



# SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

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EDITORIAL

The world is suffering the worst pandemic since the so-called 'Spanish Flu' almost 100 years ago. So far, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the number of deaths worldwide from COVID-19 to September 2021 is 4 million, 800 thousand, and people suffering from COVID-19 number 232 million. Given the developing controversy, the failed policies, the rallies, the emergence of the fascist extreme right, and the blame game between nations and across Australia's state boundaries, it is necessary to unravel why our response to the pandemic has been used by political parties to score off each other rather than effectively protect their people, and why the world's biggest superpower has had the worst result from the pandemic.

Numbers show that initially the world's worst pandemic hotspot has been the US. Official figures indicate that the US has had the highest numbers of COVID illnesses and deaths in the world. They have 45,443,601 confirmed cases and 738,870 deaths (NBN News, 21 Oct 2021). It is also claimed that 20% of Americans are choosing not to be vaccinated, amounting to 66.4 million people.

Governments have known about the likelihood of a pandemic for years. Few if any were prepared for one. Governments tend to think short term (in election cycles) rather than engage in long-term planning. Indeed, health systems across the capitalist world have seen savage funding cuts, a reliance on privatisation and the denial of urgently needed resources, which have resulted in a dangerous lack of services for illnesses and diseases other than coronavirus.

The failure of governments to be ready for a pandemic, to control the pandemic and to provide adequate and timely resources, has brought us to the current situation. Despite an initial national response, we have descended into a pre-Federation nation, with a group of states rather than a federated one.

Governments, generally, have put too great an emphasis on the economy and not enough emphasis on the health and welfare of the people. And, furthermore, some sections of the community, the wealthiest, have massively increased their wealth throughout this pandemic. New figures show that the combined wealth of Australian billionaires has risen by more than 50% over the past year, prompting concerns that the pandemic-triggered recession has 'turbo-charged' the gap between rich and poor (Daniel Hurst, December 2020, The Guardian).

Long-term savage cuts to hospitals, and healthcare and privatisation, have made us woefully unable to provide adequate healthcare for all those requiring it and has placed an unacceptable burden on our healthcare workers. Capitalism has rejected cooperation, collaboration, and collective wisdom-sharing for division, discord, and deliberate subterfuge.

Much of the media coverage in the early stages of the pandemic targeted China for causing the outbreak and lying about the issues, adding to the arsenal for war preparation. Our media, in its selectivity, quoted President Trump at the UN General Assembly on 20 September 2020 when he called it 'a China virus' and demanded that China be held accountable 'for unleashing this plague on the world'. What wasn't reported was the response by President Xi Jinping of China, when he replied: 'We must follow the guidance of science and launch a joint international response to beat the pandemic'.

The drive to war with China is being fomented by the US and its allies and has nothing to do with Taiwan, or democracy, or the South China Sea, but everything to do with preventing China from challenging the US as the world's only superpower. China, with its emerging capitalist economy, is a competitor. This is the reason for all the anti-China rhetoric, and as defenders of world peace, we must challenge it in all its forms. ☯

A TALK GIVEN AT THE MELBOURNE UNITARIAN CHURCH ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2021 VIA ZOOM. RAND IS A YOUNG PALESTINIAN WOMAN WHO WAS BORN IN THE SMALL TOWN 'CANA' FROM THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GALILEE.



# Dissecting the situation in Palestine

I wanted to start off by thanking you all for having me. I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land that I am meeting you on today, which is the Guringai people. I'd like to pay my respects to the elders past, present and emerging. While we discuss the Palestinian plight against foreign military occupation and colonialism, we must also recognise the same colonial forces that the Indigenous people of Australia faced in 1788 and continue to face to this day. Sovereignty was never ceded.

So, a little bit about me. My name is Rand. I'm Palestinian, I was born in a small town in the Galilee – about 15 minutes away from Nazareth. My small town is called Cana – and since the 8th century, it's been widely accepted to be the same Cana where Jesus performed his first miracle by turning water into wine. As a result, this small Palestinian town houses many kinds of people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Christians and Muslims live side by side in harmony in this little town. On the outskirts of Cana

there is a tomb which is of great significance to the Jewish people and has been a site of pilgrimage for centuries. And for centuries this town was diversely peaceful. My family has lived there for generations and generations. In fact, on both sides of my family as far back as we can trace it, we have called Cana home.

Flashback to 1948. My great-grandfather Ahmad fled the war in Palestine to the border of Lebanon to fight in a small militia and resist the occupation. He tried to convince his wife to move to Lebanon, but she persistently remained in their house, claiming she'd rather die in her home than flee. For 40 days she stubbornly remained in that house with two toddlers. After those 40 days, my great-grandfather returned because he missed his home and he missed his family. Two days later, the Israeli government handed out Israeli citizenships to some Palestinians that still remained in what was now occupied Israel. If my great-grandfather had returned just two days later we would not have been so lucky. Many of our

neighbouring friends and families fled to Lebanon, Syria or Jordan and took their house keys with them, believing that they would return after a month or two.

This is why the house key has become a symbol for the many Palestinians who live in the diaspora – it represents their grandparents' dying wishes to be able to return to their homes. My story could have very nearly turned out very differently if not for my bravely stubborn great-grandmother.

Let's take a look at the history of the land. The British, who had a military hold on the land of Palestine, issued a public statement – the Balfour Declaration – which basically announced support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. This completely ignored the fact that Palestinians were living there already, much like the claim 'terra nullius', or 'no one's land', here in Australia. As the end of the Second World War approached, the world was horrified at the treatment of Jewish people in Germany, Poland and other parts of Europe. More and more Jewish people began migrating to Palestine, and a growing nationalistic movement among Jews called Zionism emerged – which was not a religious movement, but a political one, and it wanted to establish a Jewish-only state known as Israel. In 1948, they did exactly that and Israel was born on the genocide of the Palestinian people. The Zionist movement then accelerated its colonial project and Zionist militias made three-quarters of a million Palestinians refugees, destroyed over 450 towns, and committed hundreds of massacres, creating what is now known as the Nakba (or the Catastrophe).

The indigenous Palestinians revolted and the neighbouring Arab countries went to war with Israel. In an attempt to settle things, the UN devised a partition plan – but this partition plan was in violation of the Palestinians' self-determination as written in the UN charter.

Remember those over 750,000 expelled Palestinians? Well, they grew up, and had children, and there are nearly 6 million of them living in the diaspora today. Some live as citizens or residents all over the world, and some live stateless in indefinite refugee camps. These Palestinians, both first generation and their descendants, call for their right to return to the motherland, which was recognised by the UN in 1948. No actions have ever been taken to help return these Palestinians to their homes.

Let's zoom in to the Palestinian territories, Gaza and the West Bank. Gaza borders Egypt and has been under blockade since 2007. This means that Israel controls its land, air and sea borders such that nothing (and no one) can get in or out of Gaza without Israel's approval. Gazans rely almost entirely on humanitarian aid, whilst Israel receives a 'defence' budget of 3.8 billion US dollars from the United States every year. Gaza is also one of the most densely populated places on Earth – meaning when Israel and Gaza go to war, there is a disproportionate number of Palestinian casualties (including women and children). In the 2014 war alone, over two thousand Palestinians from Gaza were killed compared with 72 Israelis. As you can see, the violence is immensely disproportionate. It's not a



**THE WEST BANK IS ALSO HOME TO AN APARTHEID REGIME – AN APARTHEID WALL KEEPS PALESTINIANS INSIDE THE WEST BANK SUPPOSEDLY BUILT TO PROTECT ISRAELI CITIZENS.**

war of equal powers – it's like stones being thrown at a tank. In May this year, the world witnessed Israel's illegal attacks of residential homes, schools, Al-Aqsa Mosque, the AJ journalism building, journalists, and medical clinics. The world was taken aback by Israel's war crimes, and a light was shone on the injustices against Palestinians. The shocking footage moved and inspired international protests and solidarity for the Palestinian people.

The West Bank is the other Palestinian territory, which sits West of the Jordanian river. These two territories are not physically connected, which makes general politics and potential peace talks very difficult. The West Bank is supposed to be Palestinian land; however, many Israeli settlements exist here. These settlements are illegal under international law and violate UN resolutions. They disrupt possible peace solutions because they represent Israel's unwavering political agenda to expel Palestinians from their homes and replace them with Jewish settlers. We saw an example of this in May this year when families living in Sheikh Jarrah were forcibly evicted from their homes and made to demolish them themselves so that the illegal settler expansion project could continue. To replace a Palestinian demographic with a Jewish one is ethnic cleansing. It's important to use the correct terminology.

The West Bank is also home to an apartheid regime – an apartheid wall keeps Palestinians inside the West Bank supposedly built to protect Israeli citizens.

In a 2011 report there were 522 fixed checkpoints and roadblocks preventing Palestinian movement within the West Bank and 495 temporary floating checkpoints. Armed Israeli soldiers turn away Palestinians for no reason at all and subject them to humiliating routines. Just one example in 2008 – a Palestinian woman was forced to give birth at the checkpoint outside Nablus because the soldier would not allow her to pass through to the hospital. Her baby died on site. This





**THERE ARE ROADS WHICH PROUDLY STATE 'NO ARABS' ALL THROUGHOUT ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, WHICH SYSTEMATICALLY FRAGMENT PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES.**

soldier was given a slap on the wrist and imprisoned for only two weeks. There are many official reports by independent human rights organisations and the UN which showcase similar stories.

There are roads which proudly state 'No Arabs' all throughout Israel and the Palestinian territories, which systematically fragment Palestinian communities. Palestinians need to apply for special permits just to be able to travel outside of their own town to obtain necessities – and sometimes those permits are rejected or disregarded for no reason at all, subject to the whims of one soldier. Meanwhile, Israelis who live in illegal settlements in the West Bank live under Israeli law as opposed to military rule.

This means that, in the same town, for the same crime such as theft, an Israeli citizen will get a fair trial and court hearing and be provided a lawyer, while a Palestinian can be imprisoned without trial or attacked on sight.

Al Jazeera reports

*The Israeli army has imprisoned some 12,000 Palestinian children since 2000 ... most of these children were charged with throwing stones. Israel is the only country in the world that tries children in military courts, often denying them their basic rights.*

Currently, 200 Palestinian children remain in detention in Israeli prisons, the majority of whom have not been convicted of any offence.

Meanwhile, any Jewish person living anywhere in the world can move to Israel tomorrow and be given full Israeli citizenship. They only need to prove that at least one grandparent is Jewish, or they are married to a Jew. This is to reinforce a more Jewish demographic in Israel. Meanwhile, Palestinian families are torn apart due to systemic oppression through Israel law and military rule – permits, borders, checkpoints, citizenships, blockades, economic suppression, and discrimination. The prejudice is very clear. We live not as second, but third-class citizens in our own homeland. This is the reality of Palestine today.

Useful links to support Palestine:

- BDS Australia – Boycott, Divest and Sanction <https://bdsaustralia.net.au/>
- The Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) is a national voice for the many thousands of Australians who are concerned about Israel's continuing human rights abuses against Palestinians, and the continuing effects of dispossession and displacement. <https://apan.org.au/>
- Palestine Fair Trade Australia (PFTA) is a social enterprise which imports a unique range of ethically sourced and fair trade products from Palestine. This helps to support the Palestinian economy – specifically Gaza's refugee camps, The Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (in Gaza), Nablus and Jenin (West Bank). <https://www.palestinefairtradeaustralia.org.au/>
- Olive Kids is an Australia local charity for Palestinian children <https://olivekids.org.au/>
- The Big Ride for Palestine is an initiative by supporters of the Palestinian people that combines a love of cycling/running/walking with practical solidarity and raising awareness. This year the money they raise is going to the Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organisation which is based in the Burj al-Burajneh refugee camp in Lebanon. The PWHO aims to improve the wellbeing of women, children, persons with disabilities and those with severe health problems, through empowerment education, rehabilitation, early intervention, home care services, lobbying and advocacy. <https://bigrideaus2021.raisely.com/>



**WE ACKNOWLEDGE**

**Traditional owners of the Kulin Nation, past Warriors, Elders past and present.**



# HOW CAN WE ENSURE HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI ARE THE LAST NUCLEAR-BOMBED CITIES?

## PART TWO



### NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE NOW ILLEGAL UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) provides the most significant current positive development. It entered into legal force on 22 Jan 2021 after achieving 50 ratifications, and at 30 August 2021 has 86 signatories and 55 ratifications. These will continue to grow. The treaty provides a categorical and comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons, the first treaty-based obligations on states to assist the victims of nuclear use and testing and assist in the remediation of environments so contaminated, and is helping to drive divestment by financial institutions from companies that profit from building the worst and now illegal weapons of mass destruction.

Further, the treaty contains the only internationally agreed framework for the elimination of nuclear weapons, through specified and agreed plans for time-bound dismantlement of not only the weapons but the facilities which produce and maintain them, subject to verification by a competent international authority. The treaty thus provides the most promising pathway for all states to fulfil their obligations to negotiate in good faith towards and to achieve nuclear disarmament. All nations should join and faithfully implement it.

### GETTING AUSTRALIA ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY

Shamefully, the Australian government has sought to undermine the TPNW at every stage and was among the first to reject it. The TPNW is the first multilateral disarmament treaty, and the first treaty banning a weapons of mass destruction or other indiscriminate and inhumane weapon, to be repudiated by our government. Nevertheless opinion polls over the last 3 years have shown that 72–79% of Australians want our government to join the treaty, and less than 10% are opposed.<sup>25</sup> Organisations supporting Australia joining the treaty are very broad, including 38 councils; the Australian Local Government Association; Australian Red Cross; the ACTU and more than 20 unions; health organisations including the AMA, Public Health Association and Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation; and more than 60 faith-based organisations.<sup>25</sup> To date, 7 Australian banks and superannuation funds have divested from companies building nuclear weapons.<sup>26</sup> The ALP in 2018 committed in its national policy platform to sign and ratify the TPNW, and reaffirmed that policy in March this year. We must hold them to that promise. However the urgent humanitarian imperative to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons should be above party politics. Joining the TPNW is compatible with military cooperation with a nuclear-armed state, provided nuclear weapons are excluded from such

cooperation, as US allies New Zealand, Thailand and the Philippines have already demonstrated.

While we can prevent some but not all future pandemics, COVID-19 should spur leaders and citizens to take an evidence-based, preventive approach and work assiduously to eliminate the global health threats that are within our control, foremost among them nuclear weapons. An increasingly climate-stressed world is an even more dangerous and unsustainable place for arsenals of doomsday weapons. The stable and hospitable climate all life needs demands protection from both rampant heating and a sudden nuclear ice age. We must end nuclear weapons before they end us. By our love and our labours, all of us can help bring that about. 🕊

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## AUKUS Security Pact: a Story of Recklessness and Delusion

The AUKUS security pact is another provocative alliance that can only end in blood and tears. And for no good reason other than a nostalgic addiction to imperial power.

How ironic that we should choose to sign up to a new security partnership at this time, scarcely two weeks after America's ignominious exit from Afghanistan and a costly 20-year war that has left little but destruction and anguish in its trail. The irony will not be lost on China – the villain in the piece that the pact is meant to counter and intimidate.

Understandably, perhaps, much commentary has so far focused on the first step proposed under the new pact, namely the joint plan to equip Australia with a nuclear-powered submarine fleet.

The plan is fraught with difficulty and uncertainty. As yet we know little about the time it will take to bring it to completion, the cost involved, and the complex technological and security problems it will create.

Boris Johnson's words explaining the agreement are less than reassuring: 'This will be one of the most complex and technically demanding projects in the world, lasting decades and requiring the most advanced technology.' What he omitted to say is even more troubling.

To build nuclear-powered submarines, Australia will need to be supplied not just with the technology for the nuclear reactors, but also with the nuclear fuel. All this may in time provide an avenue for the development of a domestic nuclear industry – a possibility that has always met with widespread public opposition.

Even short of acquiring nuclear power plants, Australia will have to deal with several challenges that continue to afflict the nuclear industry worldwide.

First, the fuel for the nuclear-powered submarines – probably enriched uranium – will need to be accessed from another country. Transport of such fuels over long distances raises the prospect of diversion to a third party, widely considered a major nuclear proliferation risk.

Secondly, the nuclear reactors used by the submarines will generate a significant amount of nuclear waste, which will have to be returned to the supplying country or stored in Australia. Either way, the country will face the highly contentious problem of nuclear waste disposal.

Thirdly, there is always the possibility of a nuclear reactor being breached, or at least of a leakage of nuclear materials. All these are unanswered questions. If answers are ever offered, they are likely to prove less than reassuring.

Acquiring a submarine fleet has been an obsession of the Australian security establishment for some time, and a costly one at that. The \$90 billion project for French designed submarines has been scrapped. But it has been an unhappy saga of delays and budget overruns, which have already cost the Australian taxpayer at least \$2.4 billion, all to no avail. Compensation for terminating the project will also bear a heavy cost.

And, if one was needed, an added irony. This latest decision to swap France for Britain is a decision to align ourselves even more firmly with Brexit Britain, and distance ourselves a little more from Europe.



French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian accused Australia of betraying 'the letter and spirit' of cooperation between the two countries. France's reaction to the Biden administration's role was ferocious, describing it as 'brutal, unilateral and unpredictable'. Reflecting European Union sentiment, Le Drian said: 'I am angry and bitter. This isn't done between allies.' The Atlantic alliance will be in difficulty for some time to come.

The greatest loser in all of this is Australia. It has saddled itself with a vast military project of unknown cost and duration and dubious effectiveness. It will contribute to an ever-increasing defence budget that will divert scarce resources from urgent social and economic priorities.

Importantly, it will fan the flames of resentment in China not just amongst the Chinese Communist leadership, as Australian ministers and unthinking commentators would have us believe, but amongst a wide cross-section of Chinese society. China is simply mystified by the vitriol that has become the mantra of Australian officialdom and ill-informed media reporting.

What will this latest foray into the politics of confrontation achieve? Precious little. Will China feel intimidated by AUKUS? Not likely.

Will Xi Jinping or any future Chinese leader abandon the commitment to reunification with Taiwan? Will China refrain from using force should Taiwan declare its independence? Will it be any less assertive in strengthening its presence in the South China Sea? Will it retreat from developing its Belt and Road Initiative into a vast economic and geopolitical Eurasian sphere of influence? Not likely.

AUKUS will not achieve its purpose, and will in the process give rise to new risks. In all likelihood China will feel emboldened by an emerging Cold War to redouble the growth of its conventional and nuclear forces and widen the reach of its navy.

In the meantime, Australia's diplomatic relations with China will remain frozen, people-to-people relationships will be severely restricted, and our large Chinese community will feel increasingly marginalised and the subject of suspicion.

Our trade with China, which presently accounts for some 39 per cent of our exports, will continue to experience the threat of disruption, which could easily materialise and gravely affect several of our industries, not least the tourist industry and our educational institutions.

This is not all. Our frantic attempts to develop closer military links with the United States and acquire greater military projection capabilities are bound to unsettle many of our Asian neighbours. They may be encouraged to follow Australia's example, not so much to contain China as to contain Australia's military and diplomatic assertiveness.

While they recognise that dealing with a rising China is a challenging task, they are not convinced of the wisdom of Australia's approach. Indonesia, Malaysia and even South Korea and Vietnam have a strong preference for a much more nuanced set of policies. Attempts by Australian ministers to get their Asian counterparts to engage in China bashing have fallen on deaf ears.

Australia's security policy is in a mess of its own making. Who or what is to blame? Many critics rightly point the finger at the Morrison government. But what do they



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mean by this? Do they mean the prime minister, other senior ministers, and their immediate advisers?

They no doubt play a part. But there is so much more to it than this. When it comes to security issues, current government policies are supported – some would say strongly advocated – by powerful elements in the civil bureaucracy, the armed forces, the intelligence and security agencies, influential media players, think tanks and an array of other pressure groups, not least the defence industry.

The reach of this assorted coalition of interests cannot be underestimated. It is partly an appreciation of this political reality which helps explain the timidity of the major opposition party. The Labor leadership is simply not prepared to take on the security establishment.

There is no surprise therefore that Labor should have given its fulsome support for the AUKUS partnership. The only significant qualification is that it wants to be at the table of the planning for the nuclear submarine program. In other words, it is intent in opposition and in future government to implement current plans with token changes at the edges.

Those interested in a change of direction need to look elsewhere. Little headway is likely in the absence of an alternative national narrative. To have traction such a narrative must be intellectually coherent and emotionally compelling.

We need a narrative that brings together the domestic and external strands of human security. Above all we need a narrative that resonates with the anxieties and uncertainties of a diverse society that has yet to reconcile its history and geography.

For this we must engage in a wide-ranging, sustained and respectful national conversation, which has already begun. But we have a long way to go.

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## **Statement on AUKUS Trilateral Agreement**

Australia has entered into an undefined arrangement with the USA and the United Kingdom for 'regional security' in the Indo-Pacific region. The arrangement, AUKUS Trilateral pact, involves Australia purchasing nuclear-powered submarines, the 'basing' of American troops and the storing of 'ordnance' in Australia. This has provoked fury from the French, sharp criticism from China, concern from at least two nations in the Indo-Pacific and confusion in Australia.

Putting aside Australia's inept management of this agreement, with the immediate consequences of antagonising our major trading partner, China, and jeopardising trade with our third largest trading partner, the European Union, the dangers for Australia's safety and security are enormous.

At the centre of this agreement is Australia's purchase of long-range attack nuclear-powered submarines that are NOT primarily a defensive weapons system. At the heart of each of these subs will be a fast breeder reactor that produces weapons grade waste that will not be covered by the NPT. They will be an expensive weapon that will need to be supported by American or British military technicians, engineers, and logistics personnel. The resulting loss of sovereignty and capacity to exercise independent judgement flowing from such continuing support is troubling.

Of equal concern is the geopolitical nightmare which the AUKUS conspiracy will spawn. Many Indo-Pacific nations have only recently emerged from a long period of oppressive European imperialism. Many will view AUKUS as much like an attempt to impose an Anglo-Saxon, imperialist-dominated, military and economic hegemony in the region. ASEAN may feel threatened by this new bully on the block. Inevitably, tensions will increase, as already suggested by the Indonesian and Malaysian responses to AUKUS.

China is correct when it asserts that AUKUS betrays a Cold War mentality in international relations.

Australia has chosen to forgo any constructive relationship with China, with all its challenges, and to escalate tension by engaging with the military might of the USA. This choice reveals a deep poverty of imagination that will create regional political and economic instability. It also reveals a complete failure of strategic thinking about accommodating China's world view in a peaceful and non-militarised world. For example, no serious thought appears to have been given to how best to integrate China's Belt and Road initiative into our own view of peaceful international commerce and development.

The United States, and now Australia, states that the 'China problem' has to be confronted militarily, and isolated. Such a policy is not a strategy for peace but a blueprint for war, quite possibly a nuclear one.

The CICD says this government is NOT ACTING IN OUR NAME.

Australia does not need this agreement that can only draw Australia into another US war. Buying submarines that are offensive, not defensive, is a waste of time and money.

These many billions of dollars will be much better spent on the people of Australia. On jobs, education, health, housing and tackling the climate crisis, rather than on military waste.

**John Speight**  
Executive Chairperson

**Andrew Irving**  
Vice President

21 September 2021

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## FROM THE EDITORS

It is obvious to many that we cannot continue with the system under which we exist. It is unfair, exploitative, divisive, and dangerous to the world's people. However, it raises the urgent question: What do we want in its place?

Who better to come forward with ideas than the people themselves who suffer the indignities of the current system and who urgently desire change.

Two readers have already responded to our last editorial. There must be many among our readers who have their own ideas about the kind of society we need. Please send in your ideas for us to print.

# from our readers

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## DEAR DONNA

You and other Unitarians might be interested to know that one of the owners of the Indue Company that stands to prosper from the cashless welfare card is Larry Anthony of the National Party dynasty of the Anthonys, and son of former Coalition politician, Doug Anthony.

If this isn't insider trading of the financial futures and punishment of fellow poorer Australians and privatisation for the benefit of mates, what else is it?

My school motto was 'Do Justly, Love Mercy' based on the quotation from the Bible's book of Micah. It is a shame so many others seem to have mottos which seem to be basically about making money at anybody else's expense.

Warm regards

## L Maciver, NSW

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I'm very sorry to be late with my renewal. Please find attached a cheque for \$100, being for my sub and a donation.

Thank you for your continued honest and formative publication.

Kind regards

## J Mundie, NSW

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Thanks, and keep up the great work.

## R Kilpatrick, Vic

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Please note change of address. Thank you. Excellent magazine.

## R Henry, Vic

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## BEACON EDITORIAL BOARD

Thank you for this month's editorial, which may go down as the most important *Beacon* editorial ever written. It is a subject that has concerned me for a long time. I have been telling friends and family we need a new political system to replace the outdated, unfair one we currently have. I have the beginning of an idea which I shall put to you separately, which others may be able to improve upon as the idea develops. I hope this is the start of something big.

## R Wilson, NSW

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## DEAR EDITORIAL BOARD

I have just written to you congratulating you for this month's editorial, a subject most dear to me. In fact, I have been thinking of ways we might have a fairer political system for quite some time. I am willing to share some of my ideas with you now, in the hope that you may see some merit in them, which could be further developed with the help of others. Such a revolution in the changes involved won't happen overnight, so I have developed changes into long term and short term, which need to be considered together right from the start.

### Long-term changes

We need to change our constitution, which is old and outdated. In fact, we need a completely new one to take into account the technology that has evolved in the last few decades. We cannot hope to change our constitution under the present political system, so this will only be possible after we have voted to become a republic. The start of the republic might coincide with an environmental day, such as 'Wattle Day', on the 1 September, to make Indigenous people feel part of the celebrations. The new constitution will include a bill of rights for everyone, as well as a treaty to give more rights for Australia's Indigenous peoples. Once a bill of rights is ingrained in a new constitution, any newly elected government will have to ensure adhere to the Bill.

But before we can do this, we need to concentrate on some important issues which require immediate attention.

### Short-term changes

To achieve a fairer form of government we first have to replace the current one with a brand-new political party. Clive Palmer started the ball rolling for the wrong reasons by backing Craig Kelly to become leader of the United Australia Party and supporting him with funds. This won't change the government, but it again may stop Labor winning the next election. So, we need to start a new political party for the right reasons.

A possible name for the new party might be the 'Australian Independent Party'. Of course, it would require funding and would involve recruiting current serving MPs who are either independent or disillusioned with the party they represent. Another source of candidates might be high profiled actors, sporting figures or former politicians. One such figure who stands out is Malcolm Turnbull, who might come on board if the 'republican carrot' was dangled before him.

I know I have just scratched the surface with what I have said. But the idea of a fairer system for all might just take off. I have a gut feeling that many people have just had enough with the lies and deception of our politicians. They are looking for a 'New Deal'. This could be just what they are looking for.

If you think my ideas have merit, I have plenty more that I should like to share with you.

**Rob Wilson, NSW**

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## TO THE WORKERS AT THE BEACON

We wish to thank you for highlighting the issue of the cashless debit card prominently on the cover of your last edition. This card is indeed an instrument of punishment/torment of low income people. It actively creates a desperate underclass; it divides society and must be stopped.

Your efforts are appreciated.

**L Davies, Vic**

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

**The USA has 4%**

**of the world's  
population and**

**95%**

**of the world's  
military bases.**

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**Editorial: COVID-19 and capitalism**

**Dissecting the situation in Palestine**

**How can we ensure Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the last nuclear-bombed cities? (Part II)**

**AUKUS security pact: a story of recklessness and delusion**

**CICD Statement on AUKUS trilateral agreement**

**Letters to the editor**

**Did you know?**

## Beacon Editorial Board

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Julie Stafford

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