



Let's Revive Our National Spirit

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As COVID vaccination targets are reached, there is much talk by politicians and media of freedoms being 'returned' to citizens. There are two problems with this type of phrase. First, freedoms belong to the people. They are not a gift from government. Second, while lockdowns, curfews and border restrictions are eased, new kinds of restrictions are being created.

In Adam Wakeling's review of Zachary Gorman's Magna Carta book (page 56), he wrote "Kings have justified exercising power over their subjects through being wiser and stronger". Reading this, what came to mind for me is the unjustifiable yet relentless claim to authority of Victorian Premier, Dan Andrews, throughout this crisis. Magna Carta is a set of rights but also a handbook on how to fight for those rights against overmighty Kings, which is one way of looking at everything which has been the focus of IPA research and commentary over the last 18 months.

Ian Hore-Lacy provides an excellent review of Steve Koonin's book on the makings of climate policy in the USA and globally. Koonin's analysis is important in its own right, but also sheds light on the fragility of claims to expertise made by scientists advising governments, and the even more

fragile claims to authority made by governments on the basis of that advice.

Dr Zachary Gorman, meanwhile, reviews a new book that is destined to be a modern classic about our Federation by Professor William Coleman. To those who watch the National Cabinet in action and say our Federation is 'broken', Coleman's radical argument is that there was nothing to break: mediocre colonial politicians made bad bargains which gave us a bad constitutional settlement. The aim was never to entrench freedoms, but to give Governments the power to limit them. We have been paying for it ever since.



If Australia was truly a country in which our freedoms are our greatest inheritance, then restrictions would last no longer than necessary. Instead, the 'whatever it takes' mentality adopted by politicians and health bureaucrats continues unabated, and there is still no acknowledgement of human rights and human costs.

Dr Martin Black, on page 26, identifies fundamental principles which should defeat the idea of Vaccine Passports, which are being proposed just as vaccines actually transition COVID from epidemic to endemic status. Instead, we are in a situation where only organisations such as the IPA—and it is a very short list—raise objections, and governments otherwise continue to act on the basis of nebulous-as-ever 'health advice'.

New ideas and policies opposed to freedom have taken hold.

William Coleman's book also disputes the idea that Federation was driven by a national sentiment, or in any sense created one. Sadly we cannot assume it will be a product of our education system, which has so lost its mooring that it will turn a curriculum upside down to accommodate the less-than-scholarly works of Bruce Pascoe, as Dr Paul Monk makes clear on



page 8. We must look elsewhere for our national identity and our national spirit, which is the point I make in my cover story, starting on page 16. In that article I reveal the IPA's determination to encourage all Australians to seek the national spirit—our *genius*—in our great works. We have therefore constructed an Australian Canon, with the great books, poems, songs and works of art that created or captured who we are. The Canon commences on page 23.

That article inspired our cover's statue of A B 'Banjo' Paterson. His stockman, *Clancy of the Overflow*, saw "the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended, and at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars".

In the article you will read more about the IPA's newly established Centre for the Australian Way of Life, which is sponsoring the Australian Canon. I was very pleased that recently Dr Sherry Sufi has joined the IPA as a Senior Fellow to undertake research with the Centre, and even more pleased when he contributed a typically thoughtful and interesting article. Dr Sufi is a Western Australian author, columnist, and political commentator, who is outspoken on democratic values, civil liberties, and free speech. On page 36 he explores important distinctions between ideology and Australia's national interest.

In the last edition I picked up on Tony Abbott's point that rather than tearing down statues we should be erecting more, and invited readers to send in their ideas, which they did. Two that stood out were from Carole, who believes Australians would be inspired by a statue of Australian Army nurse Lieutenant-Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel; and Nathan, who suggested the hero of Antarctica, Sir Douglas Mawson.

Bullwinkel was the sole survivor of a massacre by Japanese soldiers of a group of nurses captured in Sumatra, and after the war her bravery and leadership were inspirational for the nurses she led in a number of responsible roles, and indeed for all Australians. Pleasingly, there is a group of Defence Force nurses working to raise funds for a statue at the Australian War Memorial.

There are memorials to Sir Douglas Mawson, though not a full statue, but I was struck by what Nathan said:

His story is full of examples of personal sacrifice, unwavering loyalty to mateship and heroic efforts that later echoes among the ANZAC spirit ... To me, the grit, determination and personal ingenuity Mawson demonstrated to triumph over seemingly insurmountable obstacles is a timeless epic of inspiration—the appreciation of which would surely be a fitting antidote to the modern world's overly sensitive, victim-based tendencies.

This is the spirit of Australia; or at least the one we had, and would like to revive.

This is the editorial from the [Spring 2021 edition](#) of the [IPA Review](#) by Editor of the IPA Review, Scott Hargreaves. A Table of Contents can be viewed [here](#). IPA Members receive a print edition and online versions of articles are progressively released in the months following publication. To join/subscribe see [here](#).