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Our Election (Campaign) Was Stolen

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This is the first *IPA Review* since the recent Federal Election. The result was of course a source of joy for the ALP and a deep disappointment for the Liberal and National Parties, who lost office after three terms.

The election campaign generally was a disappointment for us at the IPA, too. We were ready to play a role in an election that would be a contest of ideas and values. Our mission is to further the social, economic, and political freedom of Australians, and we had produced a range of research on how to put that into effect. We were ready for a climate election, we were ready for an election on the decline of our education system, and with our Race Has No Place research we were ready to rebut the idea that we should put words in our Constitution to permanently divide Australians by race.

We were also ready for a reckoning of the devastation wreaked by the COVID policies of the Federal and State Governments, particularly but not only those of Victoria. The dispassionate analysis of the costs and benefits of the restrictions by Professor Gigi Foster, which you will find on page 26, is a good example of the analysis that should have been the subject of debate between the major parties.

But there was little scope to prosecute arguments on any of those issues because the Coalition under Scott Morrison gave up on each of those key issues. In 2019 he had fought a climate election, and won; but in 2022 chose to adopt the ALP policy of net zero by 2050, and lost. There are those who say that net zero by 2050 is 'bipartisan policy', but in 2022 the Australian people did not get a choice.

The burden of red tape is driving good people out of the sugar industry.

On election day the Coalition was not rewarded for its timidity or what you might call its 'me too' approach. In fact they were punished for it, and the 'teals' and the alternative parties of the centre-right were the ones that made gains.

The key questions to emerge from the election were:

- What just happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What are we going to do about it?

More than a few of the articles in this edition address one or more of these questions.

Dr Kevin You on page 40 reports on the engagement with regional communities the IPA undertook in the months leading up to the election. What came through clearly is the frustration farmers and business owners have with the slanted coverage of environmental issues by the mainstream media.

He travelled with Dr Peter Ridd and together saw firsthand how the sugar industry has been demonised by activists telling a catastrophist story of damage to the Great Barrier Reef. And how the result has been an ever-increasing burden of red tape that is driving good people out of the industry.

Title page of the More Harm Than Good article

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IPA Deputy Executive Director Daniel Wild on page 10 explains why the Liberal Party in particular is at a crossroads, and the urgent requirement for it to refocus on the needs and aspirations of mainstream Australians, particularly in rural and regional Australia. The teal phenomenon has merely shown the difficulty of pandering to the 'post-material' politics of the affluent elite.

Part of the problem is that when it comes to the politics of the environment it is seemingly only the IPA that is willing to put real facts and realism into the debate. Not only are the problems greatly exaggerated, but the so-called solutions are recipes for disaster. This is seen foremost in the plans for an 'energy transition' that were outlined by all parties, but particularly the ALP, Greens, and teal candidates.

Andrew Kemp, on page 48, writes about a century-old conflict within Australian liberalism, and sees in the teals echoes of the tradition of Alfred Deakin. But he also presents the intriguing argument that lockdowns under COVID were the perfect incubators for a movement which with flint-hearted determination enlisted the power of the State to enforce its preferences on the rest of the community. That the 'Voices of Kooyong' chose a doctor (Monique Ryan) to be their representative was, in this light, almost inevitable.

The liberating contribution of fossil fuels cannot be separated from the growth in human development.

On page 64, former IPA Research Fellow Tristan Prasser draws attention to the truth-telling work of Professor Vaclav Smil, a hugely respected author of many books on our energy system. In many of his works, Smil has made the point that one simply cannot separate the liberating contribution of fossil fuels from the growth in human development seen over the last two centuries. We have been able, for example, to feed the greatly increased global population only because of the increased productivity that comes from using diesel-powered machines, and fertilisers using

urea made from processed natural gas. Risking those puts us on a road to food shortages and civil unrest, with Sri Lanka (where commercial fertilisers were banned last year) giving us a dry run.

Although he personally believes that humans contribute to global warming, Smil is honest when he says the utopian plans to ‘decarbonise’ mankind cannot be realised when we now take so much for granted. He also makes the point that while (some, mainly Western) advanced nations are taking drastic measures to curtail emissions, the developing world is greatly increasing its population and pursuing economic growth. The scale of what is happening in the developing world will dwarf whatever the West does in pursuit of net zero.

Power stations are being closed on the false promise that they can be replaced by renewables.

Closer to home I have taken the opportunity, on page 16, to lay out precisely what is wrong with the Albanese Government’s plans for a rapid transition to renewable energy. It is not that the objectives are bad (though they are): it is that the plan is unrealistic and unaffordable, and the results unreliable.

Imagine if you send a perfectly good car to the scrap metal dealer, because you had just signed an order with a flash salesman for a new model that may or may not be delivered next year. Or the year after that. Or maybe never. That is what Australia is doing: closing down coal-fired power stations on the promise that eventually enough wind, solar, transmission lines, and batteries will be built to replace them—despite there being very good environmental, legal, and engineering reasons why they cannot. The cost of every failure in the plan will be borne by mainstream Australians.

As I complete this editorial, Parliament has just met for the first time since the election, and the Albanese Government has introduced its climate change legislation, which will enshrine in law its climate targets of a 43 per cent reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050. That is, Parliament is about to commit our nation to an outcome, based on a plan that has no hope of implementation.

I should add that the climate reduction targets will ultimately affect far more than just the energy sector. As Kevin You has identified, agriculture is one of the industries that will be hit by more regulations justified by climate targets. Manufacturing, transport, and cement (vital in construction) will all be hit.

It has been said that climate zealotry and the desire to remove carbon (and energy) from our lives reflects a certain guilt on the part of the elite in the West. In Australia we are familiar with those who denigrate our national achievements and focus on the need to cleanse us all of sin.

One person pushing back against this is Christo Moskovsky, who on page 34 draws on his recent memoir to describe the contrast between the communist society into which he was born and the free society he now calls home.

More broadly the great Douglas Murray has described ‘The War on the West’ in a recent book of



that name, expertly reviewed by Dr Paul Monk on page 56.

On page 68 Jacob Watts, who was at the IPA for six months under our Future Leaders program before returning to post-graduate study, reviews a recent book on Australian spies during the Cold War. Notwithstanding the author's strangely relaxed attitudes, Jacob draws the correct lessons for concerns about espionage and foreign influence in Australia now.

The title page of the More Than Luck article

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This article also came to mind this morning when I read that Rishi Sunak—who is (as I write) seeking to become Leader of the Conservative Party (and hence Prime Minister) in the UK—singled out the Confucius Institutes, which are arms of the Chinese Communist Party-controlled government in Western universities.

He said:

I would close all 30 of China's Confucius Institutes in the UK—the highest number in the world. Almost all UK government spending on Mandarin language teaching at school is channelled through university-based Confucius Institutes, thereby promoting Chinese soft power. We could include his concerns in the list of important issues that were not addressed in the recent Federal Election.

As always, IPA Director of Policy Gideon Rozner rounds out the edition with another humorous take on the Strange Times in which we live.

This magazine takes the perspective of those who want Australia to be free and prosperous.

I have been pulling together this edition of the *IPA Review* at the same time as assuming my responsibilities as Executive Director, so it has been a busy but rewarding time. My editing has been done in large part on the road, as we had a terrific 'national tour' speaking to IPA Members in Brisbane, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne.

This magazine has been in continuous production since 1947 and is now almost alone in providing a concentrated focus on the politics and culture of Australia, from the perspective of those who want Australia to be free and prosperous.

Very soon I will need to bring in some new faces to take this magazine to the next level, and they can be confident they will have the full weight of me, the IPA, and its members behind them.

*This is the editorial from the [Winter 2022 edition](#) of the [IPA Review](#) by Editor of the *IPA Review*, Scott Hargreaves. Articles once loaded online are listed [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](#).*

