



Keeping In Touch - Evan Mulholland

Dear IPA Members

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This point captures what the IPA has been talking about for years - that there is dignity in work, that it provides meaning and self-worth to people’s lives.

Now safe to say my boss John Roskam hasn’t always been the biggest fan of Scott Morrison, but he is right to say that he is managing this crisis well. And Australians should wish him well in that, especially given the stakes are so high.

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How The ABC Has Failed Us – IPA Keeping In Touch – 2 April 2020

Publish Date:

April 2020

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John was quoted in a [feature article](#) (\$) in the *Australian Financial Review* today by Aaron Patrick, titled 'ScoMo faces career-defining moment':

Those who fear the recession will be more damaging to health than the pandemic include conservatives such as John Roskam, the executive director of the Institute of Public Affairs, a free-market think tank.

"The medical profession will stand condemned for encouraging panic," he says. "Morrison and [Health Minister Greg] Hunt are the only political leaders in this country, who instead of engaging in panic and alarm, practised cautious, sober and prudent decision making. When everyone is panicking it's very hard to say, 'let's take a step back'."

One area where leadership has been severely lacking is our media's response to this crisis. The ABC's response has been to become a shadow government, or government in exile. It doesn't need to hold up the Federal and State Chief Medical Officers or the Prime Minister, because the ABC has its own spokesman to hold up in Dr Norman Swan, a reporter with a medical degree.

It was [reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*](#) that the Public Health Association of Australia wrote to its members asking its members to support and reinforce the advice of Professor Brendan Murphy. This is in the face of conflicting advice by the ABC.

It is no surprise that Dr Swan has aligned with similar ABC voices in calling for a complete shut down of the economy.

The ABC have been presenting Dr Swan as an alternative source of information that runs contradictory to the messages of the Prime Minister and the Chief Medical Officer. Many parents kept their children home from school at the suggestion of Dr Swan.

One journalist I don't normally agree with, Osman Faruqi, [pointed out](#) that just one week after Dr Swan called for a closure of schools, he stated that "If I had school age children, I would be sending them to school". His initial comments panicked many parents to keep their children at home.

Faruqi, a former ABC journalist, said that "Maybe the crisis wasn't the best time to throw out long standing editorial policies and elevate one journo over the range of different expert views."

Channel 10's Lisa Wilkinson also [called for a complete lockdown](#), relying on the medical wisdom



of Shane Warne and Emma Alberici to do so.

Speaking of the ABC's Chief Economics Correspondent, Emma Alberici [decried](#) that we need to stop talking about the economy, saying "We live in a community not an economy" and urged people to stay inside.

Putting aside the irony that the ABC's Chief Economics Correspondent no longer wants to talk about the economy, only at the ABC, a taxpayer funded behemoth sheltered from any loss of livelihood, could such tin-eared opinions be held sincerely.

Economies are more than just numbers; they are people's livelihoods. They are the dignity that is provided to a cafe owner that employs five staff. They are the self-worth and purpose a flight attendant gets travelling around Australia. And they are a large part of the community Alberici so earnestly defends.

I thought that must have topped the bad take stakes, but then I saw ABC Sydney radio presenter Wendy Harmer's [tweet](#), where she said:

So all set to broadcast from home tomorrow morning @abcsydney – fingers crossed all goes well! On a sidenote, I'm using a Tieline Via unit that costs \$5,500 and we only have ONE for the entire station! Clearly not enough in times like these. More funding for the ABC please!

Where is Wendy's empathy for those lined up outside Centrelink? Our taxpayer funded media are so utterly insulated from the real economy that during a crisis like this where hundreds of thousands of Australians are losing their jobs, they are busy asking for more taxpayer money for an organisation that already receives \$1.1 billion. Not all the media has been wrong on this. Phillip Coorey [summed it up nicely](#) (\$) in the *AFR*: "Generally speaking, the majority of those calling publicly for an immediate and total lockdown are either paid by the taxpayer or are sufficiently well-off to absorb six months at home without pay."

This was echoed by [John Roskam on The Bolt Report](#), who said that "This idea that we can lockdown the community indefinitely can only come from the sort of people who are not going to be affected by this".

The IPA have been prominent in the media these past few turbulent weeks, fighting for our shared values.

We've been busy suggesting that bureaucrats take a pay cut. Specifically, that those bureaucrats earning over \$150,000 a year should take a 20 per cent pay cut so that they have some shared sacrifice with their fellow Australians in the private sector that fund them through their taxes.

John Roskam was quoted in [The Australian](#) (\$), [The AFR](#) (\$) and [The Daily Mail](#) with the following:

“Not all this extra spending has to be new money and debt”

“There should be a 20 per cent reduction in public service pay until the crisis is over.”

“We have seen a disconnect of bureaucrat elites from the productive economy.”

These points were rounded together nicely by Daniel Wild in [The Australian](#).

The economic and social burden of the government-imposed sanctions to manage the health crisis must be shared equally with the public sector, which so far has remained shielded from the fallout while thousands of small businesses, sole traders and tradies go to the wall.

Public servants on average have higher wages and higher superannuation contributions than private sector workers in Australia. This is unacceptable in good times but unconscionable in the middle of economic and social Armageddon.

A job is more than a pay cheque; it is source of meaning, dignity and self-sufficiency. People who do not work are often unable to afford their own home, involve themselves in their communities or build a family. The impacts of joblessness can be felt for generations, as the children of the unemployed fall behind at school and must endure the domestic pressures associated with that loss of income. Some might even come to the conclusion that they have little to live for and nothing to offer the world.

Equality of sacrifice is required to get Australia through this unprecedented challenge. We must all dig in.

When *The Herald Sun's* James Campbell made the same point on ABC *Insiders* last Sunday, that bureaucrats on big salaries might have to take a haircut, *The Guardian's* Paul Karp [tweeted out](#):

WTF – James Campbell suggests pain might have to be shared with public service? They're working more than 100% of their regular hours, why should they get less than 100% of their pay?!



In response, his colleague at *The Guardian* Amanda Meade [tweeted](#) “It’s an IPA talking point”. Indeed. Many others on the left of politics have attacked and dismissed the IPA’s serious policy suggestion.

Don’t ever let anyone of the left tell you that it is the right of politics that is for ‘the big end of town’. Left-wing commentators are defending public servants with a salary of over \$150,000 a year, from receiving a 20 per cent pay cut and dropping from 15.4 per cent to 9.5 per cent super contributions like everyone else.

These funds would go a long way to supporting the productive workers in the economy, who through no fault of their own, are now languishing on welfare.

John Roskam was featured in the [front-page story](#) of *The Australian* on Wednesday titled ‘Coronavirus: Trillion-dollar debt to rival post-WWII years’:

The huge fiscal cost of the pandemic is leading to early debates about how to handle the recovery, with calls for tax and industrial relations reforms to encourage economic growth.

Institute of Public Affairs executive director John Roskam said, “we could see \$1 trillion of debt within three years”, with the interest payments alone costing every Australian \$900 a year.

Total gross debt going into the crisis was about \$550bn.

“If we are ever going to repay this, we have got to be a lot more productive than we have been in the last 10 years. Business as usual will mean that we will never pay back the debt. This is Australia’s banana republic moment times 10. The unprecedented level of debt means we are going to have to tackle red tape,” Mr Roskam said.

“In the medium term, tax reductions are going to have to be part of the recovery plan, industrial relations reform is going to be part of the recovery plan, and ... the GST deal with the states has to be renegotiated.”

John’s comments clearly frustrated the esteemed mind of former Treasurer Wayne Swan, [who tweeted](#) that “The IPA is already gearing up to use debt levels as the excuse to return to a more extreme trickle-down agenda of increased GST {more regressive tax} & IR deregulation {wage suppression}.” While Wayne Swan’s never had any issue with saddling Australians with more debt, the IPA will always question enormous amounts of debt, especially when [IPA research](#) released



this week found that gross national debt is set to reach over \$1 trillion within a few years.

In other media going around, IPA Director of Policy Gideon Rozner was quoted in *The Daily Mail* in [a news piece](#) titled 'Calls for Australia to bring BACK single-use bags at supermarkets – as it's revealed coronavirus can survive on plastic for three days'.

Gideon said:

Gideon Rozner, Director of Policy at the Institute of Public Affairs, described the ban on single-use plastic bags as 'foolish'.

'If the coronavirus has taught us anything, it is the importance of disposable goods that prevent the spread of disease,' he told Daily Mail Australia.

'How would we have fought the coronavirus if, for example, we didn't have single-use gloves, or single-use tissues? Single-use plastic bags are no different.'

The same people that have forced the use of reusable plastic bags on us all are now prioritising the environment over human life. I for one would welcome the return of single use plastic bags, let's put the convenience back in the old-fashioned convenience store. The IPA's loud voice for freedom has never been more important and will be crucial in the economic recovery on the other side of this.

There are just so many well informed, well researched, articulate pieces of writing from IPA staff recently, so I thought I'd leave you by providing a list and linking all of them.

[Cut Red Tape to Save Jobs](#) – IPA Media Release – Daniel Wild

[A Simple Stimulus Step that won't Cost a Cent: Stop Green Lawfare](#) – *Spectator Australia* – Kurt Wallace

[Virus Crisis Signals End of the Road for the 'Lollipop Economy'](#) – *AFR* – John Roskam

[Quantitative Easing: A Desperate Move with no Clear End Game](#) – *Spectator Australia* – Kurt Wallace

[Listen to the Experts and Elites, but Remember they've Got Form](#) – *Spectator Australia* – Daniel Wild

[Their ABC Peddles Panic in a Crisis](#) – *IPA Today* – Gideon Rozner

[How the Coronavirus Response Shows We Have Lost Our Fundamental Values](#) – *Spectator Australia* – Dr Zachary Gorman

[In this Peril, Remember Australia's Success Secret](#) – *AFR* – Professor Sinclair Davidson

[Coronavirus Pain Must Be Shared Around](#) – *The Australian* – Daniel Wild

[How Localism and Community Spirit Can See Us Through the Corona Crisis](#) – *Spectator Australia* – Dara Macdonald

[Running Out Of Rice, While Wasting Water](#)



Institute Of Public Affairs
Visit the IPA online: ipa.org.au

– Blog post – Dr Jennifer Marohasy

[How Red Tape is Compounding the Coronavirus Commerce Crisis](#) – *Spectator Australia* – Cian Hussey

[Brace for European Financial Armageddon](#) – *The IPA Review* – Oliver Hartwich

[\\$1 Trillion Worth of Debt Within Three Years](#) – Media Release – John Roskam

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards Evan