

PIBCI - Monthly Perspective

June 2020

Reclaiming the Future

The spread of Covid-19 presents a global health challenge, and a political and economic opportunity.

As governments across the globe struggle to develop and implement effective health strategies to combat the virus, we are told by our current policy makers that once it's over, things should get back to normal. However, what exactly do they mean by normal, and more precisely whose normal?

What the Covid-19 virus has done is highlight that it is our collective future that's at stake.

Neoliberalism – A Stocktake

For the past forty years neoliberalism has captured our imaginations, while it worked tirelessly stealing our future. It promised a bigger and better future; a happier and wealthier life based on deregulation and privatisation guided by the magical powers of the market economy. Now it is time to stocktake the decades of living the neoliberal dream. According to the ledger, the neoliberal project has stripped public assets through the privatisation of utilities, schools, healthcare, community housing and more. It has significantly intensified the exploitation of natural resources adding to the climate emergency. It has shamelessly encouraged the exploitation of workers, and accelerated the unprecedented wealth gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots.' Politically, neoliberalism has normalised itself as the 'only viable option.' Promoted as the 'common sense' approach to economics by mainstream media backed by enthusiastic media barons, neoliberalism has repeatedly congratulated itself, and effectively cemented itself as the only political and economic option in the public's mind. Meanwhile, its wealthy and powerful advocates have ensured opposition views are either absorbed, corrupted or denigrated as fringe utopian dreams by the legions of media commentators backed by a world-wide network of conservative think tanks.

What we have recently witnessed in the neoliberal hot spots of the United States

and UK is that Covid-19 has clearly exposed the reality of neoliberalism's significant shortcomings. Western democracies are being run by the men least equipped to manage the crisis, guided by the defunct neoliberal ideology that has privatised health care and slashed social security. This has weakened society's defences and left it exposed to the ravages of the pandemic. Yesterday's austerity measures are now being replaced by 'stimulus packages', provided by tax payers, much of it being channelled to corporations in the guise of measures to help selected workers.

The neoliberal stocktake demonstrates that as a society, we are running a massive loss, and if we keep to the neoliberal plan, the future is going to be very grim. After 40 years, we face an environmental disaster, rising unemployment, a colossal debt burden that will be clawed back in the years ahead, and continuing precariousness of employment. Talk of progress, growth, development and accumulation are all chimeras for the majority of the community and limited to dinner conversations of the 1% of society that owns the means of production, distribution, exchange and communication. Put simply, the neoliberal dream has transformed into a nightmare.

Covid-19: A Prescription for Change

The good news is that the Covid-19 crisis has placed us at the political, economic and cultural crossroad, prompting each of us to critically question and look beyond the current system. The major parties would have us believe that we need to get back on course using the well-worn and discredited neoliberal map and return to the 'old ways' which got us here in the first place. However, the reality is that the future is not predetermined. Today presents us with a unique opportunity to reclaim the future. By joining PIBCI, you can place us one step closer to becoming a registered federal political party [Click here to join PIBCI](#).

It is time to shut down the failed neoliberal project, and call out the ideology as the failure it is. The pandemic has demonstrated the deep flaws in the neoliberal ideology which aided and abetted the sale of vital industries overseas so the captains of capital could make even bigger profits on the backs of exploited overseas workers. It's time to point out how neoliberalism has backfired on the public as we scramble to secure strategic resources such as pharmaceuticals and

personal protective equipment for our frontline health workers. Clearly, the widely held assumption that neoliberalism is the most efficient and effective way to produce and distribute goods and services is just that – an assumption - that has been endlessly repeated in echo chambers to the point that we believe it as truth. In a time of social lock down, all neoliberalism has left us with is nothing but cheap and disposable consumer products that are of little use during a pandemic.

It's time to wake up again, and understand that neoliberalism is far from a common sense ideology, and it is not the only game in town. What is common sense is placing public interests first. What is important is taking control of our future based on real choices. By joining PIBCI, you will put us one step closer to realising a common sense approach to politics, economics and culture. PIBCI's policies are based on ensuring that the public's interests are placed ahead of corporate interests.

Universal Basic Income

The decades long neoliberal assault on the commons (public assets) has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. For decades, Australians have been faced with the rising precariousness of employment, an unsympathetic government that has implemented a punitive approach to social security support such as Robodebt, and austerity measures that have slashed government support for the needy in our society. This sad situation has been further aggravated by the current rise in unemployment triggered by the Covid-19.

PIBCI's policy on Universal Basic Income (UBI) recognises the vital importance that a UBI plays in society by ensuring that each citizen and permanent resident has economic freedom, independence and personal security. Given today's deepening global economic downturn, PIBCI's UBI provides an effective solution to the current rise in unemployment. It is also designed to overcome the structural inequalities that exist under the current economic system that have ushered in the widespread casualisation of employment. The UBI also is a modern approach that can address contemporary social and economic challenges such as the increasing reliance on technology and automation of work.

Our UBI policy provides an effective solution that unconditionally provides a

periodic basic income to citizens and permanent resident over the age of 18. It is well placed to deal with the current health and economic challenges and the financial hardships that lie ahead.

The UBI is designed to eliminate material poverty, facilitate individual autonomy, fight against unsympathetic working conditions, eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, reinstate dignity of the poor and promote the social and cultural participation of every individual. Our UBI will greatly assist in reducing stress and anxiety that many citizens are currently experiencing as they face unemployment and lack of an adequate income.

PIBCI recognises that the interests of the Australian public need to be put ahead of the interests of unaccountable corporations whose major responsibility is to create ever increasing profits for their major shareholders, irrespective of the human, social, environmental and national costs.

If you are concerned about Australia's political, economic and cultural direction and seek to actively reclaim our collective future, join PIBCI so we may put public interests first.

Anthony B – Website Editor
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