

PIBCI - Monthly Perspective

April 2021

Delusion, disconnection and downright deception

When was the last time we witnessed a government dig so many holes for itself before proceeding to dig them deeper and deeper? Due to the serious nature of some of the scandals unfolding in Canberra, these holes have simply become too huge to be covered up or camouflaged by the corporate press. As the credibility of the Coalition government gives way, one could ask where is the opposition? Why aren't they holding the government to account? Again, the major political parties are failing the Australian public. On one hand, the scandals that continue to surface demonstrate how out of touch the Morrison-led government is with the rest of society. On the other hand, the federal ALP timidly watches the internal decay take hold of the ruling Coalition and await the mantle of government be handed over by default. Clearly, the years of festering excess has caused the Canberra bubble (or the Canberra boil) to burst. The simple question that the Australian public must ask itself - is the Coalition government fit for purpose? Furthermore, are the major political parties fit to govern?

Disconnect

The past month has exposed the toxic culture that permeates through the halls of the Australian Parliament. The weekly jaw dropping allegations and the shameful misconduct flowing from the halls of power highlights two key issues: 1) the federal government's total disconnect with the majority of Australians, and 2) the injustices women face in the heart of our political system, parliament house, and more broadly across society. Sexual assault, sexual harassment and workplace inequality remain a daily fact for many women. In response to the misconduct and allegations seeping out of federal parliament, the Morrison-led government has attempted to manage the media rather than deal with the issues directly. After failing to brush off allegations in the media, the Coalition government has ushered in a Cabinet shake-up to give the appearance that something is being done.

Rather than address the deep-seated cultural toxicity festering in parliament, the Coalition government has been consumed by internal machinations within the party and managing the media in between each crisis. The chaos has given us vivid glimpse into the Morrison-led government in terms of its inability to handle burning issues and the cynical political management of the media. The short-sighted approach has favoured spin above dealing with women's demands and the broader social issues at hand.

The disconnect with the public runs deep in the veins of a government that has been in power for too long. This government remains blind to the impact of economic inequality

cross society. The growing gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' is a driver for a host of social problems that spill out within the work place, in the homes and in the streets of our cities and towns. And yet, this government continues to prop up corporations at the expense of a better education system and a better health system. The woefully inadequate support for mental health leaves significant gaps in a system that has a close correlation with violence against women and children. Meanwhile, recent concerns about the cost blow out and schedule overruns have emerged from the \$90 billion mega-project to supply 12 submarines by the French-owned contractor. The Coalition government's priorities clearly do not sit well with the real needs of society.

Delusion

The corporate media's seemingly endless supply of gloss that covers the Coalition government's cascade of failures is rapidly peeling off. Week after week the Coalition's inability to manage projects, initiatives and itself is increasingly revealed. Lacking sufficient talent, it has bungled its way through allegations, exercised poor political judgement, and it has demonstrated a lack of connection with the public.

Since 2013, the Coalition has propped up large corporations at the expense of the rest of the nation. Each initiative the Morrison-led government has implemented has done little to support Australians during its time in power. The public have had to endure successive disasters including (but not limited to) RoboDebt, the sport rorts affair, the bushfires fiasco, and the disaster in Aged Care. Further attempts to prop up the failing economy have included the feeble \$680 million Homebuilder program that the Coalition touted as a means to create 140,000 direct jobs. It has barely created 9,600 jobs. At a time when the planet needs help, the Coalition has turned its back on the opportunity to ramp up renewable energy, and announce plans for a "gas-led" recovery.

This 'option' has been supported by large corporations which feeds Australian gas into the international gas market. As a consequence, domestic gas prices have substantially increased, and our gas is syphoned off to other countries making a pretty profit for corporations at the expense of the Australian public.

In summary, the Morrison-led government has left the Australian public floundering while it continues to cosy-up to big business. Its lack of investment in health leaves us exposed at a time when the world is in the grips of a pandemic. Furthermore, it has undercut the education sector, decimating our research capacity. Universities have needed to prop up their budgets by relying on international students. This pivot towards the international student market has left universities exposed as COVID-19 putting a halt to this vital market. Universities have also turned to large corporations to support their research, effectively placing the fruits of research in the hands of corporations and out of the reach of the public.

Economically, this government has gifted the public with the greatest gross debt amongst the thirty-six wealthy OEDC nations. The trillion dollar debt to 'soften the impact' of the pandemic has placed Australia in the weakest economic condition since World War II. A substantial proportion of this debt was 'trusted' to businesses to pass onto employees in the form of JobKeeper, rather than paid directly to workers. As a consequence, the federal Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg has stated that it will take future generations to pay off.

To further highlight the reckless nature of the government's 'management' of the current situation, the COVID-19 vaccine rollout is in crisis. Again, the Coalition's primary focus has been on regular media announcements instead of focussing on getting the rollout done efficiently, effectively and on schedule.

The delusion that the Coalition government perpetuates for itself, and promotes to the public through the corporate media is one of control and competence. In reality, it is a government bankrupt of ideas, talent and ability. The Cabinet reshuffle has simply placed poor performing politicians into senior positions. The prospect of getting back on the rails are highly unlikely.

Your action is vital

The indifference displayed by the Coalition government and the timidity of the federal opposition party impacts all of us. Prime Minister Scott Morrison is the leader of a suspect government that has failed to implement effective change. Mired in weekly scandals, the Coalition government's ability to serve the Australian populace is beyond question.

The ALP's inability to muster enough courage to bring the government to account, and present a credible alternative government highlights the lack of depth and fortitude needed to steer the nation through rough waters.

Change rests in your hands. Comfort, compliance and complaining are the ingredients for inaction and maintaining the status quo. Acting as a citizen by flexing your political muscle is key to bringing about positive change. Join PIBCI today and become part of the change necessary to address the social and political backwardness.

Our focus on placing the public's interests ahead of corporate interests is expressed in our suite of policies. Refer to our Archives page for recent and past articles highlighting our analysis of a broad range of issues and presenting alternative solutions to those of the major political parties.

If you are already a member of PIBCI, sign up friends and family so that we can gather enough members to become a registered political party.

The past month has proven that neither major party is fit for purpose. We need political alternatives that deal with real issues, real people and the current situation that all Australian's face. Joining PIBCI and getting others to join will help to generate change for the better.

Anthony B – Website Editor

April 2021

