

HOODIES



Det Leading Senior Constable
Neal Thompson
VP26182



Senior Constable
Vadim De Waart
VP44954

Rest in peace



VICTORIA POLICE

Azzaro
STYLE



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The page three profile is a new addition to Hoodies magazine and in each issue we will highlight a person who is making contributions to the world we live in via selfless acts of kindness, inspiration and or teaching. To celebrate the upcoming Talktober event and 'Pass the mic' campaign for the mens mental health charity, 'The Male Hug' our first page three person is, Male Hug CEO, Tony Rabah

Tony Rabah, CEO and Founder

Tony has a long and established career as an Accountant & Business Advisor. He holds a Bachelor of Business, Accounting from Victoria University and is also a registered tax agent and member of the IPA. Through this, he has advised a range of organisations across various industries and sectors. As a trusted advisor, many of Tony's clients have also turned to him for personal advice and his boardroom has always been a safe and friendly space for a chat. Tony used his vast experience helping others both financially and personally to conceptualise and found The Male Hug. By doing so realising his passion to provide a safe, non judgemental platform for all men in need.





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FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF



A time of tragedy, of division and of protests

We open this issue of Hoodies magazine by offering our deepest sympathies to the families of the two Victoria police officers who lost their lives while trying to do their jobs. To Victoria Police we as an organisation stand with you and say thank you for all that you do for us and the wider community. There's no doubt that being pulled over for speeding or being busted on your phone grates on all of us, but that you stand ready and willing to put your lives on the line each and everyday you go to work says volumes about your character and the commitment you have to the community and we thank you.

This issue of Hoodies comes at a time in society when we are losing ourselves. Not only have we seen two police officers killed we have seen a foreign country stand accused of terrorism on our shores, we have seen people from all sides of the divide take to the streets in protest and cast as extremists by mainstream media and by politicians as grubs, we have seen inflation again go up and energy prices head to record levels for the sake of impossible net zero targets. With all of this happening we now seem to stand back and watch as people proudly burn the Australian flag and it begs the question isn't this all just bloody sad?

How have we allowed things to get like this? How have we lost our way so badly? And how have we lost our identity? This used to be the lucky country, a place where we could be proud of our migrant heritage, a place where indigenous Australians were celebrated, Kathy Freeman, to name but one hero. We would wave the Aussie flag proudly on Australia Day when it was ok to be Australian, but now with minority groups being the only way in which governments can get themselves into or hold onto power we can't criticise anyone or any group because we risk being cast aside as racist bigots who are anti immigration.

If you turn on the radio, watch a TV news bulletin or scroll through social media you are confronted with a range of views on the current state of things. Left wing, right wing, extremists, conservatives and so called progressives, but not much of it based on common sense. This is why Hoodies started. This is why I felt there was an opportunity for a media organisation to be that new voice of common sense. If I hadn't had 120,000 plus hits on a single post mid way through covid I would never have started this whole journey, but I did and now we have launched Hoodies Media, a media company dedicated to the middle group of opinion, dedicated to the common sense approach to news and opinion, dedicated to allowing all sides of the fair and reasonable debate to be heard, dedicated to being that authentic voice of real people.

Hoodies will make mistakes and we wont always say the popular things, but we will never be anything but authentic. It may take us longer to make a point because we not going after click bait headlines or quick fix short discussions, but we will always be on the side of common sense and will never make a decision based on money or influence.

We invite all sides of politics onto our podcast, we invite anyone with an opinion that includes genuine decency to contribute to our magazine and we ask that everyone that shares our quest for common sense, authenticity and real accountability in the modern world to subscribe to our website and all things Hoodies Media.

This organisation is based on one thing, being different to the norm and we will never stop being just that.

Enjoy Issue 25 and thanks for reading.

Cheers
Ben Logan

Editor in Chief
Hoodies Magazine

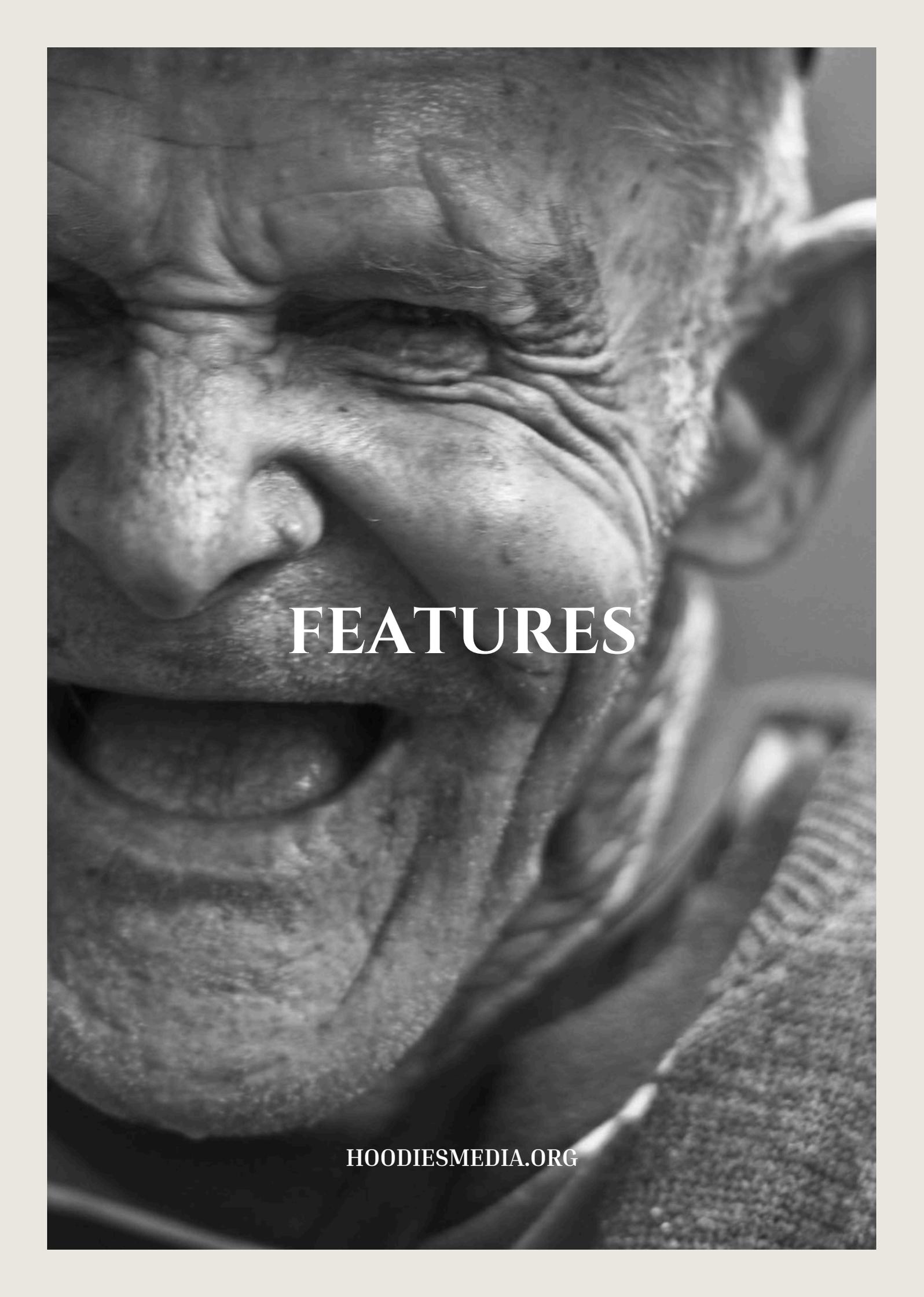


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FEATURES

HOODIESMEDIA.ORG



BREAKING NEWS

Guess who just showed up in China?

Well as Albo heads off to talk peace in Ukraine with the coalition of the willing, former Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews has turned up in China to shake hands with president Xi and to share the stage with Putin, who isn't so hot on peace in Ukraine and Kim Jong Un from a little place called North Korea! Now as albo said in the parliament Australia has had a representative at Chinese celebrations in the past most notably from the Libs BUT that wasn't when Russia was at war with an ally and Australia was planning to build submarines to protect ourselves from China!

Andrews may well be trying to get himself some kind of Ambassadorial role with the government and of course Nick 'taking the piss now' Reece and current Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan are all heading to China in coming months, but this move by Andrews was a mistake and the international coverage wont get Albo a meeting at the White House anytime soon and hey maybe that's the way they want to go, but this is a bad look even for Andrews and labor.



ALBO WANTS LONGER TERMS AND MORE MP'S

As we sit putting the finishing touches to Issue 25 of Hoodies Magazine we hear that Albo and his MP's are planning to make a few changes to the democratic system here in Australia.

The changes? Well the two big ones are, Longer terms in office and more electorates. Now if we take a step back here and stand with Albo just for a moment, the theory behind these ideas, which is what they are at the moment, is that with more electorates MP's can get to more people in their electorates. They can connect with more schools, more local sporting clubs and more local businesses, which is a great idea. The same for longer terms in office, the elected government would have longer to follow through on plans or policy and to offer real change to the country. That all seems fair and reasonable doesn't it? Ummm no.

When Bob Hawke was chugging beers and wearing his now famous Aussie jacket when Australia 2 won the Americas Cup he was more popular than god, but not even Bob could get the length of term in office extended for governments. Less than 35% of Australians voted yes to the idea at a referendum on giving governments for time in office. Now Albo may have a massive mandate in government today, but let's be real here, Albo won it by making preference deals with anyone with a pulse and anyone that couldn't stand the Libs which was indeed a great portion of the country. So to suggest anyone is going to drink what Albo is selling when it comes to changing the amount of time between drinks to elect a new government, tell him he's dreaming...

The same for having more electorates, I mean really? Come onnnn how many hands will these new MP's actually shake? This isn't about connecting with the community it's about creating more seats in areas that are already red and will simply see more red seats appear on the electoral map. If you will for a moment imagine the growth corridors or the high population areas or the areas of large land mass of Victoria being divided into more electorates what colour will they be come election time? Yes the Libs are useless but if you're a new home owner in a growth corridor who you gonna call? Well it ain't Susan Ley!

We already live with a broken democratic system and now under the guise of a so called progressive government we are hearing they want to push the boat further out for the sake of offering a better service to voters? Let's not sugar coat this one, this is Albo trying to once and for all rid himself of his competition and right now he might just pull it off.

Imagine if stupidity was a sound and the louder the sound the more ridiculous the idea. If we applied such a concept to the Victorian government machete bin campaign I suspect we'd all be deaf!

First up for me is who got the contract to make the bins? I mean they look more like clothing bins for a charity but this is Victoria and we all know that someone somewhere is getting their cut so who got the contract to make them? Not an unreasonable question, but if we push a little to find out, what do we find? The name of the company and those that own it have been suppressed by the state government and we can't find out, how weird! The bins have cost the tax payer around \$13 million so it's a decent contract for the manufacturer to land, but unfortunately for some unknown reason we cant find out who it was...again, how weird.

So not only do we not know who is making these bins and any supposed profits from their manufacture we have to ask, which machete wielding prick is actually going to hand theirs in? In Victoria and a good portion of the country at the moment people don't feel safe because we have adopted this policy called 'Catch and release'. Little wankers run around with their masks on, threaten members of the public in their homes or otherwise, cause damage, steal large amounts of what ever they can get their grubby little hands on and bugger off. Now not many of these pricks are that smart so they invariably get arrested, unless they're part of an organised crime gang and move to Dubai, but when they do get arrested they're taken before a magistrate who then invariably gives them bail and boom they're back on the streets again. Back on the streets to wield their machetes and what ever else they can threaten the public with. So it begs the question, why would they hand in their machetes? All is forgiven masked machete wielding arsehole, just drop that weapon in the nice blue bin outside the police station. I mean are we for real?

THE MOST EXPENSIVE & MOST USELESS BINS IN THE WORLD?



How on earth does the state government think this little \$13 million campaign is ever going to work? The answer isn't about having machete bins for little crims to drop their weapons in, the answer is zero tolerance. The answer is lock the little shits up. The answer is stop letting them out on bail so they can run home grab their machetes and hit the streets again! It's about hiring more prison guards, it's about building bigger jails, but it's also about offering pathways to genuine reform. It's not about facilitating drug use via pill testing or so called safe injecting rooms, it's about re-education, it's about offering career pathways and it's about calling bullshit on a state government that will say and do anything to maintain approval ratings!

Imagine what we could've spent \$13 million on in a state that is running wildly out of control when it comes to fiscal responsibility. Roads? Education? Trade? Housing? Anything but bins for machetes! Now we are never going to know the truth about how many machetes were actually handed in during this insane campaign, but isn't now a good time to ask what the hell is going on and when do we actually start implementing a zero tolerance policy rather than the current 'Catch and release' one?

People may get tired of me saying this again, but the bigger picture issue here, isn't about law and order the core of the issue is pandering to minority groups that represent votes for governments. Now labor will sell their own mothers for a vote but the Libs will only do it if it's ok with everyone else, regardless though a great portion of the decisions being made on our behalf, decisions that have profound impacts on our lives are being made not for our benefit but for votes ad that needs to stop.

With all that is happening in the world and with all the utter bullshit being fed to us as tax payers you'd have to suggest there is going to be a tipping point at some stage, but until then kick back and relax knowing mask wearing little arseholes can hand in their machetes via big blue bins we paid for!





IRAN

UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
Aşgabat

Tehran
Gorgān
Mashhad

Eşfahān
Bīrjand

AFGHANISTAN
Herāt
Kandahār

Shīrāz
Zāhedān
Bandar-e 'Abbās
Dammam
Doha
Dubai
Abu Dhabi
Gulf of Oman

LET'S TALK ABOUT IRAN

So it was Iran? Now I am in no way shape or form going to argue with ASIO, hello Mike if you're reading, but while we seem to be obsessed with protests of trans rights, bike lanes and Palestine we don't seem to have made very much noise about the fact that (according to ASIO) a foreign power committed several terrorist acts on Australian soil.

When the PM, Burgess and Penny Wong made the announcement about Iran being responsible for the attacks on the Jewish business and Synagogue there was indeed shock, but it all went away pretty quickly. The timing of the announcement was pretty close to Albo basically backing Palestine and then being castigated by Israel. The Albo announcement wasn't met with rainbows and unicorns out of the US either, virtue signalling was the call from Marco Rubio at the Whitehouse, so was it nice timing? Again who are we to criticise ASIO, but there's no doubt that Albo needed to play a card he didn't really want to.

The overarching issue though and despite what anyone thinks of the timing around the announcements terrorism has found its way to our shores and what exactly are we doing to prevent more of them?

The spook game is one not many of us understand and to be honest in many cases wouldn't want to understand, but it is an important part of our national security, but how did we not know sooner? How did we allow attacks to be carried out? And why has there not been a huge outcry since the announcement? Albo, Wong and Burgess were justifiably somber when they had their press conference and the removal of the Iranian ambassador was swift and brutal, but then what? Back in the shadows til next time?

When the September 11th attacks on the US took place they changed the world forever. Anyone that travelled post 9/11 would remember the level of security implemented right across the world as a result. Today we know if you go to an airport it will invariably take time to get through customs and even if you look harmless you could be stopped and searched. For the most part we get it because we know the reasoning behind it all, but how do we deal with Iran now? How do we look at security in Jewish businesses, in places of worship or in homes?

National security is vital in protecting the citizens of any country, but it's also an area of government we know least about. We simply have put our trust in Burgess and his team of intelligence officers, but what we do need is to make sure this isn't something that happens again. How that happens I suspect we will never know, but what we don't want is any attack or foiled attack to be used as political leverage for a government that has been embarrassed on the world stage.



To be honest, it's all just a bit sad now...

For weeks now protesters have taken to the streets of Australia for all sorts of reasons. Free Palestine, the rights of Trans people, women's rights, white supremacists, indigenous rights, environmental protection, LGBTQI rights...the list is long and some causes more worthy than others but August 31st was different because that was the day people who were proclaiming to be defending the Australian way of life are also taking to the streets.

In the lead up to August 31st these people were cast as right wing extremists by governments and the media, especially the ABC. They were labeled as people who are racist, who are homophobic bigots who perhaps don't believe in law, who are anti migration and anti Australian, people who see anyone different to them as a threat and people who believe Australia should just be for Australians. The Victorian Police minister went so far as to label anyone that protested...grubs

We did indeed see an element of the 'grub' at the protests, but what of the people who simply don't think that burning the Australian flag should be allowed? Something that we again saw happen. Are we as Australians, men and women who have fought and died for the future of the country, sports people and teams that have competed under the pride of the Australian flag now not allowed to wave one of the last remaining symbols of the lucky country? Are we going to see the Australian flag banned? And if we do then what? The aboriginal flag? Ok, but are we to have any kind of discussion about it or are we simply going to tolerate a once proud symbol removed? In the US Trump has made it illegal to burn the flag of the United States and so it should be. Yes we are aware of the offence it may cause to some people, but right now it is one of the last remaining symbols of the country once called lucky.

A person is holding a large Australian flag. The flag is white with a red seven-pointed star in the upper left corner and a green and gold wattle in the lower right. The person is wearing a black t-shirt and a white mesh face mask. They are holding a microphone in front of their mouth. The background is a light, textured surface.

Australia Day is now labelled as invasion day. A day many of our indigenous people feel is the day they saw their persecution begin, but we have failed to name another day to celebrate being Australian and we have failed to address issues faced by indigenous people via any kind of consensus. We celebrate all manner of multicultural festivals and communities but wave an Aussie flag outside of the Olympics or a major event and we should be ashamed?

Australia does indeed have a rich and proud multicultural heritage. In Melbourne places like Lygon street, Oakleigh and China town wouldn't exist without multiculturalism, but how have we allowed migration to get to the levels it has with no real plan for housing? Or how to maintain law and order? How have we allowed our own identity to be taken away from us for the sake of appeasing migrant populations who in some cases demand death to Australians and who represent votes for our reprehensible politicians.

There were as we say people who attended the rallies there to cause chaos but regardless does anyone else think it's all just bloody sad?

The CEO of Bunnings was interviewed on Melbourne radio this morning going through how bad crime and violence had become in their stores with Victoria coming out on top of the statistics, not a proud moment.

Home invasions a now regular occurrence, machetes now banned in Victoria because they had been wielded at too many people, cigarette shops fire bombed, supermarket and retail staff literally beaten doing their jobs, kids running rampant because bail laws have been nowhere near strong enough to deter them, small businesses being thrown to the wall and power prices with inflation continuing to climb for the sake of impossible net zero targets...and people are criticised for wanting to march in protest?

It all begs the question if mainstream media and governments are indeed going to suggest that protests are attended only by grubs, trouble makers and those only wanting to cause havoc what are we actually doing about the issues that are having profound impacts on the country?

It seems that anyone that takes to the streets not in support of Palestine or trans rights is a grub, so what are the options? We have a democratic system so easily manipulated we have governments in power with less than 35% of the popular vote and we have unaccountable councils continuing to jet off to far flung places barely relevant to anyone let alone people within the electorate.

What are the options here? A change in government? Storm the castle so to speak? More protests? Riots even? Do things get worse before they get better? No-one seems to be able to answer these questions, but the only real way to address these issues is to move away from clickbait headlines and quick fixes and actually plan for the future. A future that sees us at least try to become the lucky country once again.

A future that Hoodies media is a big part of.



the left & the right of it

Who do we believe in the media nowadays? Which TV news do we watch if any? Can the net be trusted? Can Sky news be trusted over the ABC? It's all very murky in the modern world, but it begs the question, what of common sense? What of authenticity and genuine accountability?

When Rupert Murdoch set up 'The Australian' in 1964 he wrote the first editorial part of which is below, but it gave insight into his founding principles of this new national newspaper....

"Here is Australia's first truly national newspaper. It is produced today because you want it; because the nation needs it. In these pages you will find the impartial information and the independent thinking that are essential to the further advance of our country. This paper is tied to no party, to no state, and has no chains of any kind. Its guide is faith in Australia and the country's future."

It all begs the question, what happened to the media? What happened to impartiality? To news and truth above all else? Now there are still many great journalists, writers and people within the media industry that do indeed uphold all that is true and right within the industry, but we cannot ignore the fact that they are for the most part divided between the right and the left.

Personally I listen, read and pay attention to all forms of media, TV, newspapers, magazines, podcasts, books and despite the fact that I have become a little tired of the right wing doomsday podcasts, I try to take in as much as I can. The reality though, as it has been for decades you have to take it all in and then make you're own judgements. There isn't one media outlet with all the answers despite the fact that some members of the Liberal party take Sky After dark as their bible.

On commercial radio the FM dial is all about a bit of fun and trying to play decent music, but over in AM land, well thats back to left v right. The Raf Epstein ABC V Tom Elliot 3AW battle in the mornings isn't actually about ratings anymore, it's about who can push their views further to one side of the spectrum, the ABC left and 3AW to the right. There is absolutely no middle ground on morning radio but why not? Is there no room for common sense broadcasting? Yes we all know that governments and advertisers are swayed by the stations that will present them in the best light, but isn't the truth out there anymore?



The bigger picture is if you're right wing you're watch sky and listen to 3AW if you're left wing you watch and listen to the ABC and if you're a conspiracy theorist, well you believe everything the internet tells you.

Rupert Murdoch has for decades been at the forefront of the media in this country and a great portion of the world, but when Murdoch began making his way in the world of the media, firstly print media he was, remarkably a left winger. A huge supporter of the Whitlam government Murdoch ran ads for Labor across his newspapers, but when Whitlam wouldn't play ball with the brutal Murdoch and when the opportunity arose, Murdoch demanded Whitlam be sacked, which he was. When Murdoch took over his father's operations he was grossly offended that he didn't receive the same right wing establishment support that his father did and for years he shied away from supporting right wing politics. However with Whitlam gone and with NewsCorp getting the backing of Thatcher in the UK it was right wing city for the Murdochs and well the rest is history.

Today we live in a world where the Murdoch press is in the right corner, Fairfax probably in the centre left and the ABC as far right as it can go without a royal commission and it all begs the question of, what of the real middle? What of the real common sense, authenticity and genuine accountability? Advertisers don't want to rock the boat so stick to what they know and who want, in their eyes, damage their brands or see them associated with anyone governments don't like, but with governments seemingly on the nose isn't it time for something to fill that middle ground? Something that does indeed give voice to real people with real issues?

Social media sites and the net have given rise to all manner of media outlets, Hoodies included, but a huge portion of them are again divided by the right and the left just much more extreme in their views, but again where's the middle ground? The opinions and common sense that has the ability to unite rather than divide?

What will it take to bring some global common sense to the media divide? Well firstly people who genuinely believe that change can be affected by offering the middle ground and then someone who thinks, like Murdoch did that there's money in it. Regardless though we have to start somewhere so why not Hoodies media? And as Steve Jobs once said, the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are often the ones that do.

THE HOODIES MAGAZINE
podcast



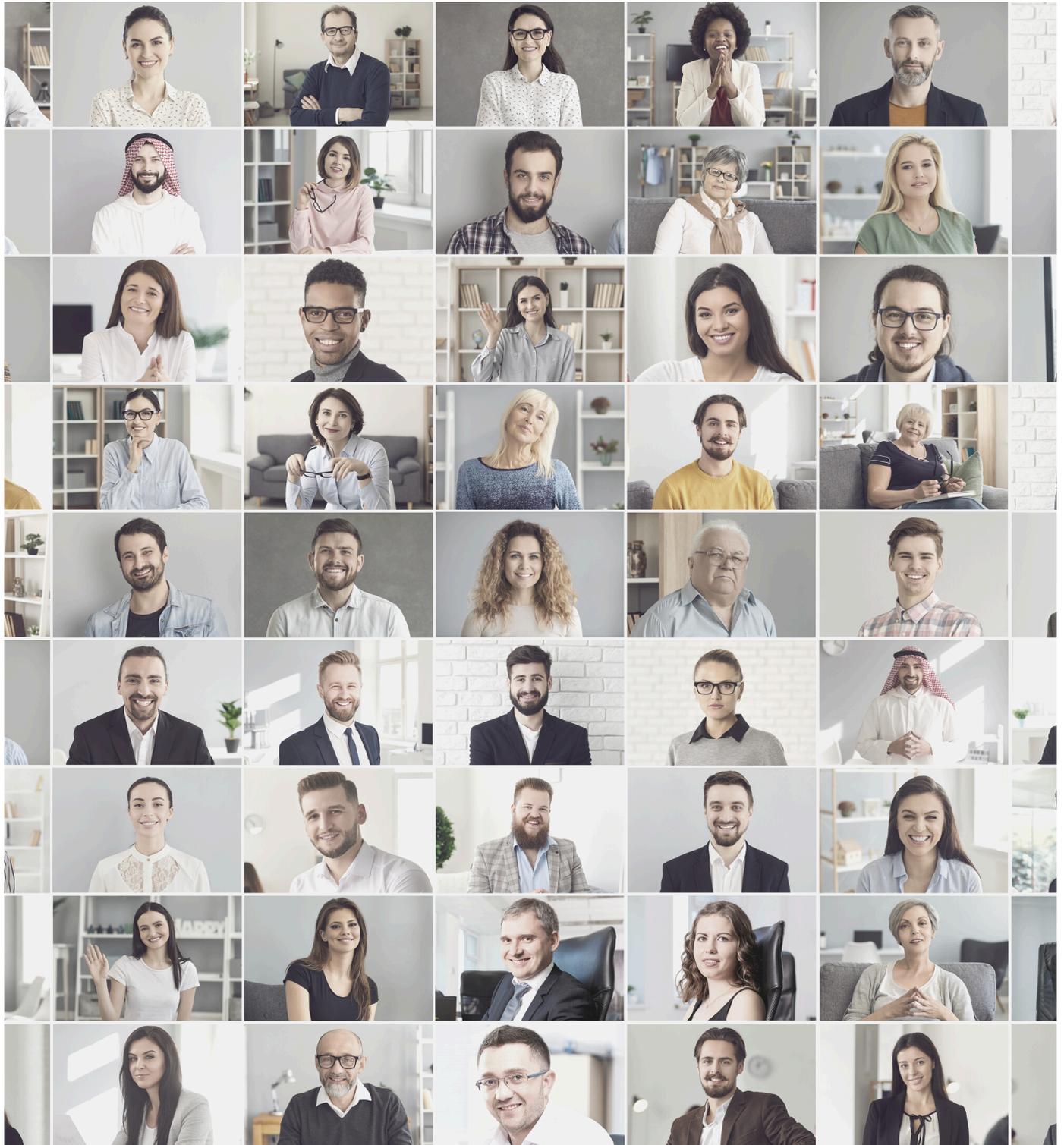
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WITH BEN LOGAN

THE POST



HOODIES

ISSUE 25

PEOPLE & OPINION

NET ZERO - AUSTRALIA'S FAVOURITE HOBBY

Net zero is the political equivalent of buying a treadmill in January. It looks impressive, costs a fortune, and after about two weeks it's gathering dust while you're back on the couch eating Doritos. Yet here we are, Australia, spending billions chasing this shiny, futuristic goal like a dog chasing its tail – except the dog looks happier and burns fewer taxpayer dollars.

We're told "renewables are the future." Well, sure. And kale smoothies were supposed to save us all from heart disease. Instead, we've just ended up with expensive energy, ugly wind turbines cluttering the horizon, and enough solar panels to cook an egg on, if only the sun agreed to shine on demand.

Let's start with wind farms. Politicians love to pose in front of them, pointing proudly at the spinning blades like they've just invented the concept of air. But when the wind isn't blowing? Well, tough luck. The country doesn't stop just because Mother Nature feels like a nap. Coal plants don't take holidays. Gas doesn't care if it's cloudy. But wind? Wind is about as reliable as a teenager promising to clean their room.

And solar? Ah yes, Australia's great love affair with rooftop panels. Fantastic idea – as long as you only need electricity during the day. Too bad the entire economy insists on running 24/7. Batteries, they say, will fix it. Sure – when we figure out how to build one that doesn't cost as much as a small island nation. For now, batteries are like a diet plan: great in theory, impossible to stick to, and always leaving you hungry again two hours later.

Meanwhile, we're bulldozing paddocks and covering them with solar farms, because apparently "saving the environment" means paving over it. Farmers are supposed to grow crops, but now they're told the future is harvesting sunshine. Maybe the cows can just eat photons.



And let's not forget the price tag. Billions in subsidies, rebates, and government grants to prop up renewables that still can't pull their own weight. It's like paying a band to perform at your wedding, only to have them show up with no instruments and demand you buy them guitars. Meanwhile, the coal and gas industries – you know, the ones that actually keep the lights on – get treated like the villain in a Marvel movie.

The hypocrisy is almost impressive. Politicians fly to climate conferences on private jets to tell ordinary Australians they need to tighten their belts, turn down the air con, and maybe consider riding a bike to work. These are the same folks who wouldn't know what a public bus looks like if it ran over them.

The promise of net zero by 2050 is the greatest political scam since “there will be no carbon tax under a government I lead.” It's always just far enough away that no one in power has to actually deal with it. By the time the bill comes due, they'll be retired, collecting speeches fees in London, or quietly living in Tuscany. Meanwhile, you'll be sitting in the dark during another blackout, wondering if at least your suffering counts as an “emissions reduction.”

Then there's electric cars. Remember when they said EVs would “end the weekend”? Turns out, they're right – at least for anyone trying to drive further than the nearest Woolies carpark. Charging takes hours, the batteries degrade faster than an iPhone, and the price tag? Let's just say you could buy a perfectly good ute, a boat, and still have enough change left over for a lifetime supply of petrol. Yet, somehow, you're a climate criminal if you prefer a car that can actually tow your trailer without having a panic attack halfway up the Hume.

And who benefits most from this green gold rush? Not you. Not me. It's the consultants, the bureaucrats, the multinational companies selling overpriced panels and batteries made in China with coal power. That's right: to save the planet from coal, we're buying solar panels made in coal-fired factories on the other side of the world. Genius.

Let's not forget the irony that Australia contributes about 1% of global emissions. One percent. China builds that in coal plants every Tuesday before breakfast. Yet we're supposed to destroy our industries, kill off reliable energy, and make life more expensive – all so Canberra can say we're “doing our bit.” It's like bailing out a sinking cruise ship with a thimble. Admirable, maybe. Effective? Absolutely not.

Here's the kicker: the people pushing hardest for net zero are the same ones least affected by it. Academics, inner-city activists, and politicians in comfortable offices. They'll still have their lattes, their iPhones, their air conditioning. It's the tradies, the farmers, the truckies, and the pensioners who get slapped with higher bills and unreliable power. Net zero doesn't mean “no emissions.” It means “zero fun for you.” So let's call it for what it is: an expensive, feel-good exercise in political theatre. A giant green vanity project. If we really wanted to save the planet, we'd focus on practical solutions – cleaner coal, nuclear power, natural gas – instead of betting the farm on technologies that can't keep the lights on without subsidies the size of the federal budget.

Net zero? Please. The only thing hitting zero will be your bank balance.

Well with Snoop Dog about to hit Melbourne even if the AFL ban a player for a homophobic slur and still have him play guess who's back? Back again? Kennett's back, back again...well it depends who you ask, but if the liberal party of Victoria is so bereft of talent that any of them are suggesting they go back to Jeff, well best we suit up for four more years of Jacinta Alan and her team of left wingers!

What is going on down at Liberal Party HQ? It used to be a question asked just of the state party, but we may as well chuck in the federal lot in as well because well unless they can get themselves together they run the very real risk of being unelectable for a generation. I have an teenage daughter who was educated very well and is now at Uni. She is a bright young woman but there is no way on earth she will ever vote Liberal. If she becomes the lawyer she wants to be maybe she will in a decade or so, but not at the next election.

See the Libs have absolutely no cut through to the next generation of voters. Nicole Werner the newbie amongst the state libs is possibly the only one within the party that understands how social media works and posts regularly across platforms like Tik Tok and Instagram. The rest of them though seem to think that cups of tea with old ladies and hitting the local sporting club will get them back into office when it simply won't.

The libs need a plan and while net zero is the stuff of fairy tales the libs can't just say they're abandoning it as soon as they get back in without a plan of their own. The same for renewables, they need a plan that reduces power bills but keeps the inner city greenie/progressives happy, although they're never happy really.

What the Libs can't do though is go back to their old ways and sure as hell not go back to Jeff! My name is Jeff...? That campaign would be like shooting fish in a barrel. It's the same with the likes of Kroger, Abbott, Bolt, Credlin and so on...it is time to put the dinosaurs to bed and move on with some new blood or at least some new faces!



ARE THE LIBS ON THE BRINK OF THE END?

**FOR
GOD'S
SAKE
DON'T
BRING
BACK
JEFF!**

As some people know I was in fact a member of the Liberal party during covid, but upon hearing we shouldn't think we can change politics from them state director I decided a move into the media would be a better idea, but a key thing I did learn from the reading I did was that freedom of the individual was at the core of liberal party values. A core value that for some unknown reason the libs never bring up in public. You never hear it mentioned during campaigns and we sure as hell didn't hear it mentioned during covid, but why? Isn't freedom something people want at the moment? Less government intervention in their lives? The right to live your life the way you choose?

Labor have the country stitched up with their progressive and reformist agenda. Labor are making Australia great again by bringing in migrant workers to help build homes? Labor are increasing the minimum wage to help get small businesses moving? They're building infrastructure with proper budgets and detailed accounting practices that don't run over budget? Bike lanes in the CBD, train lines to where ever...building a future for all Australians! Now I say all that with a little tongue in cheek humour but they are doing stuff and the progressives love it but where are the libs? They're still working out if it's ok with everyone in the party that they voice an opinion publicly!

The libs had a line in the sand moment when John pesutto was leader. At the state conference there were repeated shouts of Shame Shame Shame! Pesutto being the nice man that he is let it all slide, but if the party and JP had wanted to stamp out the factional fighting there and then I would've called halt to the meeting and had the culprits of the yelling dragged out of the conference by their heads if they refused to leave. If JP had done that, if he had sent a message to the party of tow the line or get out the party would be in a much stronger position than it is today.

Dutton tried to be the hammer the party needed in the federal election campaign but while he could deliver the hammer he didn't have the personality or charisma to then whack labor into its place. Is Susan Ley the next PM of Australia, well the irony for the libs would be astounding but it's highly unlikely so they need a leader that can wake the party up and get them back on track to maybe not being the next government but at least being a credible opposition.

The libs need fresh faces and fresh ideas, but while Sky and the idea of Jeff Kennett making a comeback are at the forefront of their thinking best buckle up for a few more years of Albo and Allan.

A LETTER FROM THE PREMIER TO THE MINIONS OF VICTORIA

Recently the premier of Victoria was in Ballarat for a conference of sorts on farming and my my didn't she get a few boos from the maddening crowd. So much so that she and the PM were chased out of town by pursuing tractors!

Now the Premier tried and failed to give said farmers a speech from the heart and explain why she felt their pain. So we thought we'd give you the speech from the Premier that the farmers didn't get to hear. A speech that wasn't just for farmers though, it was for all Victorians and a reminder of the lengths the Allan Labor government will go to to support Victorians in their hours of need.

My fellow Victorians...

Today my government and I stand alongside you and feel your pain. We know times are tough in rural and regional parts of Australia and we get it. So to help our farmers we're not going to bother farmers anymore with letters or emails about asking permission to come onto their land and build towers to supposedly cut back emissions, no! We're just going to come onto their land and start building because we know that despite imposing massive fines on farmers if they do stand in our way that in the long run, like in another 50 or so years power prices will come down, that's how we're helping farmers!

It's not just farmers we're helping, we're helping future generations of victorians by not having budgets for infrastructure projects! These projects aren't and cannot be limited by financial whims or cost of goods! Victoria needs trains! It needs trains to the places we put all the migrants! These are important projects and if the state debt gets to \$500 billion it would be worth it on election day seeing all those happy migrant voters ticking the red box.



We have taken a stand on crime as well. We have made it much much easier for teenage criminals to hand in their machetes. Teenagers who will no doubt realise the error of their ways when they see the blue machete bins out the front of police stations and simply drop their weapons in! These bins that cost \$13 million will make the difference to home invasions we've been lacking. We will update the community soon as to where Victorians can hand in their cooking knives, rolling pins, garden tools, cutlery and anything else pointy that could be used as a weapon during home invasions, car jackings, retail theft or muggings. The cost of those bins also to be placed outside police stations won't be revealed neither will the contractor who is building them because the important thing is to save lives. That's what we're doing here, we're saving lives...what? Oh I'm so sorry that's the wrong speech...

Where was I? Sorry...oh yes farmers, we will be developing a new tax on farmers, a tax that will come back to farmers ten times over in their next life. We will from November 1st be taxing farmers for having any kind of animal on their property. The tax will have scale, so for small animals, like dogs the tax will be \$100 right up to \$1000 per cow. We feel that with cows causing methane, a major factor in emissions, that the less cows a farmer has the better for all of us. Yes the tax is high, but it will encourage farmers to cut back on the number of animals they have on their properties and in turn reduce the amount of back breaking work the farmers have to do while helping the environment.

EV's are a welcome replacement to petrol powered cars right across the state and we are working with energy companies to install more charging stations for EV owners, but while the EV is going to be moving good and products around the country we feel it is time for the virtue signalling rich person to pay the piper. So from November 1st EV's will incur a levy of 25% of the value of the car at time of purchase. So you will buy your EV for \$45,000, pay your insurance and rego and then pay another 25% of that purchase price to the government. We are doing this to make our roads safe and to build those much needed charging stations.

For all the problem gamblers out there, we have decided not to reform the gambling industry because we feel it's not time to cut back on the revenue the state needs, instead we are teaming up with the AFL to allow gambling ads to be put up in schools. Gambling ads will now have to be shown at all assemblies and the logo of the AFL approved betting agency to appear on all school certificates and published school materials. This decision wasn't taken lightly and we are making sure that all gambling ads shown in schools will also come with a warning that gambling can be addictive and if it is an issue to seek help from someone who we don't know, not us though we don't know where you or the kids would find such an organisation. In fact if you are a problem gambler just keep going, we really need the money.

Finally we are making changes to childcare in Victoria and have decided we're going to have all children requiring child minding to be dropped off at the zoo everyday. Now we can't afford to employ anyone to look after them so it'll be a bit hit and miss when it comes to animals getting hold of them, but the animals are a better bet than the pedos that have been looking after kids of late!

Thank you all so much for being here, thank you for listening and may Ganesh bless our farmers!

A red and grey puffer jacket is hanging on a stone wall. The jacket is tied with ropes. In the background, a stone plaque is visible with the year '1908' and some other text that is partially obscured. The overall scene is dimly lit, giving it a historical or rustic feel.

EVERYONE HAS A PLAN TIL THEY GET THEIR NEW RATES BILL

NOT MIKE TYSON

*make sure you pay your rates beacsue without rates
how will coincillors go on overseas trips and learn
how to run a council?*

features

albo is still on with the virtue signalling

WORD & MUSIC BY BORIS THE COW

Opening scene of the long awaited movie, 'Albo strikes back' sequel to the blockbuster, 'Albo does Australia!'

It's winters day in July 2025 and Albo is walking through the Lodge in his QANTAS approved slippers and PJ's left over from yet another long haul flight. He looks out over the gardens of the Lodge as he sips his honey and lemon tea and turns to a news article from the ABC that shows thousands of people marching across the Sydney harbour bridge in support of Palestine. He pauses to watch and pulls out his mobile.

"Penny! We need to get onboard with this Palestine thing! Yes I know we've already done a fair bit of virtue signalling, but it's time to go big! It's time to recognise Palestine!"

He hangs up the phone and smiles to himself quietly repeating the words... three more years, three more years...

Now ok I don't know if Albo drinks tea, but he sure as hell flies QANTAS and he likes votes so here's the issue...again! In cricket catches win matches, in politics causes win elections and woah Albo is King of jumping on the band wagon of causes!

For the wokes amongst us and who cant see past their own inane opinions, no one is saying lives in the Middle East don't matter, they do, no one wants war, well unless you're the Taliban then you don't really care, but the point is no one in their right mind wants to see people suffer in the middle east, but what has happened is that the whole thing has become a political football for Albo to get cheap votes on.

Now, this isn't the first time round for Albo and his virtue signalling, I mean he's made political fodder out of; immigration, the environment, energy prices, supermarket price gouging, indigenous affairs, it's quite a list. He even went to Ballarat recently and said he wasn't going to bullshit anyone, much to the amazement of the crowd who thought his ability to bullshit was written in to his job description! Albo knows how to stir up popularity for a cause, but aren't we all a bit over it?

Over in South Australia they've just made it a thing that political parties can't root the system of political donations. On the surface thats a good thing, but dig a bit deeper and what they're really doing is making sure we can't have smaller parties rising up to try and take on the heavy weights of the ALP and the coalition. The SA government are out and about saying we are cleaning up politics and the scams, blah blah blah, when really what they're doing is ridding themselves of any kind of opposition.

Migration is today a huge issue, mainly because we are neck deep in housing crisis. There simply aren't enough homes for people to live in, but what do Labor keep doing? Allowing more people in, but criticise them for doin g so and guess what? You're an anti immigration bigot! How dare you not want people from war torn countries to come and live here! These people simply want homes, to feel like the belong and to have opportunities they wouldn't have anywhere else in the world...the same as Australians feel, but how dare we want the same things for Aussies.

The big one at the moment though is farmers being fined for not allowing energy companies onto their land to have power lines or towers for renewable energy installed. Now, I think we have a responsibility to look after the planet, do our bit in our life times, but not at the cost of people going without heating and or cooling or paying insane prices for energy or seeing farmer get belted by governments for not allowing their land to be used for these renewable projects that may or may not make a difference! The whole net zero thing is breathtakingly ridiculous. Australia has 28 million people and we are selling gas and minerals to other countries for them to use while we have to listen and abide by the crap that the world will be a better place if we get to net zero? I'm sorry, what about India? China? The US? Countries with billions of people living in them and we are stupid enough or arrogant enough to suggest our net zero policy is going to change the world? Come onnnnn... enough with the virtue signalling and lets get real!

Albo genuinely had a mandate for change when he won the last election, one where he had the opportunity to change the country for the better, but instead it's just more pandering to minorities that undermine the unity of the country. Virtue signalling that does nothing to advance the country, does nothing to reduce the cost of energy, that does very little to tame inflation, that does sweet FA for small business and does absolutely nothing to help people really struggling with cost of living. Apparently Albo isn't here to bullshit anyone, but right now that's all we're hearing.

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the soul
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The Writer's festival that wasn't



WRITER

In August 2025, the Bendigo Writers Festival, usually a warm and uncontroversial celebration of literature in regional Victoria, became the unlikely centre of a national debate on free speech, prejudice, and the dangers of censorship. What should have been a showcase of ideas turned into a cautionary tale of how quickly cultural institutions can collapse when they decide to police the words of the very people they invite to speak. The controversy began when festival organisers, in conjunction with La Trobe University, circulated a code of conduct to participants. On the surface, the guidelines seemed standard enough—calls for civility, respect, and safety. But buried within the language were clauses that alarmed many of the attending writers. Authors were instructed to avoid language that might be considered inflammatory or divisive, and to adhere to definitions of antisemitism and Islamophobia set out by the university's Anti-Racism Plan. One particular clause, echoing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition, suggested that criticism of Zionism could be considered a form of antisemitism because, for "most, but not all Jewish Australians, Zionism is a core part of their identity." This wording struck many as an attempt to shut down legitimate political discussion—particularly about Israel's ongoing war in Gaza.

The response from writers was swift and uncompromising. Palestinian-Australian novelist Randa Abdel-Fattah, along with a host of other prominent authors including Claire G. Coleman and Evelyn Araluen, announced they would no longer participate. They argued the code was a blatant attempt to muzzle discussion on issues of genocide, colonialism, and injustice. Abdel-Fattah described the move as forcing writers to self-censor in exchange for the privilege of being heard. Coleman went further, declaring that she "cannot appear at a festival that is attempting to compel or censor my speech." Within days, over fifty writers and moderators had withdrawn, gutting the festival's program and forcing the cancellation of its gala opening.

Organisers and sponsors defended their actions as a matter of “safety.” They claimed the code was designed to ensure respectful dialogue, not to silence anyone. But to the writers who walked away, the distinction was meaningless. Literature, after all, has never been about making people feel comfortable. It exists precisely to provoke, to unsettle, to ask questions that polite society prefers to avoid. When a festival claims to celebrate literature but simultaneously sets boundaries on what can be said, it undermines the very reason such festivals exist.

Critics from outside the festival echoed these concerns. Unions such as the NTEU and MEAA condemned the code as a threat to free expression. Cultural commentators argued that risk-management language was being weaponised to neutralise dissent. Michael Bradley, writing in Crikey, warned that codes of conduct like this become “tools to silence dissent,” often under the guise of protecting minorities but in reality protecting institutions from controversy. Festival founder Rosemary Sorensen, who had stepped away from organising several years ago, called the move an “authoritarian abuse of power,” suggesting that the festival she once nurtured had lost sight of its purpose.

What made the episode particularly damaging was that the silenced voices were not abstract or hypothetical. They were the very people whose perspectives the festival most urgently needed. First Nations writers, Palestinian Australians, and others who have spent years challenging power through literature were suddenly being told that their truths were too risky, too offensive, too dangerous for a public audience. In silencing them, the festival inadvertently proved their point: censorship is not about safety, it is about erasure.

The irony is that this kind of overreach destroys festivals from within. Bendigo’s program was left in tatters, its credibility shaken, its audiences robbed of the conversations they had come to hear. Instead of being remembered for its literature, 2025’s festival will be remembered as the year it censored itself into irrelevance. The wider lesson is clear: once institutions begin drawing arbitrary lines around what can and cannot be said, they alienate not only writers but also readers, and they hollow out the trust that makes cultural life possible.

Globally, the episode fits into a worrying trend. Around the world, writers are finding themselves under pressure—whether from authoritarian governments, university administrators, or cultural gatekeepers—to temper their words. Yet, as authors like Elif Shafak have argued, literature has always been a form of resistance. Its power lies precisely in its ability to illuminate injustice, to preserve memory, and to imagine alternatives to the world as it is. A sanitised literature, one that avoids discomfort for fear of offending, ceases to be literature at all. It becomes marketing copy, stripped of vitality.

This is why censorship, however well-intentioned, is always corrosive. It erodes trust in cultural institutions, silences marginalised perspectives, and suffocates the intellectual vitality that festivals claim to champion. When every panel discussion is smoothed down to a safe consensus, when every writer is told to self-edit before opening their mouth, the public is left with nothing but platitudes. The most urgent stories—those of displacement, colonisation, oppression—are precisely the ones most likely to fall afoul of bureaucratic definitions of “offensive” speech.

The Bendigo Writers Festival did not collapse because writers were too unruly or because the issues they wanted to discuss were too divisive. It collapsed because its organisers failed to recognise that the true danger lies not in hearing uncomfortable truths but in silencing them. Writers do not exist to make audiences or institutions feel safe; they exist to tell the stories that matter, no matter how inconvenient. By forgetting that, the festival traded away its soul.

At a time when authoritarianism is rising and the space for free thought is shrinking, the lesson could not be more urgent. Censorship, however it is dressed up, does not protect us. It weakens us. And if festivals, universities, and cultural organisations do not resist the temptation to sanitise, they risk losing the very thing that makes them worthwhile: the courage to host the stories that challenge us most.



welcome to the world of Sotheby's

A world where art, cars and some of the most precious and valued things in the world fall under the hammer of one the worlds best auction houses...a world where money is no object and where everything has a price...welcome to Sotheby's



I often think I'm a rich person trapped in a poor person's body because despite my somewhat decrepit and disheveled appearance I'd like to have nice things. Despite wanting to have nice things and being trapped in the body of a poor person the reality is we have more animals than Noah, we don't like cleaning and our garden is an overgrown haven for local wildlife...the bottom line we don't really deserve nice things because if we did have them, well they'd end up looking like they were stolen.

So as much as we as a family don't deserve nice things because we'd struggle to look after them properly it doesn't stop me, the rich person trapped in the body of a poor person from looking over at those who do have nice, shiny and expensive things. Don't get me wrong here I can't stand the establishment and if we lived anywhere remotely posh I'd more than likely end up in jail because I'd driven my five tonne mega ute at the local do gooders Merc or Roller because they had asked me to put my bins out the right way so I am no real fan of the posh, but I do look at the Sotheby's auctions and wonder what I would buy if money was no object.

Sotheby's are one of the great auction houses of the world, they sell art, antiques and cars that take your breath away, well if you're a car person that is. There are a couple of things about a Sotheby's auction that make you think 1) There are people in this world that have a lot of money and 2) Everything has a price. Now I know that there will be people thinking that the prices paid for some of the Sotheby's pieces are obscene and that people shouldn't have that much money and blah blah blah, but they do so get over it! When you think it about though and despite what ever kind of negativity people may have around the rich and these auctions, the people buying these items are actually preserving history or parts of it.

The great master works of Monet, Rembrandt, Picasso, Cezanne et al are often seen coming up for auction at prices that are extraordinary and you sort of get it because of their history but when you see the works of Jean Michel Basquiat sell for more than a hundred million dollars you do raise an eye brow. Not because Basquiat isn't worth it, but because of how it began for the artist. A man who was a graffiti artist and then thrust onto the global stage by circumstance and talent.

When it comes to cars, well they're unbelievable. Sadly for the modern car owner where you press a button and the car tells you how to drive and where to go and of course make very little noise, these cars are mostly brute force, the smell of petrol and sounds that make you feel like you're alive. It is true that not all of the cars sold at Sotheby's get driven that often, but they are a reminder that there was a time when humans built extraordinary things that made us feel alive.

When it comes to price on some the cars sold at Sotheby's the most ever paid for one was \$143 million USD, the car was a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR 'Uhlenhaut' Coupe. Before that it was the famed 1962 Ferrari 250GTO for \$48 million. So as we say there are people with a lot of money out there, but again we are seeing art in cars and are in general preserved for the sake of soul. Yes ok in most cases these auctioned pieces will go into private collections and not seen by the general public, but it's still important to know they are preserved and cared for.

The boyhood car of my dreams was the 1990 Ferrari F40, one of which recently sold for approximately \$4 million USD. It wasn't as much as the GTO, but if I did ever get to own an F40 I'd be adopting the same approach to it as Pink Floyd drummer Nick mason has had with his 250 GTO, it was made to be driven!

To appreciate the Sotheby's auctions you have to put aside the fact that some people have more money than god and if you can do that then you'll understand that despite the cost there are things in this world worth preserving at any cost. For me, the rich person trapped in the poor person's body, I'm a regular at the Fox car Museum where there's no chance of me getting anything dirty!



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WOULD I SPEND \$350 TO SEE OASIS?



If I had a spare \$350 to go to Oasis when they hit Melbourne would I go? Hmm I just don't know. I was a bit of an Oasis fan back in the day and always thought their antics were perfectly anti establishment but are they worth it nowadays?

For years Oasis, or should I say the Brothers Gallagher have been at each other throats for one reason or another swearing they'd never play together again, well until someone came along with a pile of money bigger than any pile of coke they could jam up their noses back in the day and now it's happened. They have played gigs in the UK and are currently in North America where crowds have been muted in their response to the songs of yesteryear. In the UK however thousands of 40 pluses have been jumping up and down in what can only be described as mosh pits at their concerts.

I was never a fan of the over crowded bar, night club or concert when I was a younger man. I did attend the now legendary concert 'Australian Made' at the old Olympic park decades ago where INXS, Jimmy Barnes, The Mental and a host of other iconic Aussie bands played but apart from that I was I'll sit in my seat thanks and please don't touch me. Jump forward two decades and I'm not going into a mosh pit with a bunch of middle aged people to jump up and down for a few hours while Liam and Noel play on stage.

The songs of Oasis aren't as iconic as their major influence the Beatles, but their songs like many of varying generations give us reference points for our lives. Roll with it, Stop crying your heart out, Wonderwall, Go let it out, Rock n Roll star and so on all songs we can say, hey I remember when I heard that I was...but again would I go? I still don't know.



When Paul McCartney last came to Australia it was probably for the last time and well he's a Beatle and a genius so people did stand and jump around, not to the same level UK crowds have been doing at Oasis gigs, but stand none the less. The same for the Rolling Stones, the Stones are, the Stones, an iconic band that still remarkably has a good portion of its members still alive. Can we just ask how is Keith still alive? I mean god bless him, but wow. Anyway the point is we pay the money for the icons on their last hurrah, but do Oasis fall in the same category?

Fans of Oasis will say they will pay what ever it costs to see the lads from Manchester and that's understandable but for acts charging upwards of \$300 a ticket and that aren't icons (sorry but it's true) the show needs to be spectacular. Take the recent Taylor Swift concerts and the Duo Lipa gigs both were arena spectacles and it'll be the same when the K pop bands come to Australia. Live music in big venues is now about a real show or being an icon.

Oasis unquestionably have their place in the history of modern music assured, but I won't look back in anger if I miss the lads when they hit Australian shores later this year. To all the 40 and 50 year olds in the mosh pits enjoy but remember the concert will probably go well past the time we're now normally in bed!

What if it's real love and not fake?



I am a massive NFL fan and I can only hope that the Detroit Lions win the Super Bowl this year, but what is unquestionably true for the upcoming season is that we are going to see a lot more of Taylor Swift at NFL games. Why? Because she's now engaged to one of the games great Tight ends in Travis Kelce.

Now anyone who holds themselves up to be a true NFL fan can't stand the regular shots of tay tay in the crowd, but suck it up princesses because the NFL knows how to run the biggest sporting organisation on the planet and tay tay is a big part of it.

Travis Kelce plays for the Kansas City Chiefs who in the modern era have won three super bowls thanks in part to the plays made by one Travis Kelce. Kelce took over the mantle as the games best Tight End after the retirement of New England patriot and Tampa Bay legend Rob Gronkowski and with this possible being Kelce's last year of playing the NFL are going to make the most of Tay Tay watching her future husband try and win it all again.

It was indeed a frustration to some NFL fans to see Taylor Swift in the corporate every Chiefs game, but the NFL saw a major increase in viewership when Swift was at the games. To the NFL the Swift Kelce union is a football match made in heaven. Swift wore a tailor made coat to a game during the season and the woman who made it? Flooded with orders for the same coat. The NFL aren't stupid so when CEO of the NFL, Roger Goodell was seen talking to Swift at a game in a corporate box it's hard not to imagine they were talking business.

There are all sorts of rumours about the Kelce and Swift union. It's all a deal to make them both wealthy and more famous some will say or it's all a ploy to make him a movie star blah blah blah when the reality is these are two highly successful people making hay while the sun shines and why shouldn't they?!

When Swift showed up on the podcast Travis does with his retired NFL legend brother Jason the paid had never had so many listeners/viewers. So while the world casts all kinds of theories as to why they're together if you wanted to be brutal she actually doesn't need him, it's more like he's become more famous because of her. Could it be they're just in love? God help us! Imagine if they were just two successful people in love?!

What will the NFL do with their new found fan base with the Swifties? Nothing has been announced by the NFL as a colab with Swift, but the Chiefs have seen a rise in Kelce shirt sales and she's a ratings winner so you'd think Swift and her people will be asking for something soon, but what it is who knows. The obvious cross over with the NFL and Swift would be that she performs at the Super Bowl half time show, but at this stage that may be Dua Lipa so it remains to be seen.

Whatever the NFL, Swift and Kelce come up with as a colab it will unquestionably make all them all lots of money and see the NFL take an even bigger step away from the competition as the most successful sporting organisation on the planet and the irony? In a world of secret men's business, in a world dominated by men in power, in a sporting organisation run by men the person that could see them have unparalleled success is a woman!

Let's go Lions!



Hoodies - different

Time to work

smarter at Opera

Australia

When I was 15 I went to see Bizet's Carmen at the state theatre here in Melbourne. The production was put on by the then Australian Opera and from the moment the orchestra struck it's first chord I was hooked. I can't explain why I had this love of opera from the age of 15, but it felt like home. The music resonated with me, I was fascinated by the singing and the stories sometimes wildly unbelievable were ones I followed with great interest.

After hearing my first opera I started singing lessons and when I was 22 found myself two professional singing gigs, one with the State Opera of South Australia, the other with the now long gone, Victoria State Opera. The VSO as it was referred to was a breeding ground for the countries best singers, singers who went onto amazing careers both here in Australia and overseas. It was a devastating blow to the Melbourne Opera scene when it bit the dust in the mid 1990's and really despite the arrival of Melbourne Opera and Victorian Opera the opera in Victoria has never been the same. Yes the VSO was from a different era and time, but there was something very special about that opera company.

One of the biggest influences in my life as a person, as a singer and as a professional was the late great John Dingle. John was the chorus master of the VSO and never was there or will there be again a man who could cause fear and love in one person as much as John could. John was a brilliant pianist, musician and human and not only taught me the aforementioned things but also gave me my love of Puccini. John was one of the ket reasons the VSO was what it was. His passing left a hole in all our hearts and one that will never be replaced.

Opera

The VSO was opera, it was heart on the sleeve love, anger, frustration, booze, sex, late nights, parties, professionalism, gossip, bad decisions and good but an underlying sense of passion and total commitment to the craft. Having been out of the opera scene for 20 plus years it's hard to know if the 'opera' still remains but if the news headlines and coming and goings at the National company, Opera Australia are anything to go by you would think perhaps not.

A number of years ago I tired and failed to run a music events company. I thought then that opera should have it's place in amongst modern music but I failed to realise that not everyone likes opera and or classical music and there is sure as hell very little money in it. I tired in vain to put concerts on that were too clever for their own good and lost everything. I lost friends, money and any kind of connection to the world of opera in this country and for a long time it has been heartbreaking but it was also a wake up call, that there is a reason why opera companies and classical music companies are so heavily funded by governments and wealthy private supporters.

Opera forever has been the a musical genre backed by the elite, without the support of wealthy families in the 18th century it would never have survived as an art form and the same is true today, but while government funding and private support is now vital to the support of the arts the opera companies in particular have done very little to at least try and make their own way.

I know from first hand experience how hard it is to have any kind of success in the opera and classical music world unless you're Andrea Bocelli or Andre Rieu, neither of who are anywhere near elite classical performers, but while it is hard to get bums on seats at the opera, opera companies especially Opera Australia have failed to understand that they do have everything they need in their own hands. Opera is life, especially when it comes to the works of Puccini, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Cilea and Giordano. The works of these composers are all about real life, real emotions and things people can relate to.

if you can read this - kiss my ass

Opera

The costs of putting on staged opera are huge, but it's about working smarter not harder. Opera Australia has started putting on musicals like Phantom and Miss Saigon, both once massive money spinners, but now not quite the crowd pleasers they were. So as much as OA has tried to get bums on seats via musicals it's now time to start connecting with newer audiences via more traditional means. That doesn't mean compromising on the standard of singers or the productions, but it means that OA need to start bringing in new directors, new conductors and singers who are connected to the next generation of audiences.

It also means we don't need or really want overseas creatives. The reality of the Australian arts professional is that if yo want a career in opera specifically you have to go overseas. It is true the greatest opera houses are overseas, but it is time to bring back our home grown talent and work out ways to have them here rather than bringing in people who aren't the committed to the home grown product.

It is very easy to sit in judgement outside the walls of a company and say they should do this or that, but if Opera Australia continues to push down the musical route and use it as their only means of genuine revenue then the art form itself will die. Yes it is extremely difficult to make any kind of money in the arts world, but the national company needs to bring itself into the modern era and also start doing real partnerships deals with companies who can increase their revenue.

Opera is life and whether or not you have been to a live opera it is an genre of music that gives us genuine connection to our souls and right now more than ever we as humanity need to be connected to our souls.

where is the love?



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AMERICA'S TEAM

THE DALLAS COWBOYS
ON NETFLIX

They are one of the biggest sporting organisations on the planet but the Dallas Cowboys haven't won a Superbowl for 30 years...is it time for Jerry Jones, their owner to finally bow out? A new Netflix Documentary tells the story of America's team



JERRY JONES

The new Netflix Documentary on the Dallas cowboys gave us insights into the game of American Football unlike many others, but it also had me coming away asking is Jerry Jones one of the smartest businessmen in the world or is he something else entirely.

The Dallas Cowboys are often referred to as 'America's team', well commentators and Cowboys fans call them that, other fans call them other things. The Cowboys though are without doubt one of the most recognisable NFL teams on the planet and as such are a multi billion dollar empire, an empire built by one man, Jerry Jones.

Jones is an oil man and a ruthless one. He makes no secret of the fact that he pretty much bet everything he had on one oil well being a liquid gold mine and when it did become his biggest pay day he went and bought the Cowboys. Without the oil there wouldn't have been the Cowboys we know today and without Jerry the NFL wouldn't be the organisation we know today. Jones is all about the Cowboys, he lives it, he breathes it but having watched all the episodes of the Netflix series I don't know if I like him nor do I know if he's not a misogynistic old git who only sees Jerry's way. What I think is fairly irrelevant because the Cowboys have been Superbowl champions and he's made them what they are, but more recently the Cowboys are a bit like Carlton here in the AFL, all promise and no delivery.

When Jones bought the Cowboys they weren't much to write home about, they had had a modicum of success but with the arrival of the generational talent in Troy Aikman and the appointment of Jimmy Johnson as head coach things were looking up. When Jones bought the Cowboys in 1989 he was thinking instant success but it took time for his head coach and players to gell together, but in 1992 with Aikman as QB, Micheal Irvin and Emmitt Smith amongst others playing the way Johnson wanted them to they won the whole thing.

They won it again in 1993, but then Johnson left with both he and Jones saying it was time for them to part ways, but the reality was that there had been tensions between the pair despite the teams success. Jones had made an off hand remark that basically anyone could coach the Cowboys given how good team was and Johnson resented it. It wasn't just the fact that Jones thought a performing monkey could coach the likes of Aikman, Smith, Sanders and Irvine it was that this was Jerry's team and Jerry liked things being done his way.

Jones wasn't just about the players and winning though he was also about making money and lots of it. Deals done by Jones outside the NFL's rules got him into trouble but also laid the foundations for the modern NFL and the behemoth it is today. Even NFL boss Roger Goddell is interviewed giving Jerry credit for creating business for the NFL that would never have happened had Jones not been the owner of the Cowboys.

Despite the fact that the Cowboys were the team of the 90's winning it again in 1995 they have't won it since and this despite the fact that jones now in his 80's remains heavily involved. Another documentary on the Dallas Cowboys but focused on the cheer leaders suggested that the senior leadership team at the Cowboys, mostly family of Jones, was not all as it should be. The Cheer leader documentary never suggested any kind of impropriety but it was simply just a bit odd how the current cheer leaders and aspiring ones talked about being part of the Cowboys organisation.

In recent weeks the Cowboys decided to trade possibly their best defensive player in Micah Parsons to the Green Bay Packers after a stand off over a new contract. Jones wouldn't come to the table on Parsons requests for an improved pay deal so they parted ways much to the anger and upset of Cowboys fans. Was it a bad move to lose their best defensive player at the start of a new season? Well yes, but this is Jerry's world and Jerry knows best.

The issue for Jones though is that despite the success and the huge advancements he's made for the NFL as a whole the Cowboys haven't seen success for more than 30 years and no matter how you cut that in Jerry's world that's not good enough.

It's hard to imagine thew Cowboys without Jerry Jones and I still don't know if I like him based on the documentary, but something has to give in Dallas. Will Jones give it away at some stage and hand it all over to the family? Could he sell the team? It's impossible to say, but no matter what happens while Jerry Jones is alive he's not going to give up and winning another Super Bowl.

The Dallas Cowboys documentary is now available on Netflix.



THE TRUTH



TECH NERDS & AI

The end of the world is near! We will soon have a world run by robots and Ai will dominate our lives. Free thinking will be replaced by tech company generated content that's smarter than us and that we can't compete with. We will have a single global currency and use our fingerprint to pay for good and services and live in automated world controlled by tech companies who use our data to control our buying habits. We will live without original thought and it will be a world where there is a middle income for all that will give us the life tech companies and governments want us to have. The gap between the have nots and the tech companies will be extraordinary but we will be happy and have good lives.

Welcome to the world of the tech nerd and the doomsday podcaster.

I'm a firm believer in hearing all sides of an argument or discussion about the future and what it looks like for our kids and as humans in general and really some of it can just piss off. Yes we all know Ai is changing the world, but so did the petrol powered car, so did the phone, so did penicillin, so did flight, the wheel, fire, but what not many of those things had behind them was a bunch of absolute nerds sitting out the front of their whizz bang advances for society dictating a narrative of the future. Nor did these advancements have an online world where doomsday is a great way to get followers and make bucket loads of cash. Enough with the nerds and the doomsdayers!

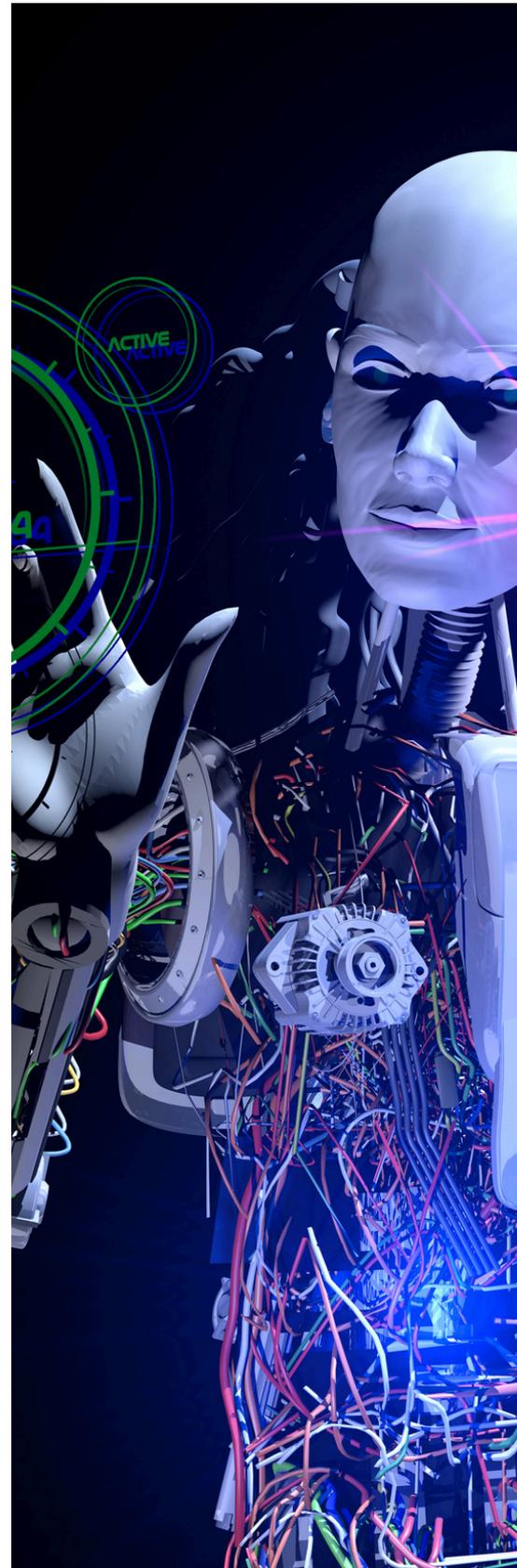
See, we are still human, we need human interaction, we need to feel, to engage with one another and tech nerds who have lived in their mom's basement for 20 years building a start up don't get that. Governments get it but they're going to tell you that the world is flat if there's a vote in it so we need to take all this doomsday tech nerd stuff with a grain of salt.

When it comes to climate change, how many world leaders have stood up in public in the last 50 years and said the seas will boil, the sky will turn red and humanity will die?! And how'd that turn out? Most people genuinely believe we need to protect the planet, to find new ways to keep the lights on etc... but let's not get carried away with the doomsday script that's passed around for more than four decades.

It's the same with technology and Ai, of course it will change lives and make some jobs redundant, but that's part of a modern society. Humanity evolves, it moves forward and it adapts. It doesn't mean that free thinking will be taken away, I mean how can it?! Are we all just going to go in for lobotomy's? Yes ok the smart phone has changed our lives, but anyone with half a brain knows that phones can be bad for you and your kids on a range of levels, so like everything, we have to do things in moderation.

We aren't going to stop going for a walk, we aren't going to stop getting outside on a sunny day, we aren't going to stop creating nor are we going to stop reading or learning so, please let's just calm down. Tech nerds have given us a whole new world, but we can't allow them to deliver this narrative of one size fits and that we must comply.

We are humans, we need one another, we need free thinking, we need interaction and we need to stop buying into the dystopian future of the conspiracy theorist. It's a human world and it we must make stand against the tech nerds starting to emerge from their Mom's basements!



hoodies MEDIA.

More than five years ago I started writing on LinkedIn not about a virus, but about blind government and bureaucratic incompetence. What I wrote all those years ago would get traction and today the magazine that was once called 'Hoodies, hats and no BS' is now called, simply 'Hoodies' and is part of a new media company called, 'Hoodies Media'.

It all begs the question of why do this? Why try and mount the impossible hill of media ownerships and why try take on the world? Well, why not, and secondly because it matters.

The media today is divided up into three categories, the left, the right and the delusional there is not middle ground. All sides at the professional mainstream level are influenced by money, greed and power, there's no one in the middle asking for at least some kind of common sense, for some kind authenticity and that offer some kind of genuine accountability.

Mainstream TV is about nice teeth and red carpets, it's about allowing people with power to have an open mic session and deliver their views through heavily influenced champagne flutes and free flights. Hoodies Media isn't that and will never be. You won't see us show at the opening of envelope and please don't ask us to anything that sits outside what we have committed to doing which is delivering honest direct and important information because we simply won't show. You want to debate something of legitimate concern and have frank discussions count us in but the rest of the bullshit? No thanks.

Hoodies media has released it's first podcast, have updated their website and will soon make available it's own branded merchandise because we genuinely want to become a global media player that does offer the world a new pathway to common sense and authenticity.

This magazine, the podcast, our online content are all part of our commitment to common sense and we hope you can join us for the journey because the whole thing only gets bigger from here!

hoodiesmedia.org



Short-Term Rental Accommodation Once Again Scapegoated in Negative Gearing Debate

By Keiran Craig-Jones, Executive Director, Short Term Accommodation Association Australia (STAAA)

Recent reports by mainstream Australian media have reignited calls for negative gearing reform, pointing the finger at short-term rental accommodation (STRA). Yet again, STRA is being used as a convenient scapegoat, obscuring the bigger picture about housing, taxation, and tourism in Australia.

Singling out short-term rentals misdirects attention away from more pressing areas for reform, particularly in the digital economy.

Negative Gearing: The Facts

Negative gearing is a tax policy that applies to all residential rentals, whether long-term or short-term. Decisions by property owners are primarily driven by personal use, yield, demand and regulatory frameworks, not by loopholes in the tax system. The same tax rules apply whether a tenant stays for a single weekend or twelve months.

Singling out the short-term rental accommodation industry misdirects attention away from more pressing areas for reform, particularly in the digital economy.

A Better Focus for Tax Reform: International Digital Platforms

One area that demands urgent attention is the under taxation of large international digital platforms. Global booking platforms generate millions in revenue from Australian consumers yet often pay little to no local tax due to offshore structures and profit shifting strategies. Meanwhile, local STRA owners and operators meet their full tax and GST obligations.

This inequity is why the Short Term Accommodation Association Australia (STAAA) supports the introduction of a Digital Services Tax (DST) in Australia, aligned with international models. Modernising Australia's tax system in this way would:

- Ensure fair competition between international platforms and local operators
- Level the playing field for Australian small business owners
- Generate revenue that could be reinvested back into the Australian economy

Rather than scapegoating STRA, reform should be directed toward measures that genuinely improve fairness, competition, and outcomes for the housing market.

STRA Industry Calls for Greater Accountability

The Short Term Accommodation Association Australia (STAAA) is calling on the Federal Government to introduce a Digital Services Tax (DST) on large international booking platforms, alongside national reforms to hold both booking platforms and property managers accountable for unlawful STRA listings.

In STAAA's submission to the 2025 Productivity Commission Competition Policy Inquiry (Submission 33): [link](#), we outline a suite of recommendations to modernise STRA regulation in Australia.

Key Recommendations

Digital Services Tax (DST): Introduce a DST on revenue generated in Australia by large international booking platforms, consistent with global practice. This ensures fair taxation and creates funds to reinvest back into the Australian economy.

Booking Platform and Property Manager Accountability: Adopt a framework similar to the Western Australian Short-Term Rental Accommodation Act 2024, which penalises platforms and property managers up to \$100,000 per unlawful listing, with additional \$2,000 penalties at the local government level. Platforms and property managers must not advertise or facilitate unregistered or unlawful STRA properties.

National STRA Registration: Establish a light touch, enforceable, opt-in registration scheme to provide reliable data, ensure compliance, and build community confidence across all states and territories.

Data Transparency: Require public STRA data to be updated monthly and include a statewide heat map, following WA's model, to support enforcement and transparency. ([WA STRA Data & Heat Map](#)).

Why Australia Needs a DST and Platform/Property Manager Accountability

Fair Competition: Local STRA owners comply with all GST and income tax obligations, while international platforms exploit tax loopholes. A DST ensures that all players contribute fairly.

Housing Support: Revenue from a DST could be directed to social and affordable housing initiatives, addressing a core source of housing pressure.

Community Assurance: Strong penalties for unlawful listings, combined with transparent public data and heat mapping, give regulators and communities confidence in STRA compliance.

Global Alignment: Countries such as France, the UK, Spain, India, and Turkey have successfully implemented DSTs. Meanwhile, WA's legislation provides a domestic benchmark for platform accountability and data transparency.

STRA's Role in Australia's Visitor Economy

Short-term rental accommodation is integral to Australia's tourism ecosystem, especially in regional and rural areas underserved by other accommodation options. STRA supports tourism, workforce housing for agriculture, healthcare, and construction sectors, and provides accessible, flexible accommodation for travellers.

Recent Tourism Research Australia (TRA) Annual Benchmark Report 2024 findings highlight STRA's importance in attracting international visitors. While domestic travellers still favour hotels (70.3 million nights), short-term rental accommodation accounted for 28.4 million domestic nights. For international visitors, the preference is even more pronounced: of 73.2 million total international visitor nights, rented houses and apartments accounted for 32.2 million nights, surpassing hotels (27.4 million nights) and hostels (7.7 million nights) ([source](#)).

This data confirms that STRA is a cornerstone of Australia's global visitor economy, with international guests choosing it over all other accommodation options.

Contrary to some media claims, STRA is not a primary driver of Australia's housing affordability issues. Supply constraints, underinvestment in social housing, and population growth remain the dominant factors. STRA typically represents less than 1% of total housing stock, with most operators being 'mum and dad' or retiree owners providing one or two listings.

Looking Ahead

STRA contributes meaningfully to tourism, regional economies, and Australia's global competitiveness. Reform should focus on areas that genuinely enhance fairness and accountability, like a Digital Services Tax, establishing a national STRA registration system, and holding booking platforms and property managers responsible for unlawful listings with real penalties.

These measures would create a fair, transparent, and sustainable framework that supports competition, addresses community concerns, and reinvests revenue back into the Australian economy, rather than continuing the cycle of scapegoating STRA for issues it does not drive.

About the Short Term Accommodation Association Australia (STAAA):

The Short Term Accommodation Association Australia (STAAA) is the Australian national short-term rental accommodation peak industry body which is dedicated to supporting and advocating for the short-term rental accommodation (STRA) industry throughout Australia.

Our mission is to promote best practices, provide a united voice for industry concerns, and protect the interests of short-term rental accommodation (STRA) industry. We aim to represent the interests of our members, enhance industry standards, and contribute positively to the broader Australian visitor economy and tourism industry.

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HM25



the end of the SEO and the online marketing?

I am someone that with no ego can sit here and say everything you see has been created on the smell of an oily rag. Bootstrapping is the term for start ups with little or no money and that continue to survive on the will and determination to see the whole thing grow. In the past and when they can afford it these start ups go back and start paying off the debts they have racked up and also start paying for SEO and advertising across the internet.

Now it is still the case that start ups when they see some money come in they're paying off debt, but what they are starting to ease up on is spending on SEO and the internet marketing. Why? Well because they can pretty much do it themselves nowadays.

The SEO spend even two years ago could be thousands of dollars per year and the social media marketing person was the ONLY person that could manage it all for you. Of late I've had several quotes from various people suggesting they would need several thousand dollars a month to get me on the front page of google or to push traffic to my website, bullshit. The days of internet marketing companies saying I wouldn't promote your site yet because you don't have enough traffic to it are over. You simply don't need to be paying dollars you don't have and can't afford to the mythical marketing company who supposedly have all the answers.

It is indeed true you need traffic pushed to your site but that can be done for a minimal outlay and is nowhere near the costs demands 2 years ago. What's the change? Well ChatGPT, Gemini and Ai in general can map out a plan for you. It can give you the guidelines for all you need to push traffic to your site and in turn increase revenue.

Another big way to increase sales is to ask every single day, where is my next sale coming from? Again the days of the real hardcore sales people are over because people don't want to work for commission only, but if you push for sales, if you're driving people to your product and what you're selling every day you draw breath you are already miles ahead of everyone else!

There are so many ways you can save money when you're setting up your business or start up. The big thing? Is do as much as you humanly can your self! Having you're own business isn't about bringing in people who tell you they can increase your following when they themselves have less followers than you do. It isn't about handing over money to people who will talk to you like your best friend but only if you're handing them money each month.

You have to accept that owning your own business is an obsession, an obsession where you pretty much work for free and try to juggle all your bills of life on next to no income. Your phone, laptop whatever you work off never leave your hand or side, you are constantly pushing for more revenue, following up with that person, doing that job for less money so you can generate at least some revenue so you can stop the bank calling and give them at least some money towards the credit card you've maxed out!

Having your own business isn't about being your own boss or setting your own hours. Go to dinner with your wife, your still checking emails, kids concert? You can barely stay in your seat if it buzzes in your pocket because what if it's a sale? Some people will tell you, you have to get up at 4am, journal, meditate, have an ice bath, do jiu jitsu, have a bowl of cardboard, drink green juice, sleep 9 hours, push weight, be present and give yourself time to reflect. Well that's all very well and nice on instagram but the reality is you don't have time for bullshit, you work, you push and you do it each and everyday.

Make a to do list and do it. Whats making me get closer to a sale today? How am I using my time? What are the priorities? It ain't ice baths and wankfests and it is no longer handing money over to social media marketing companies who little for your har earned money!

Where is your next sale coming from? Paul Breen gave me that line and it is the best piece of advice I have ever had! Ask yourself that question each and everyday and you won't ever need to be asking any kind of SEO management company to be helping you scale the once dizzy heights of Google!



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Can Nigel win the next UK election and become PM?



HM25

Outside of the issues being faced in geo politics the big issue in the UK is can Nigel Farage win the next UK general election with his Reform UK party? And does it spell the end for two party politics like we have here in Australia?

Nigel Farage's Reform UK has surged into the political spotlight in a way few could have predicted even a year ago. Once considered a fringe player in British politics, Farage now leads a party polling at levels that would have been unthinkable during the days when he was campaigning on the outside of Westminster. Multiple national surveys suggest Reform is not only ahead of Labour and the Conservatives, but in some projections, it is on course to win hundreds of seats and even form a majority government. One YouGov MRP poll indicated that Reform could secure around 271 seats, making it the largest party in a hung parliament. Other forecasts, including one from Electoral Calculus, have been even more dramatic, showing Reform potentially taking 362 seats, a result that would deliver Farage the keys to Downing Street. Ipsos polling has been the most bullish of all, with Reform at 34 percent support, ahead of both Labour and the Conservatives, which under the UK's electoral system could translate into more than 400 seats. For a man long defined as an insurgent, the possibility of becoming prime minister is suddenly very real.

Yet despite this apparent momentum, Britain's electoral system presents both opportunity and risk. The first-past-the-post model is notorious for amplifying swings in voter sentiment. A party that surges nationally may find its vote scattered inefficiently, costing it seats in practice. On the other hand, the same system can also magnify gains in concentrated areas, allowing a party with less than 40 percent of the national vote to sweep into government. Analysts such as Polly Toynbee have pointed out that proportional representation would likely blunt the advance of parties like Reform, which benefit from waves of populist energy rather than broad national consensus. But under the current rules, if Farage's supporters are geographically well distributed, his party could leapfrog rivals and dominate the Commons, even if his overall vote share is far from a majority.



The political context around Reform's rise complicates matters further. Labour strategists have acknowledged that Farage is fast becoming the "real opposition" to Keir Starmer, reshaping the narrative of British politics. The Conservatives, meanwhile, are torn between those who argue for some form of pact with Reform and those who warn that such an alliance would accelerate their decline. Former cabinet minister Justine Greening has cautioned that "uniting the right" could in fact spell the death knell of the Tory party, effectively ceding its identity to Farage's populism. At the same time, the Liberal Democrats have sought to cast themselves as a bulwark against Reform, particularly in the South West where they are historically strong. Sir Ed Davey has pledged that his party will fight Farage head-on, a sign that the electoral map could become even more fragmented.

Adding to the uncertainty is the emergence of Advance UK, a splinter group from Reform backed by figures such as Elon Musk and Tommy Robinson. On the surface, this new party might siphon off hard-right voters, thereby weakening Farage. But it could also deepen the political polarisation that has helped drive Reform's appeal, energising supporters who see Farage as the only leader capable of challenging the establishment. Whether Advance UK becomes a nuisance or a catalyst will depend on how much traction it gains before polling day.

Despite the strength of Reform in headline polling, Farage himself remains a divisive figure. Surveys have consistently shown that while many voters are willing to consider his party, they are far less enthusiastic about him personally. One recent poll even found that he was among the least popular choices for prime minister when voters were asked directly. This gap between party support and leader popularity could become a major stumbling block if undecided voters ultimately decide they cannot stomach the idea of Farage in Number 10. The country is also split on the issues that underpin Reform's rise. While 44 percent of people blame Britain's problems on the rich and inequality, 38 percent point to immigration. That divide reflects a generational and cultural fault line: younger, university-educated voters lean toward economic critiques, while older, less urban voters are more focused on migration. Farage's rhetoric appeals strongly to the latter group but risks alienating the former.

All of these factors make the outcome of the next general election highly uncertain. On the one hand, Reform's polling dominance cannot be dismissed as a blip; it has endured long enough to suggest a deep reservoir of frustration with the status quo. If the current numbers hold, Farage could plausibly become prime minister. On the other hand, the path to power is littered with potential pitfalls: the distortions of the electoral system, the strategies of Labour and the Liberal Democrats, the risk of vote-splitting on the right, and Farage's own polarising reputation. For now, it is accurate to say that Farage has a real and growing chance of winning, a sentence that would have sounded far-fetched not long ago. But politics is fluid, and Britain's volatile electorate may yet change direction before ballots are cast. What seems clear is that Farage has moved from the margins to the centre of the political contest, and the next election will be defined in large part by how voters respond to his insurgent bid for power.

Farage as UK PM still does seem somewhat fanciful despite what polling suggests, but if the discontentment with immigration, hotels, employment, access to health care and housing are still causing such huge issues for the UK by the time the election comes around Farage could well be redecorating Number 10 quite soon.

PAUL BREEN

THE BEST OPPORTUNITIES ARE ALWAYS FOUND IN THE SAME TWO PLACES

How many times have you heard someone say they want to set up their own business but don't know where to start? Or that they can't find any opportunities and don't know how to create one themselves?

Unfortunately, there's a good chance they will never set up their own business. Not because they don't have the resources or the talent, but because they're looking for ready-made opportunities served up on a plate.

And that will never happen.

The competition for opportunities is too intense, and there are usually other people around with far greater resources to exploit the more obvious ones. To launch and/or exploit an opportunity and embed it in the marketplace, the budding entrepreneur or business builder needs to work faster and smarter than ever before. And they need to find a narrow but potentially deep niche their competitors have either ignored or not yet discovered.

Which leads inevitably to two places where all the best opportunities are - sectors or niches where customers are being either:

- over-charged; and/or
- under-served.

And the very best of them may well intersect the two.

Think about it. Any great business has exploited one of these circumstances. Or both.

Richard Branson targeted old, complacent industries (e.g. airlines, rail etc) with poor service records and provided a market alternative that did exactly the opposite.

Air BnB and Uber unlocked 'dormant' or under-utilised assets, lowered costs, created a unique customer experience and disrupted the hotel and taxi industry in the process.

In my own experience, Calendar Club provided huge product choice, previously unavailable, to an underserved market. E-pay disrupted a sector used to physical cards for mobile phone top-ups (which were hated by retailers) and through technology provided a service delivery model that was irresistible to customers. And Powershop, with its low cost operating model, capitalised on the general hostility towards electricity retailers by cutting prices and providing a much enhanced customer experience through its online consumption tools and the best service in the industry.

Opportunities are everywhere. Many of them are right under our noses. Think about all those products and services that make your life easier, simpler and better. That have saved you time, money and hassle. And made you more productive.

Here are some of my all time favourites:

- Westfield's red/green light parking system in some of their shopping centres. Instead of driving round and round looking for a car spot you just look for a green light and head straight to the vacant spot. Love it!
- Getting the groceries home delivered.
- The Do Not Call Register. Tele-marketers be gone!
- The (ATM-like) check-in kiosks at the airport meaning I can arrive at the airport later, check-in faster and still catch my flight.
- My (occasional) overseas Virtual Assistant – when time is tight, call the Philippines!!

And of course...the smartphone.

I get a kick out of these things.

On the flipside I hate stuff that complicates my life or is unnecessary. Waiting around in a 'four hour window' for a tradesman or delivery to show up. Four hours, really?

All the stuff mentioned above is small and seemingly inconsequential but each improves your life, even if just a little bit. They reduce time, pain and don't cost much - some cost nothing.

But what each gives you is more time to do more important things and that is priceless. And within each of these products or services a smart entrepreneur or business builder has uncovered a need, unlocked an opportunity and worked hard to commercialise a product.

There is a lesson here. And that is to be constantly picking apart the micro-details of each interaction with a customer (in any sector) and be constantly looking for ways to remove pain and make their lives a bit easier. If you adopt this approach you will find new opportunities everywhere.

It's impossible to do this from the ivory tower or the conference room, however. And in many cases customers don't really know what they want, or can't articulate it well, until they see it. Henry Ford famously said that "if I had asked my customers what they wanted they would have said a faster horse."

Instead you have to walk in their shoes, understand their true underlying (unarticulated) needs, aspirations AND the rhythms of their lives to understand the problems that matter to them and then map solutions back to solving them.

These days whenever I have a good (significant) idea I try to talk to at least 50 people and elicit feedback about what I'm doing. I don't speak to them when I'm unprepared either. I usually have a basic prototype 'built' that I can show them. Giving them the ability to 'play' with a prototype results in more useful feedback because they can better visualise what I'm talking about and trying to do.

I'm also interested in more than just their verbal response. I watch closely how they physically interact with the prototype and what their instinctive first reactions are.

Essentially I'm looking for patterns of behaviour which will emerge and evolve out of all the feedback of each of the people I talk to.

Doing this 50 times is hard work. It can become repetitive but is the quickest way I know to do grass roots market research. It's amazingly effective too. It's also much better than trying to second guess what you can so easily find out.

The Internet has been a great help in finding and exploiting market opportunities. It's given large and small local businesses access to a global marketplace and, in many cases, reduced their supply chain costs by letting them sell directly to their customers.

Customers have also embraced it because the cost savings are being passed on to them in the form of lower prices. It's a win-win situation, with the only losers being the incumbent suppliers operating with traditional business models and needing to sell at higher prices.

These days the best opportunities lie beyond the familiar, and they're never obvious until someone puts one on the ground in a marketplace. But that's the skill. Find it first, and you might be the business that changes the game.

That's the game of opportunity identification and creation.





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CATERINA BORSATO

Share interesting facts about the contributor's background or career.

I have had a most nostalgic month!

I was asked to be a key note speaker at Hospitality Now, presented by MFWF & held at Pt. Leo Estate on the Peninsula along with some incredible hospitality icons and some forces of the future. Yours truly was part of a panel that included two other women. Zoe Birch from Greasy Zoe's (founded in 2017) who along with her life partner runs a tiny, tiny but much lauded sustainable restaurant of just eight seats. Zoe runs it her way, on her terms. The other speaker was Sophie McIntyre who headed up Club Sup in 2021, which hosts curated communal dinners and events for adults wanting to connect with other people, share stories and all offline! It's the modern version of a supper club and she is going global. Such a brilliant concept. Our topic was 'Unconventional Wisdom' and hosted by the inimitable Pat Nourse, Creative Director at MFWF. Pat is a wonderful conversationalist, nearly theatrical in his approach and can certainly engage an audience. After a while he threw out the script and the questions and he just let myself and the girls tell each of our stories. There are many new and different models that can survive in this industry and we do not need to do it conventionally. I do remember people thinking that I was insane for opening up a Monday to Friday lunch time only restaurant in the not Paris end of the city. City living was virtually nonexistent thirty years ago. The numbers didn't add up but I persevered and eventually proved them wrong.



There were another two groups of three with a different focus. One group which included Victor Leong (Lee Ho Fook fame), Fleur Studd from Market Lane Coffee and daughter of the legendary cheese monger Will Studd and Nathan Doyle from Heart & Attack and Vine fame. Their topic was The Easy Wins in A Hard Market. What things can be done to optimize your business. Great question. The other group discussion involved Gen Z and Gen A offering their take on tomorrow's customer today. What do they want, how do you get them through the door and how they can help you succeed. Now that was one discussion I would have loved to hear.

The day started off with MFWF CEO Anthea Loucas Bosha addressing three icons in Melbourne. Con Christopoulos from the European, City Wine Shop and a stable of other quite unconventional venues such as "Kirk's Wine Bar," a sushi train restaurant, the proudly Greek 'Kafeneion' and a soon to be opened 200 seater Roman style restaurant up the Paris end of Collins St, amongst others. There was Lyndon Kubis from Digging in the Cellars who knows a thing or two about wine and finally our serial restaurateur Chris Lucas, who has done more for our hospo industry than any other businessman because his roots were already entrenched in hospitality from a young age. His stable includes the ambitious Maison Batard, Chin Chin, Kisume, Grill Americano, Baby and so much more. I lovingly term them the fat cats, as they are in a league of their own in terms of size, power & ability. Probably few of the audience could identify with them but nevertheless, what they have done for Melbourne is nothing short of extraordinary. They really are visionaries. Anthea Loucas gave them a good run for their money asking them questions on their views of our industry, good and bad, their innovative ideas & wanting to extract some pearls of wisdom for the up and coming generation. Their big topic was how to make money in Hospitality. Hmmmm. Such a tough topic in today's tough market.

I felt completely daunted by the experience after hearing the boys speak, thinking my story was simplistic and yet, once I got up on that seat, I found I could easily engage with the audience. Some young & some old. They were there for a purpose. They wanted to know why we did it, how we did it & any useful messaging to prospective small business owners of the future. Apparently, there will be a recorded podcast which will reveal all.

For myself, I researched some stuff so that I could tell a real and entertaining story but also reveal the pitfalls. It got me thinking how I had no fear as a mid-thirty something. However, my mantra has always been to put my family before profits and I am sticking to that.

My story is one of hope and fear at the same time. I was so raw but let me tell you how I got to Caterina's and how I did it.

Firstly, I am a Gippsland girl and raised on a dairy farm. Pheasants, guinea fowls and silkys (a specific breed of chickens adored by my mother Stella) were our constant companions and naturally ended up on the Sunday table. I took it for granted but I guess that initial exposure to produce and eating exotics began my early culinary career. When I arrived in Melbourne to begin my University career at 16 and a half, Lygon street was awash with Italianism. Everything I had dreamed of was there, as my country life had offered none of this. Lygon Food Store, King and Godfree, Grinders Coffee House, L'Albas, Notturmo etc etc. Oh, let us not forget Mondo Music which allowed us to buy records and sing in Italian & feel so patriotic! Was it ok to feel like this? My wonderful lecturer at Melbourne University suggested I apply for a scholarship to study Italian abroad. In those days there was no real internet, nor mobile phones. I think I must have been brave! When I got to Perugia at the Universita per Stranieri, feeling Italian shot to another level. I was alone, meeting people and eating quality foods that were so foreign to me. The freshest bufala that oozed down my chin as I would squish it. Calcium balls in Parmigiano that would explode in my mouth and the finest, pinkest Prosciutto with the good edible fat from proper maturing and ageing. I was in heaven and those taste sensations in a most magical place were to change my trajectory.

When I arrived back home, with a perfect Italian accent and virtually fluent, I knew what I didn't want to do for a career. I thought if I was to ever open my own place (much to my father's chagrin), how would I be able to attract a clientele quickly enough to be able to pay my way and survive those first years. The corporates were my answer. So I worked at the football clubs including Carlton (a powerhouse at the time with the input of a John Elliott and his bevy of influential mates) and the MCG and then with Spotless Catering that ran events during the cricket, tennis & golfing seasons. I met all the right people with the corporate dollars who wined and dined equally monied corporates. These people were to become my very first customers. My first restaurant was opened in 1989 and we traded lunch and dinner but it was bitter failure for me. Not in terms of success as we achieved a Chefs Hat in the 2nd year of operation but a partnership is worse than a marriage as it involves money and kissing and making up is not an option. I was gone after 3 years with a bruised ego but it was an invaluable experience as I became more astute and I also knew that I was the link between any restaurant and the clients. As they say it is hard to run a business from the backline. My first restaurant was to close a few years later.

The next opportunity was the city, where Caterina's is currently housed. I chose this site as I had a body clock ticking and I needed to find a Monday to Friday day time space so that I could have a career as well as be a parent. It is a really long tedious story but suffice to say that what happened to me was like the precursor to crowd funding. The landlords I had been negotiating with were about to get sold up by the banks and some incredible corporates jumped in and gave me a life line. They provided me with a deposit and organized a bank loan. No bank was going to talk to a woman of child bearing age, without collateral. Sadly five days later my father passed away from a heart attack. Just to give you an idea of the monies I borrowed back then ... it would be equivalent to around 3 million today. Daunting stuff but I had to make it work. In the mean time I was pushing myself in all matter of media. I was talking food on 3AW with Ross Campbell. My life partner pushed me into free to air T.V. and my Channel 31 show was born several years later. Virginia Trioli used to give me a gig on rotation with chefs, talking food on ABC radio, before she departed for Sydney. I was a service judge on the second season of MRR on Channel 7. Once again, a great experience but I knew that commercial T.V. was not in my game plan. As you can appreciate, I was always pushing myself into unknown territories and my networking with the corporates was my version of social media and this kept me afloat.

So that's how I started. The rest is all hard work. I was fortunate enough to have my daughter at forty and I was still able keep running the restaurant as there were no nights nor weekends.

So my words of wisdom to the group were:

1. Choose a job that suits your future and for me I put family above profits.
2. Do the mathematics as usually in the 1st year up to 20% fail, by the 6th year 60% are gone.
3. Having a skill is not enough to succeed in the restaurant business.
4. Networking is paramount.
5. Surround yourself with people with skills that you do not possess.
6. Surround yourself with youth to keep up with trends even if you do not follow trends.
7. Be prepared for the pitfalls and for me it was the GFC, Covid 19, a catastrophic flood.
8. A business is not a business unless it makes money and so, a dream is not enough.
8. Integrity is everything.
9. Enjoy your job which means you will enjoy your life and you will have longevity.
10. No regrets! I was bullied, duped & insulted but I did not capitulate.

If I inspired just one person in the audience, then I did my job.

But mostly I hope I have inspired women, including my daughter, that you can have a career and a family and success does not always amount to how much money you make.

Alla prossima

Caterina xx



Taste of Port Douglas 2025

Arlan Van Rooyen

tasteportdouglas.com.au

A Four-Day Feast of Fire, Flavour, and Fellowship in Tropical North Queensland

From August 7–10, 2025, the palm-lined streets and sugar-white sands of Port Douglas once again became Australia's most delicious postcode as Taste Port Douglas returned for its ninth season. Curated by festival founders Reina and Spencer Patrick, this year's edition was the most expansive yet, a four-day celebration of culinary excellence, emotional connection, and the regenerative power of hospitality.

Set between two World Heritage-listed wonders, the Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef, the festival drew thousands of guests, chefs, producers, and storytellers to explore the theme: "Place, People, Produce." It was a living system of care and creativity, where atmosphere was curated, legacy honored, and every dish told a story.

Taste Port Douglas unfolded across a constellation of iconic venues, each chosen for its emotional resonance and ability to hold memory. The 2025 lineup featured a glittering cast of culinary talent, to name but a few, Manu Feildel, Matt Preston, Matt Stone, Colin Fassnidge, Raymond Capaldi, Roger Pizey, Ryan Clift, Michael Wilson, Nelly Robinson, Louis Tikaram & Dominique Rizzo

Each chef brought not just technique, but emotional literacy and narrative depth, crafting experiences that honoured place, people, and produce. Masterclasses: Knowledge as Nourishment. Held at Harrisons and Daintree Bar, the Masterclass Series offered rare access to culinary wisdom. Each session began with a glass of Pol Roger Brut Reserve and ended with insight, laughter, and legacy.

Festival Village: Vendors & Vibrance. Held August 9–10 at the Sheraton Grand Mirage, the Festival Village was a sensory playground of food, drink, and atmosphere:

Food Stalls from;

- **Little Italy** – Wood-fired pizza and handmade gnocchi
- **Harry Hawker Street Market** – Southeast Asian street food
- **El Mercado** – Latin American bites and ceviche
- **Fat Mango BBQ** – Flame-grilled meats and tropical marinades
- **Catchers & Growers** – Barramundi, reef fish, and oysters

Beverage Experiences:

- **Wolf Lane Distillery** – Tropical gin cocktails
- **Tequila Tromba** – Mezcal flights and mixology demos
- **House of Suntory** – Japanese whisky and gin tastings
- **Estrella Damm** – Mediterranean lager served ice-cold
- **Dal Zotto Wines** – Prosecco and Sangiovese pairings
- **Devil's Thumb Distillery** – Cane spirits with rainforest botanicals

Artisan Producers:

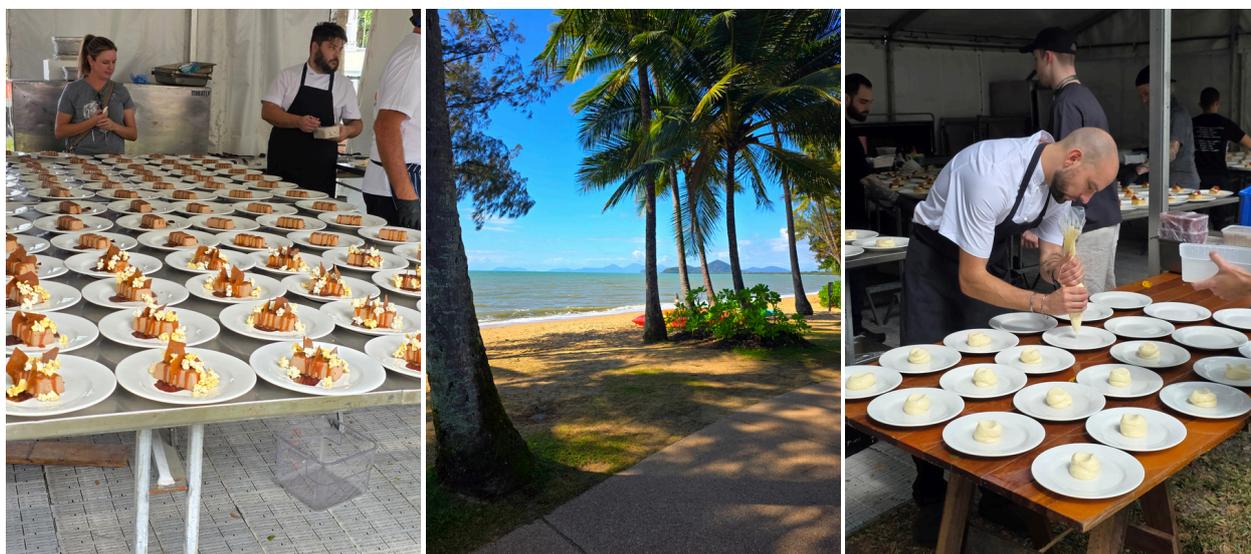
- **Vannella Cheese** – Burrata, ricotta, and mozzarella
- **Olsson's Salt** – Tasting salts and salt-rubbed brisket
- **Moffat AU & Hexclad** – Kitchenware showcases and live cooking stations

Why It Matters:

Taste Port Douglas isn't just popular, it's beloved. Now in its ninth year, it's become a pilgrimage for food lovers, chefs, and industry leaders seeking connection, inspiration, and renewal. It's luxe but laid-back, fiercely creative, and deeply rooted in place. It's not just a festival. It's a living story. Taste Port Douglas 2025 was more than a festival, it was a living story of hospitality. Next years Taste of Port Douglas event promises to be even bigger, with more long lunches, new chefs bringing world class food with the essence of Port and near by producers supporting and supplying incredible NFO produce. The Tropics is the theme, and local restaurants and attractions will also make a appearance to make the event even more memorable and enjoyable.

For further information on this once a year Festival, visit Taste Of Port website, which will have relevant information for visitors, guests and vendors to either inquire or enrol to participate in next years event.

tasteportdouglas.com.au



Cannibal Creek

There is something about a winery that is focused on hand rearing their grapes and offering a product that comes straight from the heart.

I connected with Pat and Kirsten Hardiker, owners and wine makers at Cannibal Creek recently because, well they're real. If you go to the Cannibal Creek Vineyard, restaurant or just hit their website you see the heart on the sleeve, the passion and genuine love for what they do.

Pat Hardiker was a builder in Western Australia before he and wife Kirsten relocated to Tynong in Gippsland Victoria onto a 29 hectare farm that would become home to them and their winery Cannibal Creek. Despite the fact that Pat had never really planned on becoming a wine maker, today it's his purpose in life and along with Kirsten now run a sustainable vineyard that grows, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

Cannibal creek have now had 28 vintages of their wine and while awards have never been the goal have won numerous awards for both their wines and their restaurant. The vineyard is classed as cool climate and is similar to that of Burgundy in France and the whole premise of the vineyards operation is minimal intervention in the growing process. They are so committed to minimal intervention and not using chemicals they have designed a process that takes waste from the restaurant and converts it into compost for the vines.

Located an hour east of Melbourne, Cannibal Creek is one of the great gems of the Gippsland area. A Cellar door manned by passionate wine people who obviously know their stuff and a restaurant that is like walking into somewhere you do actually know the owner, you're greeted with smiles and a welcome that shows why Pat and Kirsten have maintained such a successful business for more than 25 years.

There are so many wineries that have got ahead of themselves after winning awards or being classed as the next big thing and while Cannibal creek could indeed bang that drum their wines are not expensive and available via the Cellar Door or by getting in touch with the winery direct.

Many of us are aware of how hard farming within any industry is and wine making is no different. Farmers are the life blood of the country, they help make it run, they wear their hearts on their sleeves, they feel every season, every change in costs and every change in the economy, but so many of them keep doing what they do because they love it. Yes ok businesses need to be profitable but like Pat says Cannibal Creek is their home and their way of life.

It's hard to imagine anything ever changing out at Cannibal Creek, Pat and Kirsten are committed to the sustainability of their vineyards, they love what they do and they welcome everyone who steps onto their farm with welcome arms like long lost family. We never want them to change really! In a world that is perhaps moving too fast going to Cannibal Creek tasting their wines and having something to eat reminds us that good things take time. We don't need the chemicals to get the best out of our produce, we can step back a bit and take in the world at a slower pace and remember that a lot good things come from hand crafting something straight from the heart.

Long live Cannibal Creek and long live the people who wear their hearts on the sleeves like Pat and Kirsten.



www.cannibalcreek.com.au

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF ZCARFIE

When I was a young lad—back in the last century—I harboured dreams of playing football for Australia. My girlfriend at the time had a special talent: she hand-knitted a one-of-a-kind beanie just for me. It was vibrant green and white, proudly representing my footy club, the Cronulla Seagulls in Sydney. She poured her love and skill into each stitch, creating a piece that felt like a winning badge of pride. One day, with leftover wool still in abundance, I jokingly suggested she keep knitting until we had a 1.5-metre "tail" attached to the beanie—just for fun.

That beanie became a treasured keepsake; one I've held onto through the years. I kept it from my early teens and eventually introduced it to my children, who loved slipping it on during chilly days and sharing in the quirky charm of its unique design. Over time, the beanie didn't just stay a childhood relic; it became a family tradition and a symbol of memories and laughter.

A few years ago, I had a sudden burst of inspiration. I realized that others might enjoy having a piece of this nostalgic whimsy. And so, the idea of creating a special, unique beanie—something more than just headwear—began to take shape.

Today, I proudly introduce you to "Zcarfie" – The Complete Beanie—a one-of-a-kind, handcrafted creation that carries a story of nostalgia, passion, and playful spirit.

And as for the footy dreams? Well, I didn't quite make it past the local club—and my girlfriend, sadly, ran off with someone else! Ah, well. Life throws its little curveballs.

With warm regards,
Walter

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INSPIRATION

never stop believing that anything is possible...



TALKTOBER & PASSING THE MIC

As a proud Buddy with the Men's mental health charity 'The Male Hug' it is a real thrill to be part of Talktober and this year's campaign called, 'Passing the mic'.

The Male Hug has been going for more than five years now and the month of October has been the month where Tony and his team of dedicated volunteers are out and about encouraging men to talk to one another. We know from various research papers and from trained mental health professionals that if people can talk about an issue they're having before it becomes a massive problem they are much more likely to be able to find a solution or a way to overcome the problem.

It's the same in business, the quicker people can talk about an issue they're having the quicker a resolution can be found. The mental health of people in all walks of life is today of vital importance. Attending an event recently on behalf of the Male Hug I was personally struck by how many women came up to us to talk about and ask questions about how they can help the men in their businesses who might be struggling with their mental health. Talking is key, dealing with issues is key and making sure we're checking in on our people is a big part of how we should be working and living our lives.

As a result of talking being so important the talktober campaign of 'Passing the mic' is asking people to record a short video to their social media handles, like Instagram, in which they talk about the importance of mental health, the script ideas for the post can be found on the Male Hug website www.talktober.com.au and once you've recorded your say about mental health you call out a friend, a work colleague or a work mate by saying... "I'm passing the mic to..."

From that video the Male Hug is hoping to raise awareness of how important talking is and also raising funds to extend the 1800 MY BUDDY help line to become a constant resource for men to call and talk to someone who can empathise and understand where they're at.

Talking is so important so please register for talktober, get onboard with the 'passing the mic' campaign and keep talking because you never know when people are most in need.

THANK YOU

Thank you for reading Issue 25 of Hoodies and thank you for being part of the next part of our journey.

It has been a few weeks of extraordinary grief and tragedy and it has been a few weeks of asking what is at the core of the country.

There can be very little doubt that right now more than ever the world needs careful and considered solutions to issues of profound importance and that common sense must prevail.

Remember, as Steve Jobs said, the people that are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are often the ones that do.

To stay up to date on all things Hoodies Media please head to our website hoodiesmedia.org and when you're there please subscribe to our website.

Until next time bye for now.

Cheers
Ben Logan
Editor in Chief
Hoodies Magazine



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Hoodies Media



Issue 25
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