Scaffolding"  
on my phone in the corner of the pub.

Driving home, Heaney is on the radio  
reading "The Toome Road"  
and Paul Muldoon is reminiscing

about meeting Heaney in Armagh.  
Muldoon attempts to read "Digging,"  
chokes up, unable to bury his grief.

NATHANAEL O'REILLY,  
FT. WORTH, TX, USA

## The 2015 parliamentary elections in Turkey – A Turkish Spring?

SEDAT MULAYIM

*The results of the Turkish election of June 2015 were not what President Erdogan had sought. The party he controls did not get the number of seats needed for constitutional changes or even a majority in parliament. Support for the Justice and Development Party (AKP) declined as the economy faltered and corruption increased unchecked. Erdogan and his government had become increasingly repressive, censoring the media and arresting dissenters. Risky foreign policy was causing concern. The Kurdish backed Peoples Democratic Party (HDP) gained support from progressive voters and crossed the ten per cent threshold thus being able to win eighty parliamentary seats. Erdogan is expected to call another election rather than rely on a coalition.*

The general election on 7 June 2015 in Turkey ended the uninterrupted majority rule the AKP (Justice and Development Party) had enjoyed since 2002. Twenty political parties and 165 independents took part in the election. According to Yuksek Secim Kurulu (Turkish Electoral Commission), with 84 per cent of about 57 million registered voters casting valid votes (YSK 2015), the participation was higher than most OECD countries and the result left no room for dispute. Only four parties made it over the 10 per cent threshold needed to enter the parliament. This requirement was a legacy of the electoral system drafted by the military in 1982 which sought to reduce the likelihood of small party coalitions which had been blamed for the impasses and political and economic turmoil in the late 1970s.

In the middle of the election campaign, Erdogan, the current President and previous AKP prime minister, said that the best outcome would be 400 seats gained by a political party in the parliament for a new Turkey (*Milliyet* 2015). The seats needed to change the Constitution were 367. However 330 would enable his government to take proposed constitutional changes to a referendum. As all the other political parties had declared they were against many of the constitutional changes he was proposing, it was understood that he meant 400 seats for the AKP. One of the most controversial changes proposed was to adopt a presidential system of government and changing the powers of the office of president from ceremonial to executive. Responding to claims that a presidential system may turn into a dictatorship, Erdogan pointed out that half of the G20 countries had presidential systems and no one was accusing them of being a dictatorship (*Zamen's Daily News* 2015). He claimed the Turkish public would vote for a presidential system in a referendum as they could see that the current system

was too cumbersome to make radical changes quickly and would limit the government's ability to achieve its target of increasing per capita income to US\$25,000 by 2023.

The election, however, did not turn out as Erdogan had hoped. The AKP did not even win enough seats to govern alone. This extraordinary election result was without doubt a huge loss for President Erdogan, who only last year was elected to the presidency, with 52 per cent of the votes in the first direct election for the presidency. Previously, presidents had been elected by MPs in the parliament. Erdogan, who is accused of micro-managing almost everything in the public life of the country, appears to have undermined himself by openly taking sides and advocating for his preferred party. Despite holding an office that is by law required to be impartial, and having taken an oath on the commencement of his term to this effect, he held election rallies calling them 'launches or opening ceremonies', during the election campaign. He openly attacked opposition parties, asked for votes for the AKP and support for his proposal to introduce a French or American (or some suspected, Russian) style presidential system. This turned the election partly into a referendum on Erdogan within a year of him taking up the office (Traynor and Letsch 2015). The election result will no doubt have significant implications for internal politics in Turkey as well as Turkish foreign policy. A resounding victory for the AKP and Erdogan could have been used to vindicate a number of controversial policies both at home and abroad.

In the 550 seat Turkish parliament, a political party needs a minimum of 276 seats to form a government in its own right but the AKP won only 258 seats. Post-election soul searching by senior AKP officials indicates that they

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did not consider this result likely and a real shock was felt throughout AKP ranks. They went to the election believing they would easily obtain a majority large enough to form a government. The question was whether they would obtain the 367 seats required to change the constitution or 330 seats that would be enough to hold a referendum.

### **What Went Wrong for the AKP?**

Firstly, the famous 'it is the economy, stupid', observed originally by James Carville, Bill Clinton's campaign manager during the 1992 US presidential election, proved applicable in the Turkish elections. Turkish daily *Milliyet* columnist Mehmet Tezkan (2015) commented, 'between 2002 and 2011, there was nothing to stir people for a change and to convince them to question the status quo. People's pockets were filling up.' The Turkish economy was doing well with growth rates rivalling China. The country was also attracting a growing number of international investors with a strong domestic market and relatively strong banking system. However, the economy had slowed down considerably in the past three years and literally came to a halt in the first quarter of 2015. This was felt in all sectors of the economy and was reflected in the mood of small businesses, pensioners, public servants and farmers – all strong voter bases of the AKP. However, Erdogan had seen this coming. He had been increasingly critical of the Turkish Reserve Bank before the election and in a public exchange with its governor, questioned the need for the Reserve Bank to be independent. He also criticised the governor for not lowering interest rates enough for the benefit of small business and wage earners. Erdogan understands that if the economy does not pick up in the next year or so, the impact on the AKP voter base is likely to increase, making it harder to gain a new mandate.

Secondly, there were significant claims of bribery and corruption in December 2013 against four ministers. These involved millions of dollars, bundles of money in shoe boxes, money counting machines in private homes and a minister allegedly receiving a watch worth \$350,000 as a present. Some of the allegations and telephone intercepts were alleged to implicate Erdogan's son (Orucoglu 2015). Although the ministers eventually resigned from their posts, no one was prosecuted as a parliamentary majority is required for the indictment of serving MPs and was defeated by the AKP. However, the prosecutors who undertook the initial investigation that led to arrests were all subsequently removed from their posts.

Thirdly, Erdogan himself was seen as one of the factors causing a voter backlash. The costs had soared for his sumptuous one thousand room palace, where dignitaries are welcomed by soldiers dressed in army uniforms

belonging to past Turkish empires (BBC 2014). He was accused of ordering its construction in anticipation of gaining a more executive Presidential role for himself. The cost of luxury fittings and staffing costs were not well regarded by sections of the community who were struggling to make ends meet in an increasingly difficult economic climate. Despite the public statements of support for the president by the AKP, many disgruntled members appear to acknowledge quietly Erdogan is not as invincible as once thought and could even be becoming a liability, not just for the AKP but for Turkey.

Finally, increasingly risky and reckless foreign policy decisions were taken which appeared to have been based more on religious, sectarian and ideological grounds, rather than on well calculated diplomacy in the best interests of Turkey. Some of these decisions have had outcomes that went from bad to worse. In Syria, Erdogan supported the Free Syrian Army in its bid to remove Assad from power. But Assad still remains in power in 2015 and Syria is still being destroyed by civil war. In Iraq, the relationship with the central government was strained by an oil deal signed directly with the Kurdish administration in the north and Erdogan's granting of protection to Tariq Al-Hashimi, the Iraqi Sunni deputy-president who fled to Turkey after being charged with terrorist links and sentenced to death (*Guardian* 2012).

In Egypt, Erdogan and the AKP sided with the Muslim brotherhood with whom they have a similar ideological background, and declared opposition to the Sissi Government who came to power in a military coup. In the Middle East, Turkey's embrace of religiously conservative political movements has run afoul of several Persian Gulf states as well as Egypt (Stein 2014). However, the Sissi Government appears to have been accepted or tolerated by many countries in the West and in the region leaving Turkey isolated. In Libya, where there appears to be two governments fighting for power, the AKP and Erdogan sided with the Islamist rival government in Tripoli, whereas the international community appears to support the other government in Tobruk. Usually a confrontation with Israel over its policies and actions is a guaranteed vote winner, but this time the scope for this was limited, probably because everyone is occupied with Syria.

### **How Did the Opposition Fare?**

The main opposition CHP (Republican People's Party), representing mostly the political left, was not able to capitalise on voters deserting the AKP, managing only to maintain their vote from the previous election in 2011 with 25 per cent of the vote and 132 seats. This should not be any consolation to them, as in 1977 the CHP, under the late Bulent Ecevit, managed to win 42 per cent of votes. As the main opposition party now, however, they

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do not appear to be seen by voters as offering a credible alternative to the AKP government.

Some of the traditional AKP voters returned to the nationalist MHP (Nationalist Movement Party). It won 80 seats with 16 per cent of the vote. Although they appear to have attracted about 4 per cent of votes from the AKP, it is hardly a result to be proud of. The MHP have been criticised for banking too much on nationalist feelings and not putting out concrete policies and programmes on a full range of issues.

The real winner appears to be the Kurdish backed HDP (People's Democracy Party), who won about 13 per cent of votes, and 80 seats (38 of which are occupied by women) in the parliament, moving the party into the mainstream political arena as a power to be reckoned with. According to HDP sources, it seems to have attracted voters from both the AKP and leftist voters. This enabled them to cross the 10 per cent threshold to get into the Parliament. The HDP has often been criticised for being too close to the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) which is listed as a terrorist organisation in Turkey and many countries in the West including Australia. However, with charismatic leader Selahattin Demirtas, the party has been careful in their rhetoric not to appear as a party for Kurds only. If they can maintain this voter base in one more election, they will become a key party in Turkish politics.

Given that no single party can form a government, the AKP will first try to form a coalition government. If they fail, the next party with the most number of seats should be given the opportunity. It already looks as if there will be tough negotiations. Erdogan indicated that an early election could be called in mid-November 2015 if a functioning coalition government cannot be formed. Even if a coalition or minority government can be formed, it is almost certain that it will not be long-lasting and Turkish voters will go back to the polls sooner than later.

### **Why Turkish Spring?**

The election was literally held at the end of the Northern Spring but this election result was extraordinary for a number of significant reasons and deserves to be viewed as a Turkish Spring. The main one, I would argue, is that, regardless of how the next government is formed, be it a minority government or a coalition, or a new election called, the results demonstrated that a majority of Turkish voters opted to retain a system that was both secular in nature and parliamentary in form – two essential qualities outlined in the first three sections of the Turkish constitution. Since it came to power, apart from the initial years when the Turkish army still had some power in politics, the AKP majority government under Erdogan started a wave of controversial structural changes.

For example, in education, the eight year minimum compulsory education, which was principally designed by past governments to keep girls in the mainstream school system as long as possible, was replaced by a 4+4+4 system. This, in practice, meant girls could be taken out of compulsory education earlier, a move many viewed as having the potential to exclude women from public life, especially in conservative regions. After 2007, Erdogan and the AKP increasingly pushed religion to the centre of public life. Despite holding a secular post (Turkey does not have an official religion), Erdogan publicly talks about his Sunni background and refers to the Alevis (a major sect followed by approximately 13 million citizens in Turkey) as 'others'. During the election campaign, Erdogan often made references to religion. He said, 'I grew up with the Quran and still live according to it' in the province of Siirt and held a Quran in his hand and waved it in the province of Batman (Turkone 2015). He also appeared to be questioning the religious credentials of the CHP leader, an Alevi, accusing him of not being a proper Muslim as well as alleging that the Kurdish-backed HDP party had no religion. The HDP leader, Demirtas, had promised to close the Office of Religious Affairs as he believed a secular government should not be in control of a religious office. No other party leader used religion as much as the AKP in this election. Erdogan thought that raising religion as an election issue would increase his majority, but this tactic did not work. I find this very significant. It indicates that the secularism, which was imposed by the modern republic in the 1920s in a top-down approach, now appears to be claimed by people in this Muslim majority country in the midst of a resurgent Islam and bloody sectarian conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen and beyond. The fact that secularism was upheld by the public, and that people were not swayed by Erdogan's religious rhetoric and use of Quran in election campaigns, I would argue, was a major factor affecting the outcome of this election which does not appear to have been recognised sufficiently by the governments and public in the West.

In recent years the AKP has adopted a one party style rule that has been used to silence opposition, to adopt increasingly a 'rule by law', rather than 'rule of law' approach. The party has made increasing attempts at social engineering in wide areas of Turkish law, governance and society. Many suspected there was a Sunni Islamist agenda behind these. Critical media was silenced by giving favourable treatment to friendly media moguls in government contracts or by using regulatory or tax office processes as a stick. All this appears to have united a section of the Turkish community from nationalist Turks to nationalist Kurds, liberals to communists, against the AKP and Erdogan in this election. The indications are that this unity may survive one or two elections. It even appears to have led to some sort of a 'détente' between the Turkish-dominated MHP and the Kurdish-dominated

HDP. Though they will not be in a coalition together they will now be under the same roof in the parliament, whereas in the past MHP members would have simply walked out. Although HDP MPs did not sing the national anthem on the opening day of the new parliament, citing a reference to the 'heroic race' in the anthem, they still stood up in respect. MHP leaders said they would not be in a coalition with HDP, but HDP could join a coalition with other parties. The HDP also toned down its rhetoric given their significant share of the vote. HDP leader, Demirtas, recently called on the PKK, which have carried out suicide bombings and execution style killings, to stop attacks on Turkish soldiers and police without any 'buts' (Hurriyet Daily News, 2015). He says these attacks undermine efforts for a peaceful resolution and cannot be justified. The 'us against them' talk gave way to 'us'. This will undoubtedly help ease tensions based on ethnicity in Turkey in the long term.

The other remarkable aspect of the June 7 general election was that it took place in the midst of an unprecedented influx of refugees from Syria and Iraq. According to AFAD (Turkish Agency for Natural Disaster and Emergency Management 2015), there are two million refugees across Turkey, including 280 thousand in camps, with 30-35 per cent of them children. However, local sources put these figures much higher due to unregistered refugees travelling across the country, at a cost of US\$4-4.5bn according to the government so far. Reportedly 30 thousand babies of Syrian refugees were born in Turkey in the past five years (Saya 2015). As there is no indication that the civil war in Syria will end soon, a whole generation of Syrians face growing up in Turkey and other neighbouring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. The UN now calls the Syrian refugee crisis as the worst in a generation. These are challenging numbers for any country in the world. It was therefore remarkable that not a single party turned it into an election issue. The general consensus is that Turkey has no option but to offer sanctuary to these people. This just points to the significance of a politically and economically stable Turkey acting as a buffer zone against floods of refugees fleeing deteriorating security in the Middle East, with no end in the foreseeable future. That this is significant for the security of Western Europe is another aspect that does not appear to be recognised by the public in the West.

At the time of drafting this paper, the current caretaker Prime Minister of the AKP, Mr. Davutoglu, has failed to form a coalition government. Under normal conventions, the president should then ask the second party in line, the CHP, to try to form a coalition, but Erdogan reportedly indicated he would not be doing so because, he said, 'They do not even know the address of my palace. Why should I?' (ABC News 2015) It is widely agreed that Erdogan, who declared recently that Turkey in fact already

has a *de facto* system of executive president in him but one that needs legitimisation through a new constitution, never wanted a coalition government. He would not be able to interfere in a coalition government as he does in the current AKP government. It is increasingly obvious that the recent escalation of fighting with the PKK, with whom Erdogan had been negotiating a deal for the past three years and had in fact drafted an agreement on 28 February this year, has as much to do with the next election as the election just past (Jacinta 2015). Being aware that achieving 367 votes with the three other parties in the parliament is all but impossible, the next option is finding a way of making sure one of the three remains under the 10 per cent threshold in a future election. This would at least guarantee the AKP a majority government, even if its votes remain the same. That party seems to be the Kurdish backed HDP (People's Democracy Party).

Whatever happens with the coalition talks in the coming days, or if there needs to be an early election in the remaining months of 2015, the real winner in the June 7 elections was democracy and secular system in this Muslim-majority country in the most volatile region in the world. This offers a glimmer of hope for people not just in Turkey, but also in neighbouring countries, for the security of Europe and the rest of the world in the current climate. I believe it is appropriate to call it a Turkish Spring in the midst of a long winter in the Middle East and the Muslim world.

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#### ***utopian giants of ranking: a suite of conchord poems***

i.

burnished honey  
the trace cult of cemented-ness  
frankincense rust  
knee-deep by the wayside

ii.

delicious carnage  
the ography of chewing  
that of and if when to come  
bone dry in solipsism

iii.

azure again as a rank &  
men; thol to skol to roll,  
algal fosforo lymphnode

R. D. WOOD,  
PERTH, WA

#### ***skulking head of artichoke jazz: a suite of footscray poems***

i.

for lawn, and  
four stack.  
glaze of lead  
bridge to the road-polyp  
cinnamon head

ii.

cascade facile  
levity-glass-pepper  
knower shaken, to  
the hexagon

iii.

converted by catch,  
pad of smack  
undressed by valves  
palm of vein dawn

iv.

the density of sigh  
bone yellow dismayed  
scaped darkrise

R. D. WOOD,  
PERTH, WA

# The 2014 Indonesian Legislative and Presidential Elections: Embracing Democracy

AARON HEDSTROM-WIGGINS

*In 2014, Indonesia elected a new legislature and a new president. Power changed hands without major incident. The new President, Joko Widodo, did not come from the traditional political elite. He campaigned on enhancing democracy and ending corruption. His defeat of a candidate with more questionable democratic credentials was seen as a step towards further cementing democracy in Indonesia. But the new president has faced some severe challenges in his first year in office. Facing an economic slowdown and an entrenched political culture Jokowi has also had to govern without a majority in the legislature or even control of the party he represents.*

## Introduction

In 2014, elections were held successfully for both the president and the parliament of the Republic of Indonesia. Subsequently, government changed hands without major incident. Indonesia has undergone many changes since the nation was formed under the constitution of 1945. From 1950 onwards, authoritarianism and a weak legislature were obstacles to the development of a robust democratic system in Indonesia. However, the fall of Suharto and the New Order in 1998 and constitutional amendments from 1999-2002 have revived the capabilities of the People's Consultative Assembly within Indonesia's legislative branch. The two candidates in the 2014 Presidential race, Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Prabowo Subianto, had contrasting backgrounds and agendas. Jokowi promised continued transition from Indonesia's authoritarian past whereas Prabowo advocated a return to the New Order's centralised style of government. This paper will examine the 2014 Indonesian legislative and presidential elections, the election results and post-election outcomes.

## History

In 1945, Indonesian forces under the revolutionary leader Sukarno liberated Indonesia from Japanese and Dutch colonial rule. A constitution was developed in 1945. The first constitution vested authority in the People's Consultative Assembly, which then consisted of a single chamber, the People's Representative Council (DPR) (McIntyre 2005: 6). In 1950, Indonesia entered the United Nations and adopted a new parliamentary constitution. This minimised the president's powers and increased those of the DPR, giving it substantial decision-making authority (Crouch 2007: 28). The president and the revolutionary army became subordinate and accountable to the legislature through its power of direct appointment and removal.

Sukarno had returned Indonesia to the 1945 constitution by 1959. This allowed him to govern the country more directly under the banner of 'Guided Democracy' (Crouch 2007: 44, 45). This undermined democratic institutions, although he did establish a presidential cabinet based on the concept of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and appointed to it representatives of the country's largest political parties and functional groups (McIntyre 2005:16).

But by 1963 the Nationalist Party (PNI) – Indonesia's largest party – became alarmed at Sukarno's visible attachment to the growing Communist Party (PKI) (Suryadinata 1998: 31). Sukarno's unsuccessful military campaign of confrontation (*Konfrontasi*) with Malaysia and the deterioration of the Indonesian economy also damaged Sukarno's reputation (Suryadinata 1998: 7, 8). In 1965, an alleged communist uprising was cited as justification for the removal of Sukarno. A political purge ensued and more than 500,000 Indonesians, who supposedly sympathised with Marxist or communist ideals, were killed or imprisoned on the orders of General Suharto (Cribb 2010: 1). In 1967, the presidency officially passed from Sukarno to General Suharto. This marked the beginning of the New Order regime under which the DPR struggled to establish a robust role independent of presidential direction or influence.

The authoritarian nature of Suharto's New Order government undermined the role of the DPR. Suharto indirectly controlled the legislature during his 32 years as president through a system of patronage. Golkar (Party of the Functional Groups) became the ruling party from 1973 to 1999 and was closely aligned with Suharto. Its relationship with the Indonesian armed forces (known as ABRI until 1999 then TNI) blurred

the division of powers between the executive and legislature (Suryadinata 1998: 22). Suharto was also strengthened by the provision of seats within the DPR to the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI). The Indonesian Police (POLRI) were part of ABRI until 1999. Together, Golkar and ABRI representation within the DPR made up more than two thirds of parliament from 1971 to 1997 (Ziegenhain 2008: 49). Suharto offered patronage to Golkar and ABRI leaders. He established a commanding influence over the DPR, which became a 'rubber-stamp' institution (Sherlock 2003: 4; Ziegenhain 2008: 45, 61). By circumventing the Indonesian legislature and establishing mandated ABRI representation, Suharto undermined the democratic processes of the DPR. This system endured for the length of Suharto's 32-year rule.

Discontent towards Suharto's long and authoritarian regime was exacerbated by the impact of the Asian financial crisis. Riots and demonstrations led by students and workers called for Suharto's resignation. These were met with violent repression. But this failed to quell the protests and violence spread throughout Indonesian cities. Suharto was forced to resign in 1998 and the DPR finally showed signs of revival. From 1999 to 2002 four amendments were made to the 1945 constitution. These served to strengthen the role of both the DPR and the legislative branch. This period is known as *Reformasi* (reform) and signalled the beginning of Indonesia's comprehensive democratic reforms.

### The Indonesian Legislature and Electoral System

The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) is the key institution within Indonesia's legislative branch. It is now bicameral with an upper and lower house with a total of 696 seats. The upper house, the Regional Representative Council (DPD) established in 2002, has 132 members and provides regional representation (Ziegenhain 2008: 208). Members are elected by a single non-transferable

vote in regional multi-member electorates. They advise on policy relevant to their region, province, or electorate. The DPD does not have the veto or revisionary power of the United States Senate, sitting members must be politically independent and cannot affiliate with other parties (Crouch 2010: 61). This requirement diminishes the opportunity for the inter-parliamentary alliances that had allowed Suharto to dominate the legislature.

The DPR is the Lower House and primary legislature. It consists of 560 members elected by proportional representation from 77 multi-member constituencies. Since 2009, seats within the DPR have been contested through an open list proportional representation system in which voters could choose either a candidate or party. Parties have to reach a national quota of 3.5 per cent of the national vote to win seats in parliament (Nehru and Bulkin 2015). Candidate representation on each party's list must be 30 per cent female. In 2014, among the 12 competing parties, an average of 37 per cent of the candidates were females (IFES 2014: 4-5). Yet this did not translate directly into female representation and the percentage of female candidates elected to the two houses was nearer 18 per cent.

### Parliamentary Elections

Indonesia's 2014 legislative elections were held on April 9. These elections encompassed the election of national, regional and district representatives. Approximately 185 million registered voters or 69 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote (IFES 2014: 4). The logistics and planning required for the election were enormous. The General Elections Commission (KPU) managed the election that took place across 922 populated islands and required up to 550 thousand election booths. The final results were announced on 9 May 2014 (see table 1).

Table 1. Breakdown of Vote Percentage for National Legislative Elections 2014

Party	Total Vote	Vote Share Percentage		Change from Previous Election
		2009	2014	
	<b>2014</b>			
PDI-P	23,681,471	14.00%	18.95%	+4.95
Golkar	18,432,312	14.50%	14.75%	-0.15
Gerinda	14,760,371	4.50%	11.81%	+7.31
PD	12,728,913	20.90%	10.19%	-10.71
PKB	11,298,957	4.90%	9.04%	+4.14
PAN	9,481,621	6.00%	7.59%	+1.59
PKS	8,480,204	7.90%	6.79%	-1.11
NasDem	8,402,812	N/A	6.72%	+6.72
PPP	8,157,488	5.30%	6.53%	+1.23
Hanura	6,579,498	3.80%	5.26%	+1.46
PBB	1,825,750	1.80%	1.46%	-0.34
PKPI	1,143,094	0.90%	0.91%	+0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>124,972,491</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Data from Komisi Pemilihan Umum 2014 (General Election Commission);



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Two of the 15 parties who participated in the national legislative election were eliminated because they did not gain the required minimum 3.5 per cent of the vote. Partai Demokrat (PD), the party of presidential incumbent Susilo Bambang Yudoyono (SBY), suffered a decline of more than 10 per cent of the popular vote. The two parties that benefited from PD's decline, PDI-P and Gerinda (Greater Indonesia Movement Party), continued on to establish coalitions and contest the presidency.

PDI-P, headed by Megawati Sukarnoputri – the daughter of Sukarno – managed to garner the most popular votes. The party won 18.95 per cent of the national vote and gained 109 seats within the DPR. This marked the first time that PDI-P had become the largest party within the DPR, surpassing its democratic counterpart PD as President Yudoyono's increasing unpopularity was affecting his party. These two parties both espoused democratic ideals. It was estimated that the nomination of the popular Jokowi Widodo as a presidential candidate would increase the PDI-P's legislative vote but this did not eventuate and PDI-P had to form a coalition to obtain the voting percentage needed to nominate a presidential candidate.

The splintering of PD's popular support also delivered votes to Gerinda, led by Prabowo Subianto. This enabled it to develop its presence nationally and it secured 11.81 per cent of the popular vote – a 7.31 per cent increase on its 2009 result. Gerinda's chosen presidential candidate was its leader who had a reputation as being decisive and bold. Prabowo's strong leadership style appealed to many who were frustrated with SBY's inability to direct policy (Mietzner 2010: 192). No party was able to achieve a majority within the DPR so coalitions had to be created to form government. Moreover, no party reached the threshold of 25 per cent of the national legislative vote or 20 per cent of the DPR seats needed to be able to nominate a presidential candidate so two coalitions were formed.

The first coalition, led by PDI-P, consisted of PDI-P, PKB, NasDem and Hanura. These parties together had 39.96 per cent of the total national vote and held 224 seats within the DPR. They became known as the minority coalition. The PKB did not join with the other Islamic-based parties – National Mandate Party (PAN) coming Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and United Development Party (PPP).

The majority coalition within the DPR is the *Merah-Putih* (Red and White) coalition led by Prabowo Subianto. After the election, this coalition consisted of Gerinda, Golkar, PD, PAN, PKS and PPP commanding 60.04 per cent of the vote.

The outcome of the 2014 legislative election set the stage for the presidential election. PDI-P and Gerinda led the two parliamentary coalitions that were formed. The minority coalition, led by PDI-P, supported Joko Widodo (Jokowi) as their presidential candidate while Gerinda's leader, Prabowo Subianto, won the nomination for the majority coalition.

### The Presidential Election

On 9 July 2014, Joko Widodo defeated Prabowo Subianto by a margin of 6.3 per cent to become Indonesia's president for the term 2014 to 2019. This represents a difference of approximately eight million votes. There were also 1.3 million votes invalidated due to voting irregularities (KPU 2014: 7). Prabowo initially contested the result citing electoral corruption. His claims were investigated by the Constitutional Court and dismissed as no evidence of serious electoral mismanagement was found (Connelly 2015). On 14 October 2014, Joko Widodo entered Indonesian history as its seventh president. His election can be seen as an indication that Indonesians are embracing democracy and turning away from their authoritarian past. Joko Widodo offered the revitalisation of the post-Suharto *Reformasi* period. On the other hand Prabowo represented a return to a more centralised government in the mould of the New Order's more authoritarian model.

Joko Widodo, known as 'Jokowi', came from an economically deprived family background. He has a long record of public service with close connections at grassroots community levels. Initially, as a self-made businessman, he spent most of his life working and living as a part of the community in Surakarta in Central Java (Chen 2014: 2). This is where he developed compassion and understanding for the poor and disadvantaged citizens of Indonesia. These grassroots connections enhance Jokowi's reputation as a leader who understands the average Indonesian citizen, and underpins a congenial down-to-earth demeanor known as the 'Jokowi effect' (Kwok 2014).

In 2005, Jokowi became Mayor of Solo (Surakarta) where he implemented comprehensive reforms that provided him with a national spotlight. During this time, Jokowi developed a public image as a clean politician through his active approach to eliminating corruption (Lindsey 2014: 2; Manners 2014: 6). After seven years as Mayor of Solo, he was elected Governor of Jakarta where he served for two years before becoming the PDI-P's presidential candidate in March 2014. Jokowi represents a transition from the authoritarian 'New Order' regime towards the institutionalisation of democracy. Unusually in Indonesian politics he does not originate from the traditional elite or have a military background, rather

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he projects as a successful businessman, competent administrator and public servant. These characteristics and his warm personality were important to Jokowi's presidential campaign.

Initially, the Jokowi and PDI-P campaigns struggled to gain momentum. Funding and organisation were two key issues. Funding was eventually found from within the wealthy leaders and supporters of the PDI-P. They had been slow to fund Jokowi's campaign as he was not from the traditional elite and they considered him a stranger (Connelly 2015). Because of the difficulty in raising funds, the campaign was not initially well organised although he did have support from a large number of young progressive volunteers both on the ground and through social media. Jokowi's economic policy emphasised national financial independence. He proposed to increase domestic production of oil, to decrease the country's fuel imports and to reduce government debt through taxation and the reduction of fuel subsidies (Timur and Priamarizki 2014: 1). He also proposed to improve infrastructure, increase the amount of affordable housing and improve social security (Timur and Priamarizki 2014: 1).

Jokowi campaigned on the need to ensure the continued protection and development of democratic processes in Indonesia. A PDI-P campaign advertisement featured Jokowi pleading with the audience to avoid non-participation, and to exercise their right to vote (Jokowi's Plea 2014). He reached out to Indonesian youth by accompanying a rock band in concert through Java, the country's most populous island (Connelly 2015). Jokowi's most notable campaign strategy was his frequent visits to public markets where he listened to the concerns of citizens (McRae 2014a). This reinforced Jokowi's public image as a man of the people interested in the concerns of his fellow citizens. At the conclusion of the campaign he embarked on a quick pilgrimage to Mecca (Rais 2014). This was seen as a wise move because his coalition had only one Islamic party, PKB, whereas Prabowo's coalition had the support of the other three Islamic parties.

Prabowo Subianto, the second presidential candidate, was able to mount a well-financed and successful campaign. Unlike Jokowi, Prabowo had strong connections within the Javanese aristocracy and with Suharto's New Order regime. Furthermore, he had married Suharto's daughter (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014a: 352) and had enjoyed a meteoric rise in army ranks having served as the commander of *Kopassus* (Indonesian Special Forces). Prabowo's military history and related questions about his human rights record were a focus in the campaign. Allegations were raised about his involvement in the killings of hundreds of Timorese in 1978 and 1979 after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. He was accused

of conducting executions and using torture on Timorese Independence soldiers (Parry 2000: 16). In 1998, he was expelled from the military by a special tribunal after being found guilty of involvement in kidnapping 13 students and other political activists seeking the removal of Suharto in 1997 (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014a: 352). Prabowo claimed Suharto commanded him to carry out the kidnappings (*The Jakarta Post* 2014). The 13 activists were never found. Prabowo spent a period of exile in Jordan where the King (a former classmate) granted him Jordanian citizenship and residence in Amman (Parry 2000: 16). Prabowo's dark human rights record has continued to haunt his political career.

In 2004, Prabowo returned to Indonesia and in 2007 established the Gerinda party. Two years later he secured a vice-presidential nomination alongside the PDI-P leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014a: 352). Their presidential bid ultimately failed when SBY and vice-presidential candidate Boediono secured a sweeping victory in 2009. Megawati did not support Prabowo's presidential aspirations in 2014, choosing to support Jokowi instead. However, due to Gerinda's success in the parliamentary elections, Prabowo was finally able to mount a presidential challenge in 2014.

Prabowo has financial and family connections to members of the Indonesian elite who benefited from policies during the New Order. At the time of his presidential campaign Prabowo had an accumulated wealth of \$147 million, overshadowing Jokowi's estimated \$2.5 million (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014: 352). He was also able to rely on his multi-millionaire brother, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, the thirty-ninth richest Indonesian in 2014 (Forbes 2014). Prabowo's economic agenda sought the doubling of Indonesia's GDP, the establishment of special economic zones, the creation of two million jobs each year and the increased production of Indonesia's natural resources such as palm oil, cocoa and rubber (Timur and Priamarizki 2014: 2). He often arrived at campaign meetings in style on his private jet or even on a horse, demonstrating both his financial power and elite position (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014a: 359). He also had privileged media access through his family's ownership of *Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia* (TPI) television, which gave strong support to Prabowo and Gerinda.

Voters who feared that Indonesia was on the verge of collapse and needed strong leadership turned to Prabowo. He has claimed that democracy was unsuited to Indonesian culture and society (see Aspinall and Mietzner 2014b) and that 'Indonesia's Western-educated elite were too prone to adopt Western constructs', highlighting 'direct elections as one example' (McCrae 2014b). Such statements raised concern that Prabowo

was 'anti-democracy', and would return Indonesia to a more authoritarian New Order form of government. He rejected this, explaining that Indonesian society 'is more in line with a Westminster Parliamentary Democracy, as envisioned by our founding fathers' and that Indonesian democracy should apply 'emphasis more on consultative consensus building through representation' (Tapsell 2014). Theoretically, Prabowo's stance appeals to the admirable value of fairness in representation. But some were suspicious that the abolition of direct elections, and a return to the New Order model of government where parliament appointed and removed the president, would end the public's ability to re-elect or reject Prabowo at the 2019 election.

Nonetheless, Prabowo conducted a successful campaign and was able to convince a substantial proportion of the electorate that he was the leader that Indonesia needed. Raising fears of instability in Indonesia allowed him to highlight his military background and assert his ability to return the country to stability. Ironically, it was his military history and human rights record in East Timor that alienated many Indonesians. Moreover, his elite connections, New Order involvement and anti-democratic statements raised fears of a return to an authoritarian, undemocratic model of government.

### Aftermath

The voters of Indonesia had to choose between two candidates with very different backgrounds and visions for Indonesia. In the end, Jokowi's vision prevailed and, despite Prabowo initially objecting to the election result, he did eventually accept the Constitutional Court's rejection of his appeal and has been using his coalition's parliamentary majority to provide 'political resistance' to Jokowi instead (Wijaya 2014). The election was another step towards cementing democracy in Indonesia but for Jokowi it was only the beginning of his difficulties. He faced a serious challenge in fulfilling the high expectations of the electorate. Indonesia's economy has been in decline since his election and before he was even inaugurated, Prabowo's coalition pushed through legislation ending the direct election of regional leaders, which would remove a path into politics for candidates who came from outside the political elite. A large majority of voters opposed this legislation and Jokowi's inability to repeal it has undermined the credibility of his commitment to strengthening democracy. He has had to negotiate legislation through a hostile parliament and his 'freedom of action is constrained by his dependence on the PDI-P' whose party leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri, has put pressure on him to adopt her agenda and nominations for government-selected posts further undermining his position (PRS 2015).

Less than a year after his election, disillusionment set in. This was partly due to the continuing decline of the rupiah, the increase in fuel prices that badly affected the most economically vulnerable and slow economic growth. Jokowi was also embroiled in a corruption scandal over the attempt to appoint a Megawati ally as National Police Chief who was named as suspect by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) (Wijaya 2015). His popularity plunged, the Poll Institute Puspol Indonesia, reported 'that 74.6 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with Mr Widodo's leadership' (Kurlantzick 2015).

However, the situation could be about to improve for Jokowi. Golkar has 91 seats in the DPR and originally supported Prabowo's coalition but a major split has occurred in the party with one faction now claiming to support Jokowi. The National Mandate Party (PAN) has defected from Prabowo's coalition and is now supporting the president leaving the opposition with just 113 guaranteed votes in the 560-member chamber (Parlina 2015). He has put his stamp on his cabinet and managed to pass some important legislation through the parliament including subsidies for health care and education for the poorest Indonesians. Government may have moved from impossible to merely very difficult.

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#### Etheree Poem 2

a  
grey cat  
crouching low  
ears on alert  
killer in fur coat  
bird singing unperturbed  
murder will be committed  
she jumps like summer lightning  
a song is stopped as evening falls  
the grey cat blows soft feathers from her mouth

MOCCO WOLLERT,  
KEPERRA, QLD

# When the Counting Is Over, Can Governments Govern?

PATRICK WELLER AND BRONWYN STEVENS

*Elections determine who will govern but they cannot assure that the newly elected government will be able to govern effectively. Each government has to face unique policy problems and all of them will have to meet the challenges that constrain their ability to govern. This article explores three of those common challenges: the ability to exercise effective leadership, managing the constraints and changes of the institutions of government, and understanding the external events that constantly threaten the government's standing and derail its best considered policies and strategies.*

Elections are full of conflict and drama. Victory is celebrated. Then the new government sets out to implement the policies put forward during the election campaign. But the difficulties are just beginning. There are many factors that impede governments and their leaders from governing effectively and achieving even a fraction of their policy aims and party platforms.

'It is funny,' said a senior adviser in the British Government, 'you do the second most difficult thing in politics – which is to win an election – and then, without even a good night's sleep, you start to do the most difficult thing in politics which is to run a country' (Barber 2015: xvi). New York governor, Mario Cuomo made the contrast more epigrammatically: 'You campaign in poetry, you govern in prose' (Barber 2015: 30). No one suggests that winning elections is easy, but it is about words and images, about making promises and igniting fears, about painting pictures of a better future, or a worse one if the other side wins. The intention is to influence the decision of the elector in those brief seconds in the polling booth where they choose whom they will support; for many voters that will be their only political engagement within the parliamentary term.

In campaigns, political leaders make promises and issue warnings. But this is only words. They raise expectations among voters that they will deliver a better world but once elected the circumstances change. Moving from words to action, from opposition to government, is difficult. New ministers suddenly become aware that everything they say can be examined for meaning and, in some circumstances, used to create fear and doubt.

You have to be careful about every word you say ... it can be interpreted in a whole variety of environments. You can't just have a casual

conversation with people you know because (1) it will be repeated and (2) it may be repeated in an authoritative way and, before you know it, it punctuates the wire services (Tiernan and Weller 2010: 88-89).

New governments often take a year or more to adjust. They must learn even as they govern; some ministers never do. There is no training ground for ministers. They face the realisation that governments need to influence the behaviour of citizens, not just for the split second of voting but as ongoing practice (See Blair 2010; Seldon 2004; Tiernan and Weller 2010). They need to alter the economic and social conditions so that education is better, energy prices lower, crime is reduced, all without cuts or job losses. That is not easy.

This is why Tony Blair appointed Michael Barber to head a delivery unit to improve policy implementation. Barber later wrote a book explaining the semi-science of 'deliverology'. He identified many difficulties governments faced in implementing their agendas and enumerated fifty-seven rules for improving policy delivery (Barber 2015). Several other authors have identified how frequently governments fail to achieve their aims and in the process create numerous and costly errors. In *The Blunders of our Governments*, King and Crewe identify the subject of their book as 'the numerous blunders that have been committed by British Governments of all parties in recent decades' (2013: 1).

## Political Capital and Governing Capacity

There is an irony in political life that when political capital is at its highest, government capacity may be at its most limited. By the time the processes of governing are mastered, political capital may be diminished. Many

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prime ministers have little experience of governing when they take office. Tony Blair and David Cameron in Britain, Bob Hawke and Kevin Rudd in Australia had never held ministerial office when they led their parties into government from opposition. The Australian leaders John Howard and Tony Abbott were the exceptions in that both had been ministers for some years. Abbott's performance though, indicates that ministerial experience alone is no guarantee of prime ministerial competence.

Most prime ministers must learn while they govern. 'There is no extended period of transition in the Australian parliamentary system. Winning the election is the beginning. The very next day they have to start exercising the levers of power' (Weller 2014: 147). Prime ministers will be given some leeway because of their standing as the leaders who took their party into office from opposition. This in itself is a rare event. Hawke and Rudd are two of only six Labor leaders to do so in 110 years. The challenge is to survive as leader for long enough to combine political capital with a capacity to govern effectively. The first year of any government represents a steep learning curve.

If parties change prime ministers between elections, the new prime minister may have learned some of the lessons of governing although this doesn't always happen. But by then the factors leading to the removal of a prime minister may have diminished the government's political capital. John Major, Paul Keating and Julia Gillard managed to be re-elected for one subsequent election, but they always seemed to be on notice. Gordon Brown was not granted even that luxury. Leaders who take their parties to power have normally served as prime minister for 70 per cent or more of that party's term in office. Replacements often have a more limited tenure as they suffer from a loss of political capital and a lack of time to cement their position, as well as the normal challenges of governing.

Expectations of new governments are high but are rarely met and voters are nearly always disappointed. They tend to blame the current political class, suggesting they are more cynical, more second rate than any before them. But this is false nostalgia. Current parliamentarians are better educated than any earlier cohort but the demands of government are now far more intense. Governments must respond to the twenty-four hour news cycle and the instant reactions of social media. Interests are deeply entrenched and well able to express their views. Any 'reform' is likely to be opposed by those adversely affected. Modern governments face a wider range of challenges than their predecessors. It has always been true that when benefits are concentrated and costs dispersed, it is hard to change or terminate policies. It is hardly 'amazing that more terminations do not occur given the frequent attempts by public officials to terminate programs, policies and organizations' (Daniels

2001: 250-251). Those who will lose by any change can now immediately protest and mobilise support while the beneficiaries, often the taxpayers, gain so little individually that they do not become engaged.

The number and range of factors that make governing difficult are legion. This article will explore three propositions, common to all governments that limit the capacity of governments.

- Leaders are not as powerful as the public image that is often presented: the individual contribution that prime ministers can make is restricted;
- Institutions of government are designed to limit government power and governments will always need to negotiate the way they work;
- Events, whether domestic or external, will shape the choices of governments. Sometimes cabinets have little control over what is happening to them. Contingency and crisis dominate many terms.

The article will focus largely on the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. In the UK David Cameron's Conservatives were forced to go into coalition with the Liberal Democrats in 2010, but won a small majority at the 2015 election. In Australia, Julia Gillard had to govern in a minority after 2010 and before Kevin Rudd replaced her. He then lost the 2013 election to Tony Abbott. Abbott and his successor Malcolm Turnbull have a majority in the House of Representatives but have to work with a hostile Senate.

### **Prime Ministers: The Struggle to Lead**

Prime ministers play multiple roles simultaneously. They chair cabinet, are party leaders, parliamentary performers, chief advocates for the government in the media and national diplomats at the highest level of international forums. They need to seek cohesion in government, coherence in policy and consistency in communication. They are primarily responsible for determining the government's strategies and setting the priorities that will be pursued. These are the responsibilities of prime ministers; they cannot be delegated and are rarely shared.

This array of powers and responsibilities leads some to assume that prime ministers are all-powerful. They are far from that. They may be the most powerful person within a government; indeed they will face problems if they are not. We talk of the Howard Government or the Cameron Government for a good reason. But to accept that prime ministers hold a position of strength is not to assume that what they demand happens. Leaders everywhere are restrained by personal limitations, by institutional demands, by the ambitions of others and by factors outside their control.

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Prime ministers also face huge demands and have limited time. All the roles they have to fulfil and all the demands for their attention can quickly fill the day. Some roles come with the position: as chair of cabinet, as parliamentary advocate, as international diplomat. Consequently, the attention they can give to particular policy items will be limited. Even if prime ministers are interested in everything, they will only be able to effectively influence a small number of areas. So they must choose.

Some prime ministers are policy wonks, fascinated by the way in which new ideas can shape society. Gordon Brown and Kevin Rudd were two such people; they wanted to be on top of all the issues, to understand the implications of the different choices, to know where a decision would take them. They required extensive briefings as they explored issues and examined options. Hence, they could be questioned about all the big issues that faced their government and needed to be on top of them to answer adequately (see Seldon and Lodge 2010; Weller 2014). In part, these demands came from a belief in their own capacity to know what good policy was and a lack of trust in their ministers to get it right. But this approach caused backlogs as papers sat in the prime minister's office waiting for a decision. This led to frustration among other ministers gradually building. By contrast, Howard was better organised. Cameron, less interested in the minutiae of policy, is quicker to decide when items come before him and more trusting in his senior colleagues, particularly the chancellor George Osborne (see d'Ancona 2013; Robinson 2015). Much of what Cameron's government does may have little more than the broad imprimatur of the prime minister.

One reason prime ministers are regarded as powerful is because they have a disciplined political party behind them, but that does not mean they are secure in their position. They were elected by their party and are responsible to it; that becomes important whenever their performance is regarded as inadequate. Constant polling nowadays means that prime ministers are always on notice. Fears of defeat make backbenchers nervous. In Australia, the executioner's knife is never more than loosely sheathed. As Member of the House of Representatives Jim Chalmers noted, the Australian prime minister is 'a big dog on a short leash' (Chalmers 2012: 48). Rudd was removed, even though the ALP government was leading in the polls, because support for the government was slipping and backbenchers feared that the government might lose. Gillard was removed because the government faced annihilation; the return of Rudd was designed, not to win, (no one thought that possible) but to save as many seats as possible. The Labor party rules have now been changed to make it harder to remove any future Labor prime minister, but if the party decides that he or she is clearly leading the party to defeat, then a means may be found.

The Federal Liberals do not face such a constraint. The party room alone chooses its leader. The connection between declining fortunes and execution is always direct. Tony Abbott was challenged within eighteen months of winning government because his style and performance were seen by many back-benchers as disastrous. The government was constantly behind the Australian Labour Party (ALP) in opinion polls. In the first challenge, 39 MPs voted against him even though there was no alternative candidate. Leaders cannot ignore their parliamentary party; they elect party leaders and can remove them. After the challenge, Abbott was on probation. When the Liberal party room concluded that he could not revive the government's electoral fortunes his fate was sealed. He was challenged and defeated by Malcolm Turnbull 54 votes to 44 (Coorey 2015). Daily politics, the twenty-four hour news cycle and regular opinion polls provide a constant threat. Indeed, Malcolm Turnbull cited opinion polls in justifying his challenge.

The one thing that is clear about our current situation is the trajectory. We have lost 30 Newspolls in a row. It is clear that the people have made up their mind about Mr Abbott's leadership (Turnbull 2015).

In Britain there is no formal mechanism to challenge a sitting prime minister, but modes of destabilisation were constantly used by Gordon Brown's supporters to undermine Tony Blair when they thought it was time he stood down. Even when Brown was prime minister and there were no obvious contenders for his throne, there were often discussions in the media about possible challengers and what form a challenge could take. If all cabinet ministers were to say to a prime minister that he or she should go then the leader's position would be untenable. Short of such unanimity, no one knows quite what circumstances would be enough to drive an obdurate British prime minister from power. To replace a Labour leader, a party-wide ballot must be organised with fifteen per cent of the parliamentary party required for nomination. Affiliated supporters, registered supporters and party members can vote and each vote has the same value (Quinn 2015). This has diluted even more the influence of Labour MPs in the selection of the party leader.

Irrespective of the mechanisms for change, prime ministers hold their position on leasehold, not freehold. They represent their parliamentary party directly and the wider party indirectly. They need to maintain party support. Those leaders who:

aspire to equate headship of government in a democracy with personal hegemony, pay a serious political price – removal from office as a result of alienating a sufficient number of their own colleagues rather than by the more usual form of rejection at the hands of the electorate (Brown 2014: 100).

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Prime ministers have limited choices. David Cameron won the 2015 election with an increase in the Conservative Party vote and no longer has to rely on the Liberal Democrats to govern. That gives him political capital and standing. But his majority is narrow and he cannot take the support of the parliamentary party for granted. He knows that behind him are a large number of Conservative MPs who want the UK to withdraw from the Europe Union (EU); so much that it overrides party loyalty. Cameron wants to stay in Europe after renegotiating the terms of the UK's presence. So he walks a tightrope, leading a party that recognises his electoral achievement but insecure and regarded as suspect by many of his own side.

Prime ministers have extensive *potential* for power. When they decide to become involved in a policy area or in a debate, they will dominate the discussion and it is likely that their views will prevail. They will sometimes determine unilaterally what government policy will be and inform their cabinet colleagues on their decision. No big decisions will be made in any government without their support. As long as they do not take their colleagues for granted too often, their idiosyncrasies will be tolerated. Leadership is not about command. Richard Neustadt concluded that for the US President 'Presidential power is the power to persuade' (1976: 78). This also applies in parliamentary systems. Prime ministers need acquiescence and trust. They have to work hard to achieve it.

Tony Abbott failed to achieve the trust of the electorate or of many of his colleagues. His lack of consultation and the questionable nature of his 'captain's picks' undermined his standing in the Liberal Party. The first challenge was 'driven by widespread back-bench discontent about the Abbott style and deep fears that he would lead the coalition to an election loss next year' (Grattan 2015). Furthermore, broken promises and the 'unfair' first budget resulted in the loss of public support. His aggressive style and three-word slogans that were so effective in opposition did not transfer well into government. His tardiness in responding to the accusations of misuse of travel entitlements by his personal choice of Speaker and his inability to respond flexibly to demands for taxation reform reinforced the view that he was out of touch. His conservative social views and machinations on same-sex marriage left him looking dated. He was unable to change his approach and style. With voter support for his leadership in decline and the government behind in the polls a second successful challenge was mounted. In justifying his challenge Malcolm Turnbull savaged Abbott's leadership, style and substance, commending 'advocacy not slogans', the restoration of traditional Cabinet, an 'end to policy on the run and captain's calls' and the restoration of a coherent economic message (Probyn: 2015).

Prime ministers must constantly ensure that there is support for government policies and for their own position.

In election campaigns they speak for their government, in practice they need to discuss and persuade as much as demand. If they do not, then the fate of Rudd, of Gillard, of Blair and of Brown awaits them. Abbott failed to heed the warning signs but Cameron is all too aware of them.

### **Institutional Constraints and Debates**

Parliamentary institutions were designed to limit executive government and developed initially as a means to restrain the royal prerogative. Constitutions and constitutional conventions developed to prevent the misuse of power. Once elected, governments must work within those constraints, however reluctantly.

The United Kingdom has no single document that defines the distribution of powers. The constitutional settlement is a medley of legislation and conventions that is always changing and under debate (see King 2007; Bogdanor 2009). The British Parliament proclaims its sovereignty and it alone can determine what the law of the land is. It cannot be bound by courts and it can change the law. But entry into the EU and the devolution of powers to Scottish, Irish and Welsh Parliaments challenge old certainties and there is constant dispute about interpretation and the impact of current circumstances.

First is the controversial issue of EU membership. The Cameron Government's policy options are constrained by the Treaty of Rome and EU policies. Cameron's actions are also limited by the hostility to the EU of some members of his own government. Britain had to cede powers to Brussels and adjust its policies and practices in order to join the EU. This has not been universally accepted in Britain, particularly in the Conservative Party and other right wing parties like the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

The directive on the right to work freely anywhere in the territory of the EU (Directive 2004/38/EC) was a major issue at the 2015 election. UKIP want the UK to withdraw from the EU altogether. All the other major parties proposed some limitations on the directive's reach. The issue is most divisive in the Conservative Party where a number of Euro-sceptics support the UKIP position. Cameron does not but has been forced to placate this section of his party by pledging to hold a referendum on EU membership by 2017. Before this, he needs to renegotiate the UK's relationship with the EU and to limit unrestricted EU migration. This will be difficult to achieve.

The point here is that there is a troubling mismatch between any future government's desired aims to address public concerns about EU migration and free movement, the policy levers it has available, and the niceties of negotiations with the other 27 EU member states (Morris 2015).

Even if Cameron succeeds in renegotiating some terms, the Euro-sceptics in his party will not be convinced. The



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EU is an issue with the capacity to infect all government activity, even to destroy the government.

Just as significant is the challenge to the very existence of the UK as a *united* venture. Britain is not a federation. There is no compact that defines the power of the central government and those of the subordinate governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Those governments were created by parliamentary legislation in Westminster; they are in a sense created by consent and could in theory, although unlikely in practice, be abolished. But the rise of the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) and their current dominance of the Scottish electorate gives new urgency to an old issue.

Outside the question of outright independence for Scotland, the principal debate is on what is described as the West Lothian Question. Why should Scottish MPs be able to vote on English issues when English MPs cannot vote on Scottish issues? That did not matter so much when most Scottish seats were held by the major parties and SNP MPs didn't vote on purely English matters. But with the increased devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament and the SNP holding 56 of the 59 Scottish seats in the UK Parliament, Conservative Party MPs are objecting to Scottish nationalists having the right to vote in shaping a country from which they want to secede. This issue was highlighted recently when the SNP announced it would vote against legislation to relax the former government's restrictions on foxhunting in England and Wales ensuring it would be defeated (Mason 2015).

The Cameron Government's attempt to deal with the West Lothian Question by introducing English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) illustrates again the institutional and political constraints on the Cameron Government. The government introduced EVEL after promises of increased powers for Scotland were given during the Scottish independence referendum. Laws affecting just England would go to a committee composed only of English MPs before a final vote of the House of Commons. The changes were to be introduced by amending standing orders (Wilkinson 2015). But the government was forced to withdraw these proposals after they faced extensive opposition from Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Democratic Unionist Party. Even up to twenty members of the government's own party opposed the plan ensuring its defeat (Mason 2015).

This British Parliament will be dominated by issues of institutional imperatives and identity, within Europe and within the UK itself. They will be exacerbated by UKIP on the right and the SNP on the periphery where they support an independent Scotland and strong advocacy for a European presence. These are not issues which Cameron would have chosen to concentrate on but they are part of the constitutional settlement, the institutional structure within which he must govern.

## **Institutional Constraints in Australia**

The UK Government does not have to be unduly concerned with opposition from the House of Lords, which only has the capacity to delay. But in Australia the Constitution outlines the division of powers. Hence, the government must work within constitutional limits and negotiate the substantial powers of the Senate.

The Senate can provide a formidable barrier. It is elected for a six-year term by proportional representation and rarely has an absolute government majority. The Senate was not intended by the architects of the Constitution to be a mere reflection of the House of Representatives and it has rarely been so. When the Senate is controlled by the governing party it serves little useful purpose, but if the opposition controls it then total obstruction has traditionally followed. The Whitlam Government faced a hostile Senate that blocked ninety-three pieces of legislation before it failed to pass supply (Whitlam Institute: n.d.). Since 1980 minor parties, sometimes in conjunction with independents, have usually held the balance of power; firstly the Australian Democrats and then the Australian Greens. The Senate works best when a constructive party or group holds the balance of power and is prepared to negotiate with both sides. It is, however, perverse that particular electoral outcomes are required for constitutional arrangements to work well.

The current Senate proved difficult for the Abbott Government. As well as the ALP and 10 Greens Senators there are now eight cross-bench Senators requiring individual negotiations. If the ALP and the Greens oppose legislation, the government needs the support of six of these senators to implement its policies. The government was able to get some legislation passed through the Senate including the abolition of the carbon and mining taxes and temporary protection visas but was blocked on other measures. The government claimed that \$30 billion dollars in savings from the 2014 budget were rejected (Woodley 2014). These include a proposed G.P. co-payment, a six-month wait for unemployment benefits for people under thirty and funding cuts and deregulation for higher education. Other measures blocked include the abolition of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the reinstatement of the Australian Building and Construction Commission. Much as the government would prefer to by-pass the Senate, it is an enduring institutional restraint on Australian Governments.

Governments regularly complain about having to deal with Senates they do not control, but the fragmented nature of this Senate has drawn attention to the Senate's electoral system itself. At the last two Senate elections Senators have been elected ahead of candidates with many more first preferences. This resulted from complex preference allocations among micro-parties with often-conflicting agendas. This practice has been dubbed 'gaming' the Senate vote and was made possible by

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amendments to the Electoral Act designed to reduce the number of votes wasted through informal voting. Instead of numbering all squares, voters could choose to tick one box above the line for a political party. Preference distribution for these votes was removed from individual voters and put into the hands of political parties.

Some seemingly perverse electoral outcomes have led to calls for reform to the electoral system. Electoral analyst Anthony Green asks: is it 'acceptable electoral practice to conduct elections on unwieldy ballot papers using unknown and incomprehensible preferences between equally unknown candidates'? (Green 2015). The Interim Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters recommended optional preferential voting be used for the Senate and the abolition of party voting tickets (JSCEM 2014: 53-54). This was supported by the Coalition, the ALP, the Greens and Senator Xenophon. It would eliminate micro-party candidates elected only because of preference swaps but would still not ensure government control of the Senate. But initiating this reform may further limit the government's ability to get legislation through the Senate as Senators who have benefited from the system have threatened to withdraw co-operation from the government if it implements the JSCEM recommendations.

#### **'Events, dear boy, events'**

Governments only partly determine their own future as this quotation, attributed to Harold Macmillan, indicates (Knowles 2006: 33). Events are all too often thrust upon them. Any neat strategic plans for governing are frequently undermined by the frantic requirement to respond to circumstances that were never forecast. Uncertainty and contingency are the essence of governing.

Consider the circumstances that new prime ministers and governments had to face when they took power in 2007 or soon after. All the new leaders inherited on-going commitments. New governments cannot just renege on promises legally and legitimately made by their predecessors, however much they may disagree. Indeed, they must manage the fallout of decisions they may once have opposed. The Abbott Government returned military advisors to Iraq despite the effort of the previous government to end Australian involvement. The Abbott, and now the Turnbull, Government is being drawn further into an unpredictable civil war in Syria with the alarming possibility of confrontation with Russia.

The large number of refugees from Syria and other conflicts seeking asylum are determined by both push and pull factors. People want to leave disastrous situations and come to countries where they will be safe and comparatively prosperous. Democratic, wealthy, law-abiding countries are attractive, particularly compared to Syria, Iraq and multiple African countries rent by civil war

and poverty. Australian and UK Governments have been forced to deal with 'unauthorised arrivals'. The United Kingdom and Australia have been preferred destinations although asylum seekers transit through other countries en route. Attempts to deal with asylum seekers have caused problems with neighbouring countries, the UK with France and Australia with Indonesia. Refugee policy is highly complex and much of it is out of the government's control.

Turnbull has inherited the success of Abbott's policy of stopping the boats but has to deal with problems in Australia's off-shore detention centres which have attracted severe criticism both domestically and internationally. The detention of children, the long terms of incarceration and deleterious mental health outcomes urgently need resolution. Asylum seekers have suffered violence, injury and death. Women and children have been subject to sexual assault. Laws muzzling detention centre workers can result in criminal prosecution if breached. The Australian Government finances the detention centres but says it does not have full control. Resettlement of refugees in Papua New Guinea is looking increasingly problematic. Any softening of the overall policy will attract accusations of encouraging people smugglers. While there is little room for a Coalition Prime Minister to move, inaction is not tenable. Detainees cannot be left in indefinite detention.

The global financial crisis (GFC) was perhaps the most unpredictable, or at least unpredicted, event that thrust itself onto government agendas. It originated in the United States but it threatened the financial viability of banks, financial institutions and governments across the world. Governments had to react fast to ensure their financial systems did not implode. Information was limited. The speed of events seemed unprecedented. Solutions were uncertain. Outcomes were unknown but doing nothing was not an option. Alternative strategies were at best inspired guesswork. The advice from Treasury was 'go hard, go early, go households' (Weller 2014: 193). The inner group of Australian cabinet ministers met over two days in almost continuous session as information was collected about overseas responses. Every morning for six weeks there was an 8 a.m. briefing in which the progress of the world's economies was reported and its impact on Australia assessed. Here was the classic crisis, unfolding even as policy choices were made, with decision makers unclear about what was happening and what would eventuate (Weller 2014: 193-196; Taylor and Uren 2010). None of the crises were caused by either the UK or Australia but the consequences will live on for decades in terms of deficits and commitments.

The recent decline in revenues from the mining industry has provided the Australian Government with another economic policy challenge. The Abbott Government promised to balance the budget but the deficit continues

to grow and tax revenues are dropping as demand from China slows – another factor over which the government has no control.

Climate change is also largely outside the control of either the UK or the Australian Governments. Action is required but uncertainty about the exact consequences and the distant time frames allow for climate scepticism. Nothing any individual country does alone, except perhaps the US and China, will have a decisive impact. International collaboration between rivals for a distant pay-off is hard to imagine and harder to achieve when the costs are immediate and identifiable. Voters have to be persuaded that costly measures are essential for the future well being of their grandchildren. That is a hard sell. Governments struggle to make policy in the face of debates full of vituperation. They have no choice but to act. Doing nothing is itself an ideological stand. The Abbott Government was forced to produce a policy and set targets in part because it was bound by international commitments.

## Conclusion

Governments are less powerful than we would like them to be when we want some specific action, and all too powerful when we disapprove of what they are doing. But we expect them to solve problems, even those that are outside their control, perhaps because they keep promising they will. Electorates themselves are inconsistent and divided. We want limited taxation, but also more government services. We think government spending should be reduced but want programs we approve of retained. Wind farms and new airports are desirable, but somewhere else. We condemn negative political advertising as destructive, but it works because we allow ourselves to be scared. We condemn political parties for relying on polls and focus groups but they reflect what we tell government we think. During elections, politicians promise us what we want. In government they have to solve intractable problems and react to events outside their control. Hence, they face many constraints in governing and in achieving their policy objectives.

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#### **Kazaly**

Listening to the seven-inch  
of "Up There Kazaly"  
in the bedroom of the kid  
from across the road  
after school on a winter afternoon  
in nineteen seventy-nine  
we wore our jerseys with pride  
and hand-balled the Sherrin  
back and forth as we belted  
out the chorus, unabashed,  
innocent children of the decade

NATHANAEL O'REILLY,  
FT. WORTH, TX, USA

#### **on removing a tattoo**

- (i) at the clinic:  
as if  
by removing the tattoo  
she could erase the past  
  
start afresh / again /  
with a clean slate  
  
worth a try  
  
even if skin deep
- (ii) d.i.y.:  
he tried  
peeling the skin  
  
as his dad  
taught him  
  
when fishing for leatherjacket

ADRIAN FLAVELL,  
ADELAIDE, SA

# Neoliberalism by Stealth: Exposing the flaw of neoliberal understandings of 'freedom'

LESTER J THOMPSON AND JO COGLAN

*A foundational principle of classical liberalism was freedom from social and economic oppression. The contemporary neoclassical, or neoliberal, manifestation of classic liberalism applauds freedom but seems vague about the oppression it rejects. This is particularly evident when justifying neoliberal demands for deregulation, small government and market facilitation. In embracing neoliberal ideas, successive Australian governments have ignored these logical weaknesses regarding freedom and oppression while normalising free-market public policy. This paper argues that in government and public opinion, neoliberal principles continue to dominate by stealth without acknowledgement that they are oppressive rather than liberating. Policy based on such theories needs reconsideration as the logic that justified its precursor, classical liberalism, has been generalised as justification for neoliberal policy that is not grounded in the need for freedom from oppression.*

## Introduction

Prior to his appointment, former Prime Minister Tony Abbott (2013) aligned himself with neoliberalism by congratulating the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) for 'defending Western civilisation' and for recommending small government, free-market, and privatisation policy:

The IPA, I want to say, has been freedom's discerning friend. It has supported capitalism, but capitalism with a conscience. Not for the IPA, a single-minded dogmatism or opposition to all restraint; rather a sophisticated appreciation that freedom requires a social context ... So, ladies and gentlemen, that is a big 'yes' to many of the 75 specific policies you urged upon me (Abbott 2013).

To its advocates, neoliberal politics is a set of ideals which are friendly towards individuals, protective of freedom and civilising for society. Alternately, a critique of neoliberalism might evaluate its foundational ideals drawn from F.A. Hayek, Milton Friedman and Anthony Fisher for their logical inconsistency with ideas about 'freedom', 'civilised' society, and actual 'tyranny'. Thus in this paper the logic of contemporary neoliberalism is examined against the logic of an international neoliberal project, that began in the 1940s in reaction to perceived 'socialist' threats from 'big government' 'welfare states' that tyrannically abuse freedom.

The prime minister's rhetoric regarding small government is so well aligned with neoliberal concerns about tyranny and civilisation (Harvey 2005; Thompson and Coghlan

2014) as to justify a thorough examination of the social, economic and political policy-reasoning that he applauds. It will be suggested that organisations such as the IPA promote neoliberal agendas and market-expansionist policy recommendations which undermine the Australian welfare state, based upon flawed ideas about both the 'free' nature of the market and the 'tyranny' of the modern state. This paper considers how liberty or 'freedom from oppression' is central to classical liberalism but is confused within neoliberal ideology, appearing as unrestrained market-power.

Firstly, this paper begins with a brief discussion of the development of neoliberalism to highlight its failures regarding 'freedom from oppression'. The discussion that follows considers how early neoliberal ideas about freedom centre upon circular logic that freedom opposes tyranny, the state is tyrannical, and therefore state activities must be constrained to protect freedom. By assuming the modern state as tyrannical, and by presenting freedom as an absence of state intervention, neoliberalism falsely equates taxation, regulation and government interventionism with tyranny. The discussion strives to evaluate such logic through first considering the contemporary neoliberal movement.

## Freedom Versus the State

The Atlas network is an international coordinating body for more than 400 free market think tanks that advocate neoclassical (neoliberal) perspectives of liberalism as the preferred ideology of Western modernity. The

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ideology emerged after World War II when Anthony Fisher's commitment to liberal 'freedom', evidenced in his membership of the Society of Individuals, drove him to promote classical liberal values. According to Frost (2008), this period had witnessed a growing public disrespect for classical liberal principles alongside acceptance of democratic socialist ideas. Fisher sought the intellectual assistance of the neoclassical economist Hayek, to counter the 'dominant intellectuals' who 'had tilted the political debate in favour of growing government intervention' (Frost 2008: 10). For Fisher and Hayek, the market price mechanism was superior to both planned resource allocation and centrally planned welfare states which undermined individual self-reliance and liberty (Frost 2008: 12). The core ideas of this neoliberal movement were that individual freedom is fundamental to progressive civilisations, while centralised government planning constrains individual activities on to a 'Road to Serfdom', tyranny and servitude (Hayek 1944; Atlas 2010). This doctrine drew on a history of oppressive European monarchies, and posited that civilisation could only resist tyranny if individual liberty, self-reliance and freedom were institutionalised. The market seemed the ideal institution.

By 1947, Hayek had already begun his own political project after calling together a conference in Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland discussing 'the state and the possible fate of liberalism (in its classical sense)'. There, the attendees' fervent moral concerns about individual freedom and civilisation instigated the influential Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS). From MPS was a view that:

The central values of civilisation are in danger. Over large stretches of the earth's surface the essential conditions of human dignity and freedom have already disappeared. In others they are under constant menace from the development of current tendencies of policy. The position of the individual and the voluntary group are progressively undermined by extensions of arbitrary power. Even that most precious possession of Western Man, freedom of thought and expression, is threatened by the spread of creeds which, claiming the privilege of tolerance when in the position of a minority, seek only to establish a position of power in which they can suppress and obliterate all views but their own (MPS: n.d.).

MPS was concerned that post-war socialistic trends denied 'all absolute moral standards', 'the desirability of the rule of law', the 'belief in private property' and the importance of 'competitive markets'. Apparently, 'without the diffused power and initiative associated with these [individual, legal and market] institutions it is difficult to imagine a society in which freedom may be effectively preserved' (MPS: n.d.). Even a seemingly benign 'needs

focused' welfare state appears from this view, a 'road' towards communistic tyranny and abused individual freedoms.

Fisher held similar pressing concerns about 'civilisation' and because of his own fervent commitment to individual freedom and his agreement with Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), he acted in 1955 to found and financially support the seminal Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) in the UK (Friedman: n.d.). He later advised on the founding of the Manhattan Institute, the Pacific Research Institute, the Fraser Institute, and then most importantly the Atlas Economic Research Foundation 'to institutionalise this process of helping start up new think tanks' (Atlas 2010) that would promote the 'freedom' agenda. According to Milton Friedman, a founding member of the MPS:

At the end of World War Two Anthony Fisher ... went to see Hayek at the London School of Economics. He told Hayek about his interests in promoting free markets and free enterprise and said he was thinking of going into politics ... Hayek discouraged him from that course of action. He advised him ... to get the ideas of the public at large, changed – to change the general atmosphere of belief. As a result Tony Fisher ... established the Institute of Economic Affairs ... and it became the institution that changed the intellectual climate of Britain ... CATO is today performing the kind of function that the Institute of Economic Affairs performed so well in Britain. It is involved in trying to alter the climate of opinion ... (Friedman n.d.).

In the words of Friedman the 'climate of opinion' has changed and this happened as a result of the vision of these men and the work of partisan organisations. The MPS, IEA, The Cato Institute (CATO) and Atlas all seem to have been born out of classical liberal moral concerns held by Hayek and Fisher to save 'civilisation', by ensuring individual liberty and by holding back government tyranny. Today these bodies, Australia's Institute of Public Affairs (IPA), and the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) all seek to promote variations of:

Individual liberty and choice, including freedom of association, religion, speech and the right to property, an economy based on free markets, democratic government under the rule of law, [and] an autonomous and free civil society (CIS 2013).

In Australia, the IPA was formed in 1943 during the demise of the United Australia Party and the formation of the Liberal Party of Australia, but now nestles with many aligned think tanks as part of a movement supported by Atlas. Though the IPA consistently had overt political ties with the Liberal Party (Beder 2006: 134), its stated

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aims are similar to the other bodies under the Atlas umbrella; namely, 'The IPA supports the free market of ideas, the free flow of capital, a limited and efficient government, evidence-based public policy, the rule of law, and representative democracy (IPA 2013a).

Inclusion of the IPA within the Atlas network implies that it acts in accord with Atlas's evangelistic mission 'to strengthen the worldwide freedom movement' (Beder 2006). The Atlas vision of 'a free, prosperous and peaceful world where limited governments defend the rule of law, private property and free markets' (Atlas, 2010) is a view shared by ideologically-aligned organisations. The IPA, though founded in a period of economically liberal ideas following World War II, and initially influenced by both Keynes and Hayek, moved closer to MPS/IEA neoliberal principles around the 1980s (Beder 2006; IPA 2013b). Perhaps as a reward for its ongoing rightward lurch, a 2008 'IPA Review' was awarded the Sir Anthony Fisher Memorial Award for best magazine. Such awardees seem to favour free-enterprise development and are focused upon the desire to promote a market-based supplier-consumer interpretation of 'freedom' (Oreskes and Conway 2010: 248).

### **Interpreting Freedom: Institutional Constraint?**

As liberalism has, from its classical origins, been focused upon individual self-determination, any liberal philosophy that supports a specific economic approach to society should describe how that model results in benefits to individuals. The core belief within classical liberal free-market ideology was that people should be free to associate and consume (or do) what they want in life as long as they don't harm others or breach the rule of law. The logic was that, in contradiction of traditional European ruling class autocratic governance, each person is born with equal rights. As the mind of each person is capable of reason, then each is characterised by 'apartness', self-direction and personal responsibility rather than 'bounded-ness' and subordination (Ingersoll et al. 2001: 24). Thus each has a right to freedom rather than institutional constraints, and this in turn permits unpredictable but beneficial creative outcomes which are impossible under autocratic constraints. If the benefits of free expression and creation are able to flow into the market to improve general wellbeing then constraints by autocratic government will detract from wellbeing. If classical liberal beliefs were underpinned by simplistic classless democratic logic about free individual action, later neoliberal beliefs extended this by assuming that market expansion maximised freedom, while taxation, regulation and welfare state expansions constrained creativity and wellbeing.

From the classical liberal perspective, family problems and challenges were best dealt with by people freely interacting, collaborating contractually and forming corporations without interference from 'rulers' or the 'state' except for those protections that relate to the

'rule of law'. These ideas informed neoliberal beliefs that government action, whether through taxes, regulation or laws, should be kept to the minimum that protects life and property and facilitates free association and contract formation. Early 'liberal' desires to constrain government were a reaction to authoritarian constraints upon (creative) individual action rather than an antipathy towards any taxation for intervention to facilitate freedom or help needy people.

Yet early 'liberals' accepted that lawlessness directly harms individuals and thus law and government are needed to protect free association and contracts. As classical liberal 'free markets' and property rights were natural expressions of liberty, then democratic governance and an impartial rule of law were critical. These were essential for protecting individuals from harm and for preventing property encroachments, yet strangely and in contradiction of liberal philosophy, the 1800s saw the law give individual liberties and rights to corporations that had few of the characteristics and none of the needs of individuals. Though taxation was generally acknowledged as necessary for legal protection of individuals, by granting rights to organisations, very powerful corporate interests could use the law to pressure for tax and regulatory arrangements that benefited them to the disadvantage of individuals. What this means is that the growing understanding of human needs from the 1950s onwards is not reflected in neoliberal policy recommendations which favour corporations over individuals.

When contemporary IEA, IPA and CIS authors sought to reduce government's 'role in our lives' (IEA 2015: 1) they focused upon maximising market freedom to maximise personal freedom, yet contemporary interpretations of this neoliberal mission maximise corporate power. Historically, the classical liberalism that motivated Fisher, Hayek and others to develop the MPS (and other bodies) was a set of ideological beliefs about humanity which emphasised an innate dualistic (mind/body) 'individuality', and a highly abstract concept of 'individual freedom'. Though the movement was justified as an attack on tyranny, it increasingly focused upon 'market freedom', privatisation of government activities and limited government rather than an objective assurance of liberty as experienced by individuals. The IPA public information seems so focused upon the market form of freedom that there is a need for extensive examination to identify alternate individual-liberty intentions. From considerations of the IPA position of the rights of tobacco companies and oligopolistic media corporations, it seems evident that in cases where the needs of individuals are in competition with the need of the market, the IPA favours the market. Thus the existence of a global network of well-resourced institutions committed to increasing corporate power, under the guise of freedom, seems an Orwellian concern for every government concerned about individual welfare and 'freedom'.

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If Friedman is correct about the movement's success in achieving an ideological 'climate' change, then Hayek, as its intellectual mentor (with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan) influenced the contemporary conceptualisation of 'freedom' in contemporary Western society. This view was slanted towards perceptions that the interests of the market and the individual were synonymous, as in *The Road to Serfdom* he saw Western society as 'above all an individualist civilisation' (Hayek 1944: 14). His competitive, individualistic view of human nature thus seems at odds with recent knowledge about 'group' based human evolution (Thompson and Coghlan 2014). For Hayek:

During the whole of this modern period of European history the general direction of social development was one of freeing the individual from the ties which had bound him to the customary or prescribed ways in the pursuit of his ordinary activities (Hayek 1944: 15).

In a very laborious and clearly modernist narrative Hayek presented freedom as a recent characteristic 'unchaining of individual energies' (Hayek 1944: 15) particularly as 'industrial freedom' in a 'civilising' direction. In the 1940-1950 period when Hayek, Fisher and others started their evangelistic mission to preserve liberty (and private property rights), they found it 'difficult to imagine a society in which freedom may be effectively preserved' enough to permit civilising progress (Hayek 1944: 16). Clearly the preservation of freedom was their motivating concept and yet the implied concept – freedom as lack of tyranny – is elusive except as a 'free' market prescription for a better future. If tyranny was imminent from the 1950s, it is surprisingly challenging in the second decade of this millennium to measure from an individual perspective the welfare state 'tyranny' that he predicted, or the individual 'freedom' benefits of his climactic movement. Wellbeing increased through the 'long boom' 1950-70 periods of Keynesian welfare state expansion and democratic socialist policy.

### **Freedom and Civilisation**

How can the public conceptualise how the democratic governments of the 'civilised' world have been a measurable threat to their liberty if the parameters of freedom and tyranny are obscure? Clearly the definitions of individual freedom and liberty are central to understanding the neoliberal project and to demonstrating varying levels of liberal achievement. When Friedman (2011) implied that the MPS and other institutions were focused upon preventing either 'galloping' (1950-1980) or 'creeping' (1980-2011) socialism from collectivist social policy development, it seems that he was arguing that such 'socialist' policy reduces freedom by increasing the level of national income expended by the public sector and by increasing the regulation of previously lawful activity. Thus previous socialistic governments

thwarted neoliberal agendas by ignoring classical liberal concerns about freedom, less regulation and constrained spending. Though socialistic government 'creep' required more public expenditure and thus increased taxation and regulatory intervention into family life, the public showed scant concern through the 'long boom'. Their concepts of 'freedom' and 'tyranny' seem to be publicly unfamiliar, tautologically described, taxation and regulation matters.

Perhaps because of the logical problems of this neoliberal project there seem to be problems in demonstrating that welfare states reduce freedom. For example, according to the Heritage Foundation freedom index, Denmark rates higher than the US while Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden rate nearly as well as the UK and higher than Germany: Lithuania, Iceland and Norway all rate in the 'mostly free' category in spite of their democratic socialist history (Heritage Foundation 2012). Interestingly, the Reporters Without Borders (RWB 2012) organisation ranks Finland first, Norway second, the Netherlands fourth, Iceland sixth, Denmark eleventh and Sweden twelfth in the world for press freedom. These are well above the UK, which was ranked 28th; and the US, which was ranked 47th. Further, the Heritage Foundation (2012) ranks Australia third in the world, after Hong Kong and Singapore, in its 2013 Index of Economic Freedom monitor, even after nearly six years, and 19 years in the last three decades, of social democratic government. Social democratic governance seems to have achieved high levels of freedom (even economic freedom) and no noticeable tyranny.

In absence of a publicly noticeable growth in socialist tyranny the MPS founding member Milton Friedman (2011) bemoans 'social intervention', 'redistribution', 'disability' assistance and 'concern about pollution' that government has been acting upon in recent years. He suggests that if the movement assists to 'repeal a law each day', society 'would be in good shape' (Friedman 2011). In so saying he implies a contested neoliberal ideological position that government is predominantly 'tyrannical'. In seeming irony he is claiming tyrannical the research and work of numerous relatively impartial bureaucrats but not the impact of four hundred plus organisations, which Monbiot (2007) estimates are pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into promoting a neoliberal ideological agenda for preventing a tyranny which has not appeared, and for protecting 'freedom' in absence of any real or discernible threat. What they might achieve by repealing a law 'each day' seems a purely market facilitation project in favour of corporate power<sup>1</sup>. Yet, if even social democrat governments across the world are maintaining free markets and press freedom, there seems little evidence that central planning has been a significant source of creeping tyranny. In this light it seems relevant to evaluate the freedom that these institutions are actually promoting. Remembering that the project was justified because 'freedom of thought and expression' was threatened by 'the spread of creeds



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which, claiming the privilege of tolerance when in the position of a minority' sought 'to establish a position of power in which they can suppress and obliterate all views but their own'.

The great problem with the mission of ideologically aligned neoliberal organisations (think tanks) is that though they were initially formed to protect civilisation from tyranny through promoting freedom, when tyranny never established itself in any publicly noticeable way, they needed to create a 'climate of belief' that government taxation and regulation were tyranny. The early Hayekian hypothesis was that socialist ideas were causing an expansion of government and the growing incursion into individuals' lives would create a growing sense of oppression (Hayek 1944). In absence of a public sense of tyranny the argument is now that taxation is an infringement on freedom and tantamount to socialist tyranny. Accordingly there is an appeal to citizens that they should feel unfree if they feel that they pay too much tax (ABC 2012). As such, freedom is a concept that seems difficult to discern and that can only be discerned if individuals are indoctrinated enough that they begin to notice it.

In contrast with Australian freedoms it seems paradoxical that MPS ideology was influential in justifying the policy and maintenance of the tyrannical Pinochet military dictatorship in Chile after it forcibly overthrew the democratically elected Allende government (Harvey 2005; Robin 2012). Rather than the MPS and the neoliberal movement striving for individual freedom, such as an absence of tyranny in Chile, they supported market reform within a tyrannical system (Hayek 1978; Robin 2012). In a letter he wrote to The Times of London in 1978, Hayek (1978) confuses his own position on the 'rule of law' when he defends the Pinochet regime by stating 'in some historical circumstances personal liberty' is 'better protected under an authoritarian than democratic government'. This creates considerable difficulty for a consistent neoliberal view of liberty and freedom while it justifies 'market fundamentalism' and corporate freedom above individual freedom (Harvey 2005: 66-7, 70; Robin 2012). Democratic liberal countries like Australia, in which most citizens feel 'free' with little trend towards tyranny, experience active interventionist policy lobbying from organisations such as the IPA while requiring little individual protections. Such emphasis on taxation, environmental regulation, and welfare policy as tyrannical, rather than on individual freedom within repressive regimes, casts the neoliberal movement as propagandists.

The Heritage Foundation (2012) judged Australia as the third most free country, after two Asian nations which have a quality of life that most Australians are happy to avoid.

It can then be argued that freedom is a state of mind regarding the capacity to choose (Veenhoven, 2013: 259), and thus those who do not feel that they are oppressed are experiencing significant freedom. As most do not feel oppressed, then we are experiencing freedom and we do not need intervention from neoliberal institutions. Why then is there need for intensive activity by the IPA and CIS in changing public views? The IPA proudly proclaims that it has had significant impact upon media-generated political discourse. More concerning is the longstanding directorship of the IPA by Rupert Murdoch (Abbott 2013), the proprietor of the most oligopolistically powerful media outlet in Australia (Thompson 2011; Valdori 2014). According to former Prime Minister Tony Abbott:

Rupert Murdoch has sometimes changed his political allegiance but he's never changed his fundamental principles ... those have been greater personal responsibility, smaller government, fewer regulations and support for open societies that don't build walls against the world (Abbott 2013).

The evidence indicates that neoliberal institutions are committed to reducing the role of government, and empowering market functioning irrespective of public desires. Thus if the proprietor of the most powerful media outlet in Australia has a long term commitment to a neoliberal institution, then biased information might be provided to the public. Further, if the neoliberal institutions (and its directors) are committed to changing the 'climate of opinion' towards market fundamentalist ideology and if the media is biased towards this, then there will be a predisposition towards propaganda that favours neoliberal politics. This suppression and obliteration 'of all views' but one, is what the MPS was established to prevent, yet there seems in Australia an oppressive collaboration between the IPA, the media and the contemporary Liberal Party regarding changing the way people think.

### **The State and Social Responsibility**

The controlling of public views threatens the Australian democratic process and biases the policy agenda of governments. Successive democratic Australian governments have accepted their responsibility for limiting individual 'harm', upholding the law, and administering just protection of lawful but powerless citizens, yet neoliberal interventionists seek a minimalist form of policy and law favouring market freedom. The principle of government protecting vulnerable individuals from harm from the powerful and corrupt is fundamental to democratic liberal government (Berlin 1986: 161).

The Australian public have not feared the centrally planned welfare state from 1950-1970s as a source of tyranny, yet the neoliberal world view sees it as

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damaging to market freedom and the public needed to be persuaded to accept this. Yet the Keynesian welfare state created a long economic boom which substantially improved living conditions and arguably improved public freedom up until the 1970s. This social planning approach, which neoliberals opposed for threatening individual 'freedom', was a widely accepted strategy for socially protecting individuals from harms caused by poverty and powerlessness. By contrast to the liberty achieved during this period, a project that seeks to make free citizens change the 'way they think', and subsequently feel unfree if the government acts in socially sanctioned ways, seems tyrannical.

The neoliberal activists of bodies such as the IPA accept the need for the 'rule of law' and as such they accept the need for state intervention in civil and economic affairs. It follows that the implementation of facilitative law such as a National Disability Insurance Scheme, rather than being anathema as perceived by Friedman and the IPA, is publicly popular in Australia (Novak 2012). This is an example of how law in civilised countries expands beyond simplistic protections for life and property, to include services for broadening economic participation and also for restricting activities or products that harm vulnerable individuals. For example, children were protected from exploitation, including prostitution, and there were regulations put upon the sale of narcotics that individuals were 'freely' choosing to purchase and consume. The logical arguments about these laws were that there was no real freedom of choice involved when children were exploited or when addicts chose to consume opiates, and thus social permissiveness regarding these free choice processes was harmful to all persons involved. Law that protects persons from harm is perceived useful. The welfare state was a public admission that government should be the institution that ensures public welfare by protecting citizens from exploitative and harmful processes and corporations.

### **Conclusion: A Flawed Philosophy**

A philosophical examination of the conceptual basis of neoclassical economics expands the understanding of the think tank project and the freedom based achievements of the neoliberal free market prescription for civilisation. Dixon and Hyde (2003: 634-635) argue that the neoclassical approach is built upon 'methodological individualism' which is neither empirically measurable nor consistent with 'the ordered social relationships or recurring patterns of social behaviour that determine the nature of human action'. As the measures of achievement of the neoliberal project – freedom and increased wellbeing – are subjective and unmeasurable, and as social influences 'impose themselves on and exercise power over agency by moulding peoples actions and

thoughts', then there is reason for caution rather than neoliberal confidence about the outcomes of their freedom doctrine (Dixon and Hyde 2003: 635). It seems that at best the underpinning neoliberal concepts 'freedom' and 'individual agency' are conceptualised in a way that is consistent with 18th and 19th century philosophy rather than with contemporary understanding of people and society. Thus neoliberal objectives are flawed.

Hayek and Fisher instigated the neoliberal project because of a desire to save the 'essential conditions of human dignity and freedom', and yet these concerns were poorly conceptualised. Even when conceptualised, they were under less threat from social democrat governments that they opposed than by the authoritarian governments that they supported. The neoliberals seem wrong about the danger to 'civilisation' as the policy that was menacing freedom was very much defined by the social constructs of a relatively small group of predominantly privileged men (Harvey 2005: 152-3; Monbiot 2007). The project seems still to require the constructs of the neoliberal worldview, focused upon the interests of men like those at the original Mont Pèlerin meeting (Harvey 2005; Monbiot 2007). These interests seem in opposition with those of an alternative group whose 'freedom' the central planning is designed to help and whose beliefs they wish to change. Thus the project needs a covert strategy to 'get the ideas of the public at large', and 'the general atmosphere of belief' aligned with neoliberal ideas about utopian 'market freedom' (Friedman n.d.) and government regulatory tyranny (Wilson 2013). For the project to work individuals must be made to think like neoliberals, so they perceive oppression as do neoliberals, even where they previously saw 'freedom' in public investment, social intervention, and welfare state protections. Thus there is a neoliberal desire to strategically change the way the public think, rather than a liberal desire to provide the public with the information they require in order to make rational choices, in a free-market of ideas.

Rather than working to protect the 'central values of civilisation' these institutions are now working in Australia in a relative coalition with oligopolistic media outlets and Liberal identities with the aim of dominating public opinion. This seems to some degree to clash with Hayek's original intent as it is promoting a 'creed', which though 'claiming the privilege of tolerance', actually seeks 'to establish a position of power in which they can suppress and obliterate all views but their own' (MPS n.d.). This process can be seen to be more compatible with a strategic process for reducing public freedom rather than a project that is fighting tyranny. Thus they are actively doing what they were set up to stop.

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#### End Notes

1. See arguments of Beder (2006) and Burton (2007).

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# THE ONE THEY SAT ALONE

## A VALEDICTION: DEMANDING MOURNING

GARY CREW

After Rita left me, I sank into that self indulgent misery where you find yourself listening to song lyrics.

Worse, where you find yourself sobbing along with them.

You know what I mean?

Like, the morning (mourning?) the kid came into my life, I was listening to some hammy tenor warbling on the radio as I drove to uni. (I'd managed to keep the Volvo.) My mother used to sing this: Thomas Moore's classic weepy, *The Last Rose of Summer*. I should have flicked it off but as I have suggested, I was in the mood for tears. 'Who would inhabit this bleak world alone?' the tremulous tenor wanted to know. Oozing sentiment though the line was, how could I not share his woes?

There's a certain ecstasy in the misery of the loveless.

Later, alone in my office—and being in that sort of mood—I looked up the meaning of 'sentiment': 'a tendency to be swayed by feeling rather than reason'. That's nice, I thought. I can go with that.

Moore's lyrics were written in 1805, pre-empting the Victorians in their relish for woe. Having spotted the last rose of the summer—not even a contesting bud is nigh—the poet conscientiously cuts and dismembers it, scattering the leaves (what happened to the petals?) among its 'scentless and dead' companions while citing the blunt valediction, 'Go sleep thou with them'.

Why should a thing so lovely be thus condemned?

The lyricist summarily explains:

When true hearts lie withered,  
And fond hearts have flown,  
Oh! Who would inhabit  
This bleak world alone?

So, the poet reasoned, if you're alone and miserable, make sure everyone else is too, or possibly—even preferably—you're better off dead. On the strength of that, I turned to my window.

Below me stretched acres of tree-dotted university lawns, littered with languorous youth, all snogging and snuggling like there was no tomorrow and my bleak muse Keats (having sneaked up behind me, uninvited), whispered: *Fair youth, beneath the trees; thou canst not leave they song, nor ever can those trees be bare. So doth Eternity tease...* Ha! I sniffed, jabbing an elbow into his ribs, what lies were told by your precious Grecian urn? And pulling myself together, I went for a coffee.

Rita or no Rita, I could still afford that miserable pleasure.

With an hour to kill (I was seeing some undergrad plagiarist at 10:00), I cribbed a quiet corner in the refectory and slumped, wallowing in the maudlin memories of my own withered love.

I was going down for the third time when a yabbering mob of teenagers descended. One glance at their uniforms and I knew they were from a neighbouring high school. I shuddered as they hugged and punched (is there a difference?) until finally some tight-skirted teacher made an attempt to bring them to order.

I pushed my coffee aside, intending to leave, when out of the crowd that same teacher reappeared (her skirt hitched, her chignon in disarray). Hissing into a student's ear, she propelled him towards my sanctuary. I had enough problems without watching somebody else victimised so I reached for my books, but something in this kid's face made me stop and look again.

He was me. I saw myself there, a kid, sitting alone: first day, first year: same uni, same corner of the refectory. Smart as (quiz master smart) but dumb as. And lonely as. Like this kid I had the body of a young Frank Sinatra (yeah, I'm that old...) but not much else, other than zits – and raging hormones. Oh, and jeans turned up because they were too long and my mother said I'm not cutting them off because you might still grow (Ha!) and there were girls. Gorgeous, giggling girls with breasts. But I was invisible.

So I looked at the kid again: his face: there was a hint of Tom Waits about him: the dark, unkempt hair; the raw cut of his jaw; the toothy contortions—he squirmed

under the teacher's vice-like grip—and I realised that he had bigger problems than the wrath of an over zealous minder: this kid was different—like special.

You know...

What's he been up to? I wondered—pinching bums, pulling pony tails, wielding a flick knife—who knows? But when the teacher and her victim reached my quiet zone, with a compressive shove on his shoulder, she forced him to sit.

Content—even triumphant—Madam Lash made an adjustment to her errant locks (she didn't know about her skirt) and strode off—dusting her palms as one does when rid of a bug.

I observed my solitary friend. First he looked down, scanning the table, and finding no evidence of confection to soothe his misery, he raised his eyes, anxious, as his tormentor rejoined the mob. A momentary enlightenment crossed his face—an epiphany, if you like—as he saw that of all his companions, he sat alone. Ah, I mused, you will come to such sights colder by and by and I tried to catch his eye, thinking to establish an empathetic connection but he looked through me like glass. Again I would have stood; I should have gathered my books and left, but noticing his tie—so neatly tied; and his shirt—so neatly pressed—and realising that somebody cared, that somebody loved him, I settled to watch.

Giving him time, I gazed into the tepid remains of my coffee, idly fingering the nervy dribble streaking the sides of my cup, then I looked up, thinking to catch him out—doing what, I have no idea. But he was looking away—his head so far turned his collar strained, his tie, his shirt (all askew), stretched across his chest—staring back at them: at his careless companions, all yabbering and jostling, ignorant of his plight. Ow! I thought. Ouch! This is no *I-did-it-my-way* Frank Sinatra, this is the contorted image of *I'm-the-last-leaf-on-the-tree* Tom Waits, and I allowed myself an indulgence, a certain gratification of my poetic observation—egocentric as it was—until I saw his hands.

The chairs in the refectory were well designed, comfortable, and with his open palms he beat the upholstered arms; beat them, beat them frantically—rhythmically—lifting a tad then beating again; lifting a tad then beating, ever so urgent, ever so frantic... ever so fast, and I stared.

This is pain, I thought. This is suffering, and looking to his face, I saw his lips—glossy with drool—as he set his teeth, as he grimaced and strained. 'Me!' he spat. 'Me! Me! Look at me...' and I shuddered, thinking, 'I am. I am looking at me.'

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Associate Professor Gary Crew has written over 70 illustrated books, short story anthologies, novellas and novels spanning a career of over 25 years in print. He is one of Australia's most awarded authors, winning the Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year award 4 times: twice for Book of the Year for Young Adult Older Readers ('*Strange Objects*' in 1991 and '*Angel's Gate*' in 1993) and twice for Picture Book of the Year ('*First Light*' in 1993, illustrated by Peter Gouldthorpe and '*The Watertower*' in 1994, illustrated by Steven Woolman). Gary's '*Memorial*', illustrated by Shaun Tan, was awarded the Children's Book Council of Australia's Honour Book in 2000 and short-listed for the Queensland Premier's awards. His novels and illustrated books are published in translation all over the world.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Quentin Beresford 2015 *The Rise and Fall of Gunns Ltd*, NewSouth Publishing. ISBN 9781742234199, p. 442**

This excoriating cornucopia of crime, corruption and crony-capitalism in Tasmania follows Quentin Beresford's account of Brian Burke's spectacular political and criminal career in Western Australia (*The Godfather – The Life of Brian Burke*, Allen & Unwin). Forensic in detail, Beresford charts the authoritarian political environment of Tasmania that led to a litany of economic failures in state-financed and controlled operations. Unsustainable levels of debt in the Hydro-Electric Commission were hidden for decades but deemed by government as acceptable in order to promote its ideological agenda. If a politics student wanted a source detailing 'worst practice' as applied to business, economics, democracy, employment and the environment, she need go no further.

It is also a ripping yarn which if suggested as a plot for a novel, would be considered too far-fetched. The depth and breadth of the corruption, above all to the democratic system, is breathtaking. The attempted bribery of Labor MP Jim Cox by media magnate Edmund Rouse, ending in the latter's imprisonment, was a nadir even for a state that is 'insular and inward-looking' where 'the big boys' in '... a conservative, male-dominated club that's got Tasmania in a stranglehold do not want the state to move forward ... Any progressive thinking is seen as radical and Green'. Premier Jim Bacon epitomised the long standing ideology that jobs prevailed over the environment, terming dissenters 'latte-sipping middle-class tree huggers'.

The course to a Gunn's collapse was steered by a sequence of Premiers who believed an inefficient and government subsidised logging industry, which resulted in the enrichment of a handful of individuals such as John Gay at great sacrifice to the environment, to be a valid business model. Never happy with mere millions, Gay and others pushed for increasing power to strip Tasmania of its old growth forests for pulp in a declining world market. The enabling legislation was passed after consultation

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with an increasingly powerful Gunns and with government frequently being told to act on its requirements.

The Tamar Valley pulp mill provided the glue for diverse activists to target the lamentably researched project that had poor long term viability. Toxicity of the project related not only to the proposed pulp mill's emissions but also to the political process enabling it. Slowly, Tasmania's largest company fell apart with Gay selling his shares before releasing an unpublished report stating the company's virtual bankruptcy.

Sourced and written in the academic style, it is nevertheless a gripping and revelatory account displaying the dark heart of Australian politics that should resonate throughout its nine governments. Although necessarily reliant on media sources, some of these come from the more 'colourful' spectrum where accuracy may not be deemed as important as a good story. However, the notes and bibliography offer copious sources for any student wishing to follow one of the many avenues of potential research.

Tasmania desperately needs a Royal Commission on forestry, and preferably an ICAC, but unsurprisingly the two major parties refuse to countenance it as they have been party to the long-standing culture of deception to pursue their ideological goals. The destruction of Tasmanian old growth forests by an unviable industry was described as an 'epidemic of madness' by Richard Flanagan. However, to this day, the madness continues.

**AUTHOR**

MICHAEL BUKY

MICHAEL BUKY HAS SWAPPED UNIVERSITY POLITICS FOR LIFE IN RURAL TASMANIA

## BOOK REVIEW

**Ed Finn and Kathryn Cramer (Eds) 2014 *Hieroglyph: Stories & Visions for a Better Future*, New York NY: William Morrow (an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers) ISBN 978 0 06 220469 1**

The seventeen short fictional narratives in *Hieroglyph: Stories & Visions for a Better Future* are written in response to a call from Neal Stephenson (of Snow Crash fame) for optimistic visions of preferred futures for humanity. Under the banner **Project Hieroglyph**, this enterprise seeks to energise the genre of science fiction short stories, encouraging scientists who write and writers who employ scientific principles to stimulate the traditional feedback loop where the novel ideas of a story inspire actualised scientific innovation. This execution in turn fosters further imaginings for evolving human existence. The project's progenitors at the Center for Science and the Imagination (Arizona State

University) believe that humans, mired as we are in geopolitical tensions and marketplace cultural drivers, have limited scope for 'getting big things done' through collaborative global networks. *Hieroglyph* is conceived as a creative crucible where authors can introduce provocative extrapolations of technological and societal advancements in the hope of opening and intensifying civilisational transitions. Each story is accompanied by Story Notes and links to further sites of interaction encouraging participatory readership.

In most cases, the narratives fulfil the project's ambitions providing some spectacular conceptions of future directions for humanity grounded in plausible extensions of the known into a logical construction of the unknown. In *Atmosfera Incognita*, Neal Stephenson's amiable protagonist oversees a scheme conceived by an eccentric billionaire (and old school chum) to build a 20 km tower up into Earth's stratosphere. *The Man Who Sold the Moon* by Cory Doctorow also employs a likeable protagonist to guide us through multiple Burning Man festivals in the Nevada desert and through the workings of the 'Gadget' built by his newfound friend Pug to 3D print the desert playa into building tiles using solar power. Pug becomes a billionaire entrepreneur (another one) before descending into cancerous twilight and death, but not before achieving his bucket list item, sending Gadgets to the moon anticipating the day humankind comes to stay. The plots and social implications progress credibly and the science is balanced well with the relational development of the characters but what begin to emerge as more stories unfold are some similarities that appear to be obstacles inherent to the genre.

The billionaire entrepreneur device is deployed once again in Gregory Benford's *The Man Who Stole the Stars* exposing a structural liability in the exo-Earth narratives. The projected technological innovations necessary for astronomical expansion into the cosmos require astronomical amounts of money. Through necessity, the short story warrants an expedient device such as the entrepreneurial billionaire to facilitate a realistic financial expression of the production costs within a constrained word count. But is it the limitation of the form or the imagination of the writer/thinkers that produces this repetition? Seldom do authors conceive of a future that is not entirely inured in profit-driven capitalism and rarely is there any acknowledgement of the downtrodden masses who will not attain the stars, but for a billionaire's fleeting pang of conscience—'what with all the suffering in the world'—which is soon forgotten. Paul Hawken's identification in *Blessed Unrest* of the burgeoning acephalous congregations of people dedicated to coherent, organic, collaborative change have not penetrated the imaginations of some of these futurists. In contrast, however, stories such as *Girl in Wave: Wave in Girl* by Kathleen Ann Goonan do evoke structural

alternatives for society with the expected communality of digitised consciousness implicit in posthuman augmentations of existence. Similarly, Vandana Singh weaves a global networked butterfly effect of interlacing narratives into *Entanglement*.

Another pitfall for some authors is the overuse of imagined techno jargon of tomorrow. The reader is bombarded with futured colloquialisms in *Quantum Telepathy* as Rudy Ricker offers us: qwet rat, gnat cameras, qrude dude, quantum wetware, denurbalizer stick, Idi Did gallery and Roller nurb chow fortune, within the first few pages. When applied prudently, this tactic can enhance verisimilitude but when the density outweighs the comprehensibility, the reader is left wondering for too long what on Jupiter is going on. Fortunately, many writers in *Hieroglyph* judiciously pepper their text with shorthand familiarisms, usually providing an explanation in the context.

Many of the innovations proposed in the varied scenarios are already in their emergent stages as the Story Notes attest, reminding us of the promise in our augmented present. With such a wealth of possibility contained within its covers, *Hieroglyph* cannot be consumed all at once—the scientifically accurate elaborations conceived encourage leisurely contemplation of human potentials suitable for all who still find the time and cause to wonder.

**AUTHOR**

Gil Douglas is a creative director, producer and choreographer who has devised, designed and implemented multifaceted entertainment, large scale events and theatrical experiences for audiences in Australia and New Zealand. He has completed a Bachelor of Arts and Honours at the University of the Sunshine Coast and currently lectures and tutors in Communication and History.

**ancestral forensics**

in our family tree  
there are branches  
where people swing  
and should you dig  
the roots  
will unbury the dead

ADRIAN FLAVELL,  
ADELAIDE, SA

**Amastia**

Lump is black with the cur of  
coal, craggy as hopscotch chalk  
Feeding on unseens  
Machine spied inside to report  
Lump covets  
----- growth  
but was fettered by tubes of the Host  
Hands operated  
purging Host saving lump  
in a jar with pleasant aspects settled  
on the sunny windowsill

MONICA CARROLL,  
CANBERRA, ACT

**LHC**

Sometimes, the computer function that makes proper spelling from bad, changes references to the big underground doughnut to read, Large Hardon Collider. As the opening of a prose poem, that suits the purpose – but what you do next will either amplify your metaphor, or disappoint your mother. Ought the next say something about absolute symmetry? Or the failure of numbers to tally, declared to be a neutrino? That's another class of automatic correction. Yet, if we need to explain the perfectly placed green kiss in the centre of a snowdrop petal, all mock the rituals of faeries in the vernal equinox.

MONICA CARROLL,  
CANBERRA, ACT

**PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE WORLD WE LIVE**

Photography Students from the University of the Sunshine Coast were asked to recreate the styles and perspectives of well-known painters or photographers. By re-creating and analysing the works of past-masters, the students establish criteria to decode a photograph or painting, examine techniques used to produce a work of art and can also question the truth behind the image. 'The essence of photography is history. We press the shutter in the present, and the image recorded instantly becomes the past' (Stone 2011).

For this project, the idea was for students to take iconic images of the past and revisit them, retaining certain key elements such as composition, feeling, and lighting but making them modern, fresh, and new, while paying respect to the originals. Through this method students can develop an immense understanding through exposure to lives and styles beyond their own, where the narrative of history offers the reflection and perspective of art as they develop their own unique styles. The project enhances for the student artist-photographer enlightenment of their own emerging style by providing context and a foundation for the development of their style. The historical context of past lessons and anecdotes can present themselves as influences within

the student work. 'When we study and contemplate the images of the past we'll instinctually add context to our own work'.

'Photography today has become commonplace, and the medium continues to evolve and reinvent itself, as we, the artist-photographer, must too. However in studying the past, we find that present struggles strangely mirror the photographic quandaries of yesterday ... In photography, as in life, we build on the foundation of what has come before and we owe a debt of gratitude to pioneers of our field' (Stone 2011).

**References**

Stone L. K., 2011 *Photographing Childhood: The Image and the Memory*, Taylor and Francis pp. 34-35.

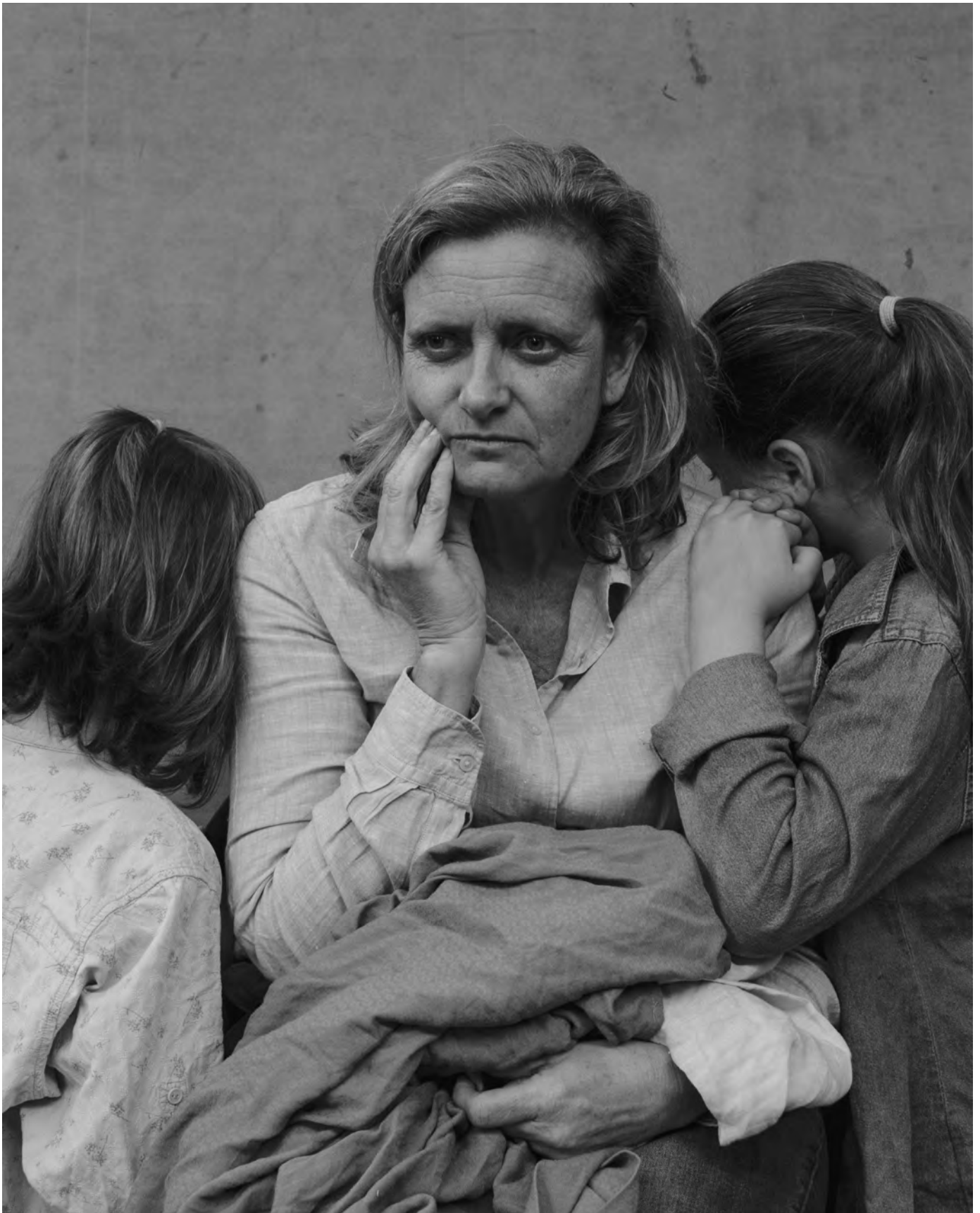
**Author**

Dr Debra Livingston teaches photography and graphic design at the University of the Sunshine Coast and was recently selected as a finalist in the 2016 HeadOn Portrait award, Sydney, exhibited in Sydney, New York and India.

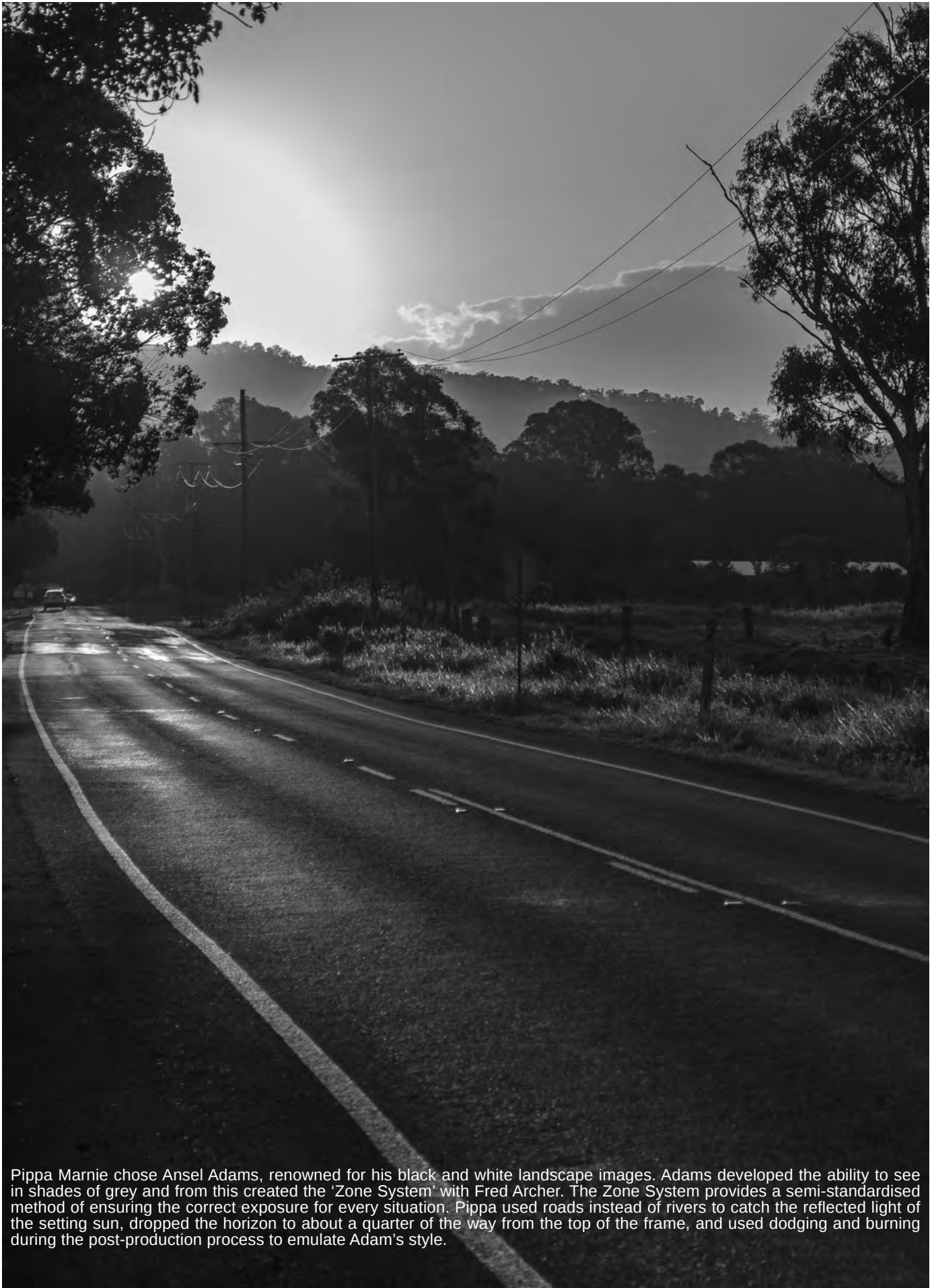
Jaclyn Crane (below) chose to reproduce Max Dupain's *The Sunbaker* (1937). Max Dupain was a renowned Australian modernist photographer. His work is currently displayed in the National Gallery of Australia. *The Sunbaker* is a portrait of one of Dupain's close friends and is widely considered his most famous image.







Pippa Marnie chose Dorothea Lange (1895-1965) who became a documentary photographer for the Farm Security Administration during the Great Depression in the hope her photographs would affect social benefit and change. Pippa chose her most famous image *Migrant Mother*, to emulate. Lange took a total of six images and drew in closer to the subject each time. The final shot, which was quite close in, was the one she chose to distribute. Pippa had quite a hard time mimicking the frame until she remembered that Lange shot on 4x5" film and would need to crop some height from the image during the post editing process. During shooting, Pippa came to understand why Lange had positioned the children facing away from the camera, as even in this pose it was still hard to limit their movement.



Pippa Marnie chose Ansel Adams, renowned for his black and white landscape images. Adams developed the ability to see in shades of grey and from this created the 'Zone System' with Fred Archer. The Zone System provides a semi-standardised method of ensuring the correct exposure for every situation. Pippa used roads instead of rivers to catch the reflected light of the setting sun, dropped the horizon to about a quarter of the way from the top of the frame, and used dodging and burning during the post-production process to emulate Adam's style.



Emma Taylor chose Jerry Uelsmann, a renowned photographer from the 1950s, being best known for his excellent analogue dark room skills to manipulate a combination of photographs to produce fantasy images. Emma replicated one of his works called, *Eyed Hands*. After she discovered that he used a model with a tattoo, Emma was able to draw something similar onto her model. There are two separate photographs digitally manipulated in post processing to compose her version of Jerry Uelsmann's, *Eyed Hands*.

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