

What's Happening to Australia

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For many Australians, Australia no longer feels like Australia. The relaxed, sunny, and optimistic attitude characteristic of the quintessential Australian has been replaced by a deep sense of pessimism, malaise, and a loss of self-confidence and self-belief. There is a growing unease that something has gone very wrong with our country and way of life, accompanied by an unshakable belief that Australia's best days are behind it.

The spirit of our sunny optimism was perhaps best captured on 29 November 1948, the day the first commercially sold Holden rolled off the assembly line at Fishermans Bend in Port Melbourne. The Holden was "Australia's own car." The first car "made in Australia, for Australia", described by then-Prime Minister Ben Chifley as a "beauty."

The Holden was more than a car. It was a symbol of national success and hope for the future. The parent company of Holden, General Motors, stated at the time that "the manufacture of a car is the



greatest industrial stride Australia has made since the production of steel was introduced in Newcastle in 1915.” And that the start of car manufacturing “will go down as a milestone in Australia’s history.”

It was a time when almost every Australian who wanted a job had one. And almost every one of those jobs was stable, full-time, and available to Australians of any cultural background, skill level, or occupation. It was the era that gave birth to the Australian dream of owning a home in the suburbs on a quarter acre block.

Australia became a workers’ paradise that attracted millions of migrants after the Second World War from Greece to Poland to Germany to Italy. They readily and happily assimilated into Australian society by learning English, starting businesses, raising their families and, in doing so, enriched our nation. In 1955, the year the one millionth post-World War Two migrant arrived in Australia, half of Holden’s national workforce of 5,400 were migrant workers from 38 different countries. Only 14 per cent of the national population were born overseas at the time, according to the Census of the previous year.

It is true that the end of World War Two did not bring the end of human conflict and division. Internationally, the threat of fascism faded as the spectre of communism rose, and the Soviet Union and Communist China replaced Nazi Germany as the challengers to Western liberal democracies. The Cold War played out as hot conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and Egypt, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 brought the world close to full-scale nuclear conflict. Australia had its own domestic challenges, too, with sectarian disputes between Catholics and Protestants, workers’ strikes, and the ongoing challenge of socialism.

Australians got through these challenges because we were overwhelmingly united in our shared values and sense of optimism. A shared commitment to liberal democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, egalitarianism, classlessness, family and community, and the heritage of Western Civilisation came to define the Australian way of life.

This communal commitment to equality and national solidarity was demonstrated in 1967 when 91 per cent of Australians voted in a referendum to make Australia more whole and equal by voting to remove certain references to race in Australia’s Constitution so that Aboriginals would be counted as equals.

If 1948 was the year Australia became a grown-up, self-reliant nation, 1967 was the year that Australia became whole. And 1983 was the year that Australia became a global player, with our victory over America in the America’s Cup.

This sense of optimism lasted until the end of the century and was book-marked by the year 2000. The end of the millennium was a time of monumental success for Australia. The economy was booming, there was a popular and stable government in Canberra, and the Sydney Olympics gave Australians the opportunity to proudly show off to the rest of the world not only our athletic



proWess, but the great and iconic Harbour Bridge and Opera House too.

Australia won a national record 58 medals at the 2000 Olympics, tied third with China and behind only Russia and the United States. At the same time, the Australian cricket, rugby, and soccer teams enjoyed great successes in their respective international competitions.

Australia was unbeatable.

But much has changed. It feels as though Australia has not had a win for some time. Australians are pessimistic and miserable. Our institutions are eroding. Even sporting success is now fleeting. The Australian way of life has declined so swiftly, and in such a significant way, that Australia is almost unrecognisable from just 20 years ago, let alone since 1983, 1967, or 1948.

HOW THE AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE HAS CHANGED

Australia is now a free and liberal democratic nation in name only.

The parameters of every major debate are now bounded by a combination of an ever-growing body of laws which restrict speech and expression, and a culture which is becoming increasingly censorious and intolerant to any view that deviates even marginally from the politically correct one. This censorship is taking place across all the major issues which affect our nation and its future: large-scale immigration, climate change, national identity and culture, religious expression, and, most recently, the response of governments to Covid-19.

Worse, the insidious nature of legal and cultural censorship means Australians are self-censoring for fear of an intolerant mob that is all too willing to expel them from polite society, lobby to have them fired, and ruin their life. Self-censorship poses an existential danger to a liberal democratic nation because once people start to self-censor – that is, they stop saying what they really think and believe – they soon lose the ability to articulate their thoughts. Eventually, those thoughts, and the ideas and beliefs which underpin them, simply disappear. People forget. And those thoughts, ideas, and beliefs are lost forever.



Self-censorship is fundamentally at odds with what it means to be an Australian. Australians are renowned for their direct and irreverent (some call it crass) speech and their dismissive attitude toward authority. Australians, in fact, delight in offending the delicate sensibilities of Europeans and, to a lesser extent, Americans and Brits. It is a part of our classless nature. Initiating or enjoying a crass joke, for example, doesn't depend on one's accent or cultural background.

Self-censorship results in others erroneously believing that few think as they do. The 19th century French aristocrat and diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville argued in *Democracy in America* that the effect of censorship is that "[The] majority, feeling isolated, begin to retreat into silence rather than speak out for what it mistakenly thinks is a minority view." The overwhelming majority of Australians are proud to be Australian, are proud of Australia's history, and believe, for example, that Australia Day should be celebrated on 26 January each year.

But a cursory reading of the news or scrolling through social media would have one believe that these are arcane, niche views, which only backward-looking and reactionary people would hold.

Perhaps more concerning than the growth of legal prohibitions on Australians has been the advent of the enforcement arm of political correctness: cancel culture. Cancel culture is the phenomenon of Australians silencing and censoring one another through extra-legal mechanisms. Practiced almost uniquely by the postmodern left, common tactics include putting pressure on employers to fire employees who have publicly expressed conservative views; putting pressure on businesses to withdraw their advertising from certain publications and television programs; denying conservatives a platform from which they can voice their opinions (referred to as de-platforming); and the practice of 'doxing' which is to publish private information about an individual with the intent of that person being identified and harassed into silence.

The censorship of public debate, and the closing in of the boundaries of what is considered acceptable public opinion is not just a feature of our culture. It is also reflected in our politics and political system.

Australians who are unhappy with the direction of their country have little opportunity for recourse at the ballot box. Over the last two decades Australia's two major parties have become less and less differentiated. On many of the major issues that matter to the future of Australia, the differences between the Coalition and Labor are of degree rather than kind. In his 2003 book *From the Suburbs: Building a Nation for our Neighbourhoods*, Mark Latham argued that "the political spectrum is best understood as a struggle between insiders and outsiders – the abstract values of the powerful centre versus the pragmatic beliefs of those who feel disenfranchised by social change."

The vote for Brexit and the election of Donald Trump in 2016 demonstrates this point on an international level. In Australia, the search for representation is demonstrated by growing disengagement, and a declining share of the vote going to the major parties.

A key driver of this growing discontent and disengagement is a feeling amongst the public that the political system simply doesn't reflect their interests, concerns, or aspirations. Members of Parliament and those who surround them as staffers, advisors, and in the bureaucracy typically have a narrow background which is unrepresentative of the population at large. At the federal level in Australia, 52 per cent of all parliamentarians have recorded at least some occupational history as a party or union official, or as a staffer to a member of state or federal parliament. This is an increase from 38 per cent among the parliamentary cohort of 1999.

Working-class Australians have historically been underrepresented in parliament but have nonetheless accounted for a significant portion of parliamentarians. In 1950, for example, approximately one-third of the Commonwealth parliament had a working-class background. Today, less than two per cent of Commonwealth parliamentarians were engaged in working-class occupations immediately before entering parliament, compared to approximately 30 per cent of the Australian labour force.

The growing disconnect between the mainstream and the elites has, over the last two decades, metastasised into all areas of our society. Those at the commanding heights of our economy and culture have formed a detached enclave. The upper echelons of big business, unions, universities, non-government organisations, and media organisations increasingly come from a narrow background and share similar values and beliefs.

In *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*, British journalist and commentator David Goodhart captured this with his distinction between "Somewheres" and "Anywheres". Goodhart's Anywheres are a "large minority group of the highly educated and mobile who tend to value autonomy and openness and comfortably surf social change." They are the ones who have come to dominate our society and politics. Conversely the Somewheres are a "larger but less influential group" who "value security and familiarity and are more connected to group identities than Anywheres."

Somewheres are rooted in time and place, and are committed to family and community. They are patriotic, proud to be Australian, and are proud of our culture, traditions, institutions, and history.

The Anywheres, by contrast, are rootless cosmopolitans, who have more in common with their globe-trotting counterparts in London, Tokyo, Brussels, and New York than working-class citizens of their own nation. Not only do they have no sense of allegiance to Australia, or to its values or customs. They are ashamed of them.

The Anywheres see Australia as an international hotel room to which they have the right to check



in and out as they please. Any constraint – legal or moral – is seen as an illegitimate and unfair inhibition of their self-expression and self-actualisation. They are, in the main, ungrateful to the country that has provided them with the opportunity to succeed and get ahead.

The corollary of the rise of the elites is the collapse of egalitarianism. Australia was once celebrated as the least class-conscious society in the world, and perhaps ever. It wasn't where you came from, or your accent or last name that mattered, but your ability to work hard and contribute. True, Australia did not always live up to this ideal. But Australians expected their politicians and "betters" in society to at least pretend that they weren't better than anyone else.

Well into the 1990s Australia was still a nation where a low-skilled migrant worker, with an elementary grasp of English who had no more than a high-school education, could learn a trade, start their own business, own a home, raise a family, send their children to a good local school, and have a bit left over for a modest but comfortable annual family holiday. Not anymore.

Opportunities for Australians with modest skills and those who have received no formal education beyond high school are almost non-existent. The collapse of industries, such as manufacturing, agriculture, heavy industry, and associated manual labour work which provided stable, well-paying work for low-skilled (and often migrant) workers has diminished opportunity. These jobs have been replaced with predominately low-paying, unstable and precarious work which is at risk of automation and outsourcing.

Since the year 2000, for example, some 43 per cent of all jobs created have been in industries which are in the lowest third of employee pay, while more than half of these new jobs were part-time.

It is simply impossible to buy a home or raise a family with such uncertain employment foundations.

We can see the effects of this on our streets. Australia's major cities are now scattered with low-skilled and low-paid migrant food delivery drivers who work for multi-nationals like Uber dropping food to the doors of mansions in ritzy suburbs occupied by the cosmopolitan Anywheres who are responsible for the outsourcing and destruction of high-paying, stable manufacturing jobs of the kind the migrant food delivery driver would have held in the past.

The disparity within Australia can also be seen in another bedrock of the Australian way of life: homeownership. As recently as 2014, 67 per cent of households owned the home they lived in. This was comprised of 53 per cent who owned only the house they lived in, and 13 per cent who owned the house they lived in plus at least one other house. By 2018 the percentage of Australians who owned the home they lived in had dropped to just 50 per cent, while those who owned multiple houses increased to 16 per cent.

It is tempting to suppose that the changing structure of the Australian economy and society is the

product of inexorable forces. That there is a deterministic process which all nations go through, from agricultural, to industrial, to services-based economies. That economic globalisation, and the free flow of capital, goods, and people is the natural state of the world. That national borders are artificial constraints placed on economic efficiency. And that removing these constraints to achieve global wage and price parity is the culmination of the “arc of history”.

This is true to some extent, but the role of the political class cannot be discounted. Globalisation was, and is, a choice. Successive Australian governments, starting under Whitlam, have made conscious decisions to remove barriers to trade and open Australia up to the global market. There have undoubtedly been many benefits of doing so – the forces of comparative advantage and free trade have generally made Australians wealthier – but that is not to say either that there were no costs involved or that our elites had no power to change the shape of this supposed “arc”.

Accompanying the upheaval in Australia’s economy in recent decades has been the gutting of our society. Civil society in Australia has largely collapsed, and Australians now ask or expect government to do what they once did for themselves in concert with local associations. Welfare, health care, education, and other forms of social assistance are now overwhelmingly the domain of government. Over the past 50 years the percentage of Australians engaging in some form of volunteering has declined, as has church attendance, the marriage rate, and the proportion of couples who have children.

Some have suggested that a declining civil society and the associated expansion of government is beneficial because it has liberated Australians from their – in the words of Edmund Burke – “chosen and unchosen obligations” to one another. A government that takes care of children, the infirm, the elderly, and the destitute relieves Australians of those burdens to pursue, presumably, more important things. In reality though, it has left Australians isolated and has diminished the vocational and charitable work which was traditionally an important source of meaning and purpose.

Where civil society has collapsed, so too have social norms and mores. Less and less is expected of individuals today. Only two generations ago, it was basically expected that one would look after one’s own children in youth, parents in old age, and family and friends in ill-health, hold down a job, get married and stay married, pay respects to, and dutifully observe, days of national commemoration, make a contribution to one’s local community, and serve in the armed forces if required.

The collapse of civil society does not just present a significant issue for the moral health of individual Australians. It poses a fundamental challenge to Australia’s egalitarian way of life. Civic organisations, be they sporting clubs, RSLs, mutual societies, or Churches, provided an opportunity for Australians of different cultural and occupational backgrounds to intermingle. Rich or poor, Catholic or Protestant or Jew, factory worker or CEO, immigrant or native-born, Australians of all backgrounds could be found in the stands and in the cheer squads of their local football, cricket, rugby, or soccer team. Civil society was the glue which held an otherwise

disparate and diverse society together and allowed for the cross-pollination of class.

Sport, in particular, was always the great equaliser. Buoyant in victory, or despondent in defeat, a beer after the game at one of the many local establishments which flourished on game-day created a sense of shared commitment and passion. Now, however, sporting events have become parades for the new aristocracy, who can enjoy full-strength alcohol from their corporate boxes while regular fans can only be trusted with mid-strength at best. Politicians, lobbyists, and the captains of industry and finance chatter amongst themselves, looking down at the unwashed, foul-mouthed masses who are harassed and surveilled by behavioural awareness officers if they cheer too passionately.

WHY THE AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE COLLAPSED

Australia has declined because, simply put, no one cared to stop it. It was not inevitable, but the product of conscious choices made (in the case of the left) or not made (in the case of the right).

The deeper question is: *why* wasn't the decline stopped? The answer is that the right took Francis Fukuyama's declaration in *The End of History and the Last Man* seriously. The Cold War was over, and Western, liberal, capitalist democracies were victorious. Fukuyama argued that the fall of the Berlin Wall heralded "the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." Conflict would occur within nations and between nations still mired in history. "Some present-day countries might fail to achieve stable liberal democracy, and others might lapse into other, more primate forms of rule like theocracy or military dictatorship", argued Fukuyama, "but the ideal of liberal democracy could not be improved on."

Confident in victory, the right gradually receded from the cultural sphere because there was nothing left to debate. It was taken for granted that Australia would always be Australia.

Instead of engaging in matters of cultural substance, the right became committed to 'neutrality': the belief that the ultimate political and cultural good is a society which contains neutral zones where different conceptions of the good life can be pursued. It is based on a noble-sounding perspective that individuals should be able to do what they want with their lives provided they don't inhibit the ability of others in society to do likewise. In practice, the argument goes, Australia should be a country where people of diametrically opposed systems of beliefs and values can live alongside one another in peace and harmony, treating one another with dignity and respect.

But neutrality does not tell us where to go. It does not tell us what is right or what is wrong, or what



our children should be taught. Under the doctrine of neutrality there is no way to distinguish between an education based on critical race theory and one based on the Great Books and the heritage of Western Civilization. And because neutrality is, by definition contentless, it tends toward a form of nihilistic non-judgmental relativism where every life choice is considered as good as any other provided it does not impinge on free choice.

The deeper problem is that built within the doctrine of neutrality is a commitment of non-intervention, which only exacerbates the underlying cultural degeneration. If left unattended, G.K. Chesterton argued in his book *Orthodoxy*, “things naturally tend to grow worse.”

If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change. If you leave a white post alone it will soon be a black post. If you particularly wish it to be white you must be always painting it again ... an almost unnatural vigilance is really required of the citizen because of the horrible rapidity with which human institutions grow old.

Professor Jordan Peterson built on Chesterton’s observation in *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* by adding that the problem is not just not attending to our culture, but that “we speed the natural deterioration of great things through blindness, inaction, and deceit. Without attention culture degenerates and dies, and evil prevails.”

This is precisely what has happened. As soon as the Cold War ended, the Cultural Cold War began. And into the field vacated by the right marched the left with their theory of culture. The left has strong and unrelenting views of justice, of what is right and wrong, how people should behave, and how institutions should reflect and encourage those behaviours. And they are merciless in the pursuit of their notions of justice. They are not afraid to leverage the institutions of power which they command to push this onto society. State power. Corporate power. Media power. Cultural power. It matters not. Power is power, and it’s to be leveraged to achieve a just outcome.

The left is smaller in number but, to be blunt, they are more determined because they want to win. According to data in the Australian National University’s *Australian Election Study*, there is a significant enthusiasm gap between the left and the right. Broadly speaking, those on the left politically are far more likely to engage in activism. They are more likely to discuss politics with their friends, seek to persuade people to vote for their preferred candidate, support political candidates by attending meetings and putting up supportive materials, donate to political parties or candidates, and more likely to sign a petition, attend a protest, and coordinate with people who share their views.

The majority of Australians who are politically active are of the left. But those on the left who are politically active are a tiny minority of the overall population. Specifically, while only 7 per cent of the population is categorised as “highly engaged”, according to the ANU study, the left makes up 70 per cent of this small group. This means that less than 5 per cent of the population are exerting

a significant amount of control and influence over the other 95 per cent. The philosopher Nassim Taleb refers to this phenomenon as the “minority rule” which he describes as the “mother of all asymmetries.” Taleb argues that an intransigent minority with a significant commitment to, or belief in, what they are doing only need to reach a minutely small percentage of the population – less than 5 per cent – for the entire population to submit to their preferences.

The doctrine of neutrality has inhibited the right’s ability to exert leverage in the same way the left does. For example, the right is often committed to the idea that organised boycotts of left-wing companies would somehow transgress the principles of free enterprise.

The foundational question is: can a liberal, democratic nation survive if it tolerates those who are intolerant? Or, as Taleb asks: should we permit the free speech of a political party whose platform it is to eliminate free speech if elected? Commitment to neutrality necessitates an answer in the affirmative. That is, neutrality toward at least some forms of minority intolerance leads to self-immolation. Neutrality can’t defend itself with neutrality. An open system cannot defend itself with openness. At some point, a moral absolute must be stipulated and insisted upon.

The leverage of a noisy minority is exacerbated by the highly centralised nature of our society and economy. The mediating institutions of civil society – local clubs, RLS, religious organisations, unions, families – have been hollowed out, leaving only atomised individuals and large centralised governing institutions. This opens the door to the intransigent minority because centralised power is easier to capture than power that is scattered across the community.

To take one current example, the National Curriculum must be taught in all schools in Australia, be they public, religious, or non-religious independent. Activists who gain direct control of the curriculum, or who are able to exert undue pressure on those who have control, are able to influence the content which is taught to every school child in Australia. If there were many competing curricula at the state or school level, however, minority activists could take over some of the curricula. But not all of them.

While identity politics is perhaps just the most recent outgrowth of poststructuralism, it is the most strident in its overt narrative of destruction. Identity politics argues that our established values, customs and history do not represent the diverse racial, cultural, and gender identities of Australians.

The aim, we can say, is to deconstruct. The motivation is resentment. And the cause is neutrality. By resentment I mean the observable fact that many on the left now live largely meaningless lives which are devoid of hope for the future. And they are taking it out on everyone else.

The postmodern left are victims of a culture that has forbidden them from accessing the ways of life needed for fulfillment and meaning. Family, religion, community, work, and patriotism are the foundational basis of a life worth living. No civilisation, culture, or nation has ever survived without them in some form or another. They were promised liberation and Heaven on Earth. Instead, they



got anxiety, loneliness, depression, and existential dread.

As Jordan Peterson explains with the Biblical story of Cain and Able. Having been looked upon unfavourably by God, fate, and life, Cain decides to murder his brother whose life is faring better than his own. Cain, according to Peterson, kills his ideal rather than working to mirror it.

HOW TO SAVE THE AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE

The best case that can be made for optimism is that if a small group of postmodern activists have been able to fundamentally change the culture and institutions of Australia, then there is no reason why a countervailing force on the right can't be at least equally effective. As Sun Tzu counselled, what matters is unity, not size.

For this to be achieved, those on the right will need to evolve beyond a limited commitment to the doctrine of neutrality and become comfortable stipulating the existence of moral absolutes and their place in public life.

Part of this will be broadening the purview of how the right views the political arena from merely that which is public (that is, done by government) to that which is undertaken by a broader coalition of government, big business, unions, tech and media companies, and the major institutions of civil society. In the main, these institutions adhere to the same doctrine on many of the major issues facing the future of Australia – from climate change and to identity politics to freedom of speech.

The lack of diversity of opinion in civil society means that it is no longer appropriate for those on the right to simply assess the size and scope of government as a barometer for freedom and the health of the Australian way of life. The day-to-day lived experience of the average Australian, in terms of what he or she can say, think, and do is as much influenced by business, media, and universities as it is by government. In many ways Australia today appears less as a pluralistic liberal democracy where many and varied competing interests can make their case in a free and open public arena, and more like an oligarchy influenced by a small cadre of ruling elites who now command the heights of our social, cultural, political, and commercial lives.

The deeper point to understand is that the 'market', such as it is, is not neutral, and arguably never has been. Yes, private market outcomes between individual businesses and consumers are in part driven by the profit motive. And, yes, government intervention has and continues to heavily distort the decision of private actors in the marketplace. But market outcomes are also, and I would argue increasingly, not influenced by economic factors, but by values. And given it is the left who most assertively stipulate their values, it is the values of the left which sets the parameters of

how the private sector will behave. Jeff Bezos did not buy the *Washington Post* to make money.

This means the right must broaden its focus from the three-to- four-year election cycles and adopt a long-term view.

On many of the major public policy issues today the major parties are unable to distinguish themselves from each other. Sure, there are still some important differences between Labor and the Coalition and, sure, there are still some noteworthy individual politicians who make worthwhile contributions to debate. But in the absence of significant cultural changes, it is unlikely that Australia will be substantially different in two decades if the Coalition are in government for a majority of that time as opposed to Labor. The Coalition has been in government at the federal level for around 75 per cent of the time since World War Two, but we are nonetheless where we are today.

It's wrong to think that this means Australians should disengage from politics. It is incumbent upon all of us who are concerned about the direction of Australia and believe the institutions of democracy are not functioning as they should to join a political party of our choosing and to do so with the intent of making a difference. Simply observing the leftward drift of the major political parties without doing what one can to address that drift is unhelpful.

But it does mean that the problems facing Australia will not be solved by politics and politicians alone, or even in the main. For the left, engagement with politics and culture is a 365-day a year occupation. For many conservatives, it's one day every three or four years. The political system responds to cultural changes as much as it shapes culture itself.

We also need to be willing to play the long game. The debate about Australia's future is never ending. There will always be debate and disagreement within society on the direction our nation should take, but these debates are mostly settled well before making their way into parliament. True, the laws the parliament ultimately create, and the way in which these laws are enforced and interpreted by the judiciary do influence behaviour. But parliament largely operates within pre-established acceptable boundaries determined by culture.

The most likely reality is that just as it has taken many decades for the left to transform and denigrate Australian society and culture, so too will it take time to rebuild.

Amidst the challenges and difficulties, there is good news which we should always bear in mind. First, the truth is on our side.

Conservatives are committed to a politics and culture based on human nature and reality, while the left tries to force reality to conform to their utopian ideology by coercively changing language and social structures. Reality, though, is unchanging. It exists independent of the ideas held in the minds of political activists. And attempts to bend reality can only go on for so long.

This does not mean that the truth will automatically win out. The truth is powerful, but it isn't more powerful than power itself. Hence, the need for engagement.

Second, while the left is almost everywhere in power, much of what they believe and promote is weak and repulsive to most mainstream Australians. Polling commissioned by the Institute of Public Affairs has demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of Australians believe that: freedom of speech is an important Australian value; we all should be treated equally regardless of our race, gender, or ethnicity; Australia day should be observed on 26 January each year; Australia has a history to be proud of; and Australian culture should be celebrated.

Yet because these beliefs and values are largely not held by the elites they are not reflected in the major institutions in society in a way they once were, and this leads to the (false) belief that such views are therefore not widely held.

This can result in demoralisation which is in part the result of being isolated and feeling as if few others believe in the things you believe. Therefore, an important role is to provide "rhetoric" in the traditional sense by reflecting back to mainstream Australians what it is they already believe, if for no other reason than to remind them that they are in the majority. A silent majority which stays silent will not be a majority for long.

Attempts at conciliation, however laudable in normal times, are naïve and dangerous in times such as ours. At the end of World War Two, Australians were faced with two competing and mutually exclusive visions for the future. One was the continuation of a liberal constitutional democracy, based on free enterprise, individual rights and freedoms, and the rule of law. The other was for a form of socialism which was revolutionary in its aims in that the implementation of socialism could only be achieved via extra-constitutional means, or through having the activist judges engage in constitutional revisionism to provide the semblance of lawfulness.

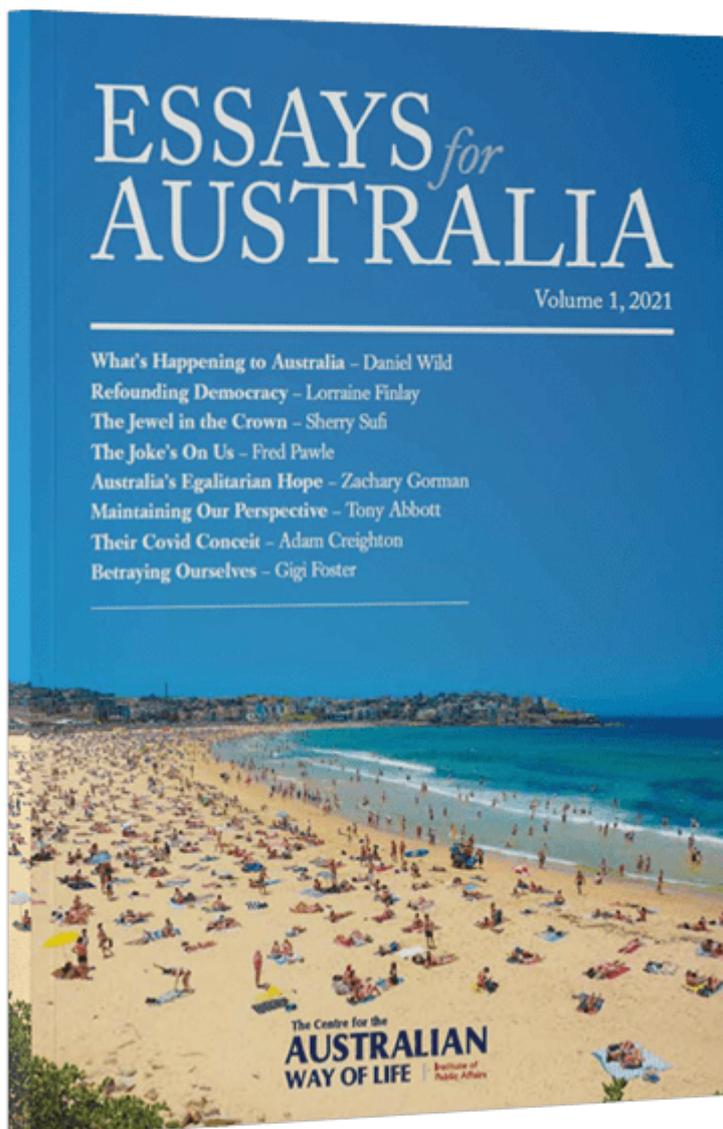
Australia today is at a similar crossroad and Australians again face two competing visions for the future. One is based on the continuation of the traditional Australia way of life – freedom, democracy, individual dignity, the rule of law and equality before the law. The other is based on identity politics, censorship, and oligarchic rule. These visions of the future cannot coexist. Only one vision can win out. Attempting to compromise and "play nice" does nothing but confer our enemy with legitimacy.

If those on the right continue to "live and let live" while those on the left demand conformity to their vision of justice, then our values will continue to be removed from public and private life.

There will always be those among us who protest that it is now too late, that so much has been lost, and that any attempt at recovery is futile. But it is not, and never will be, too late. Even when it feels like it is too late, the only sensible thing to do is to act and behave as if it isn't. Doing what needs to be done to help save Australia does not guarantee success. But doing nothing guarantees failure. If we try, we know that, at least within some local domains, things will improve.

History is not an externally deterministic process. It is a product of human agency, and application of free will of those who care the most.

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