ISSUE 28 2026

Hoodies

NEWS - POLITICS - CULTURE - BUSINESS - LIFESTYLE



Do we need a legitimate global reset, not a conspiracy theory?

Marco, Gordon & Heston sit down for lunch

Margaret Porritt the last of a generation that survived everything...except Albo

The legacy of Labor

A hypothetical world

The end of MAGA

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Thank you

We shall see you next month...

Letter From The Editor



Welcome back my fiends to the show that never ends we're so glad you could attend, we're inside, we're inside, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 28th issue of Hoodies magazine (Emerson Lake & Palmer Live at the Royal Albert Hall FYI)

We start with the news that the legendary Aussie music icon Molly Meldrum has passed away at age 83. I remember being at the Warehouse nightclub with a group of friends in the early 90's and there was Molly having the greatest time with a drink in hand and just being himself. He was a music journalist in an era when you couldn't pick up your phone for information. He travelled constantly, interviewed the greatest bands and artists on the planet and while some people may have mocked him he was universally loved and respected. Countdown was the music show before MTV, before You Tube and before streaming came along. We all watch he'd Countdown on a Sunday night and we all watched Molly on Hey Hey because we loved what he gave us, which was genuine passion and news on the bands and artists we loved. We will never see the likes of Molly again and we will always be grateful to the great man for everything he gave us and how much he entertained us. With the Labor government in acre taker mode, both Labor and Liberal parties have agreed that there will indeed be a state funeral for Molly as there should be. RIP to the one of a kind music legend and genuinely decent human, Molly Meldrum. RIP Molly and thank you.

So it's been a minute since the last issue of Hoodies magazine and the funny coincidence is that Issue 27 of Hoodies magazine featured Jess Wilson on the front cover. The headline on the front cover of issue 27 was 'Can women save the Liberal party?' And blow me down with a feather Wilson now stands to become the next Premier of Victoria. So you heard it here first! Hoodies was the one media organisation that asked if women could end up saving the state!

But in the nearly 12 months since we've published an issue of the Hoodies magazine the world has indeed changed dramatically. We have seen Ai become a major piece of ground breaking technology but also one of the most controversial, we have seen living standards in Australia decline, we have seen inflation increase and small businesses thrown to the wall and we have seen the United States in some ways at least try and take away some powers from the ever out of control Trump administration.

At home while inflation and interest rates have continued to climb Anthony Albanese has continued to do very little to rein in government spending that along with the war in the Middle East continues to have massive repercussions on the Australian economy. Where do higher energy prices, cost of living and global conflict leave Australia? On a pathway that sees us divided and unsure of our place in the world. Can we make it back? Can we be the lucky country again? Absolutely we can and despite our living standards declining we are still very fortunate, but we want our lives back, we want to be able to afford to put petrol in the car again and we want to be proud of the great southern.

This issue of Hoodies Magazine talks to legendary fashion retailer and designer Margaret Porritt about her history, how she adapted to hard economic times and the lessons she learned, we look at how Jess Wilson could well be the first elected female Premier of Victoria and we talk to he amazing Peter Nous from JRN Housing. We talk politics across the globe and delve into world issues that are affecting all of us. And we of course look at culture and soul in the modern world.

Hoodies Magazine is now back to being a monthly publication available via our website www.hoodiesmedia.org and we hope you can rejoin us on the journey that is Hoodies Magazine.

Ben Logan

Editor-in-Chief





people & features

Peter Nous from JRN Community Housing

Yes, madam premier

On the night of the state election in Victoria on November 28th it's hard to believe we are going to have to wait very long for a result. The suggestion in 2022 that it was indeed going to be a tight run race turned out not to be true and the Andrews government was returned for a historic third term. Four years later with the Andrews succession plan in ruin and the man himself a shadow of his former self the Liberal national Coalition looks set to take over in a landslide. Now it may well be closer than people think but the competition won't be between labor and liberal, instead it will be between the coalition and one nation.

One Nation stand to pick up a number of seats and if labor do as badly as is being suggested could in theory end up as the state opposition. Regardless of how the right wingers battle does end Victoria will have it's first ever publicly elected female Premier, her name, Jess Wilson.



Talking to a former Liberal party heavy weight I remember being told when Wilson became leader of the state party that she had the potential to become Premier. Having seen some of the inner workings of the Liberal party and having met Wilson herself several years ago I wasn't convinced. A first term politician former lawyer and political staffer was this the person that was going to stop the liberal party infighting and unite the party to finally knock labor off?

Matthew Guy who oversaw the Liberal party loss to Daniel Andrews was succeeded by the man who could've been, John Pesutto. After what was a catastrophic leadership period that saw the party in court against its own the reins of the party were turned over to ex police officer Brad Battin. For just under a year Battin took the liberal party from a dishevelled mess into a party that was starting catch up to labor in the polls and was looking like it could maybe win an election with the copper from Berwick, but twas not to be. Battin was looking like he'd have to appear in court over the whole Deeming Pesutto saga and the party wanted a clean skin that had nothing to do with any of it, enter Jess Wilson.



The exit stage right of Daniel Andrews left Jacinta Allan at the helm and by the time Wilson became leader Labor had hit the self destruct button. With Battin beginning to make in roads on labor it was Jess Wilson's appointment as leader that saw them take real numbers away. Allan couldn't keep up with all the criticism being levelled at labor and Wilson was now there to hammer them home. A key reason why Wilson is now looking like the next Premier of Victoria is that she has managed to unify the once basket case Liberal Party.

When the Libs did ditch Battin for Wilson you could almost see Jacinta Allans eyes light up with glee of fresh easy to knock off prey, but that wasn't to be. Wilson did struggle a little at the start but a year later that fresh faced clean skin is now looking like the heir apparent.

As premier Wilson probably gets herself the worst job in politics in the country. Victoria is broke and broken. Not only is it broken but it is highly divided thanks in part to the appalling attitudes of labor, the rise of the Orange army and their ever present right wing disruptive media outlet, Rebel News. If it is the case that one nation hold the balance of power in the state the Libs are going to have to play nice with them or run the risk of ultimately going back to the polls to sort out supply, but in the last few days it seems many pundits are suggesting the Coalition won't have to worry.

So what does a Wilson lead Victoria look like? More support for small business, cuts to the public sector, less infrastructure spending and a rocket up the male dominated corporate world? We can only hope but what Wilson will bring is a fresh non jaded set of eyes to a state in desperate need of change. She will no doubt work incredibly hard and be put under extraordinary pressures, but such is the life she and her family have chosen. She has a long road ahead and here's hoping she gets to work straight away on bringing back to life the once mighty state of Victoria.

Margaret Porritt, the fashion icon & inspiration

I'm not sure what some people in their 80's have done in their lives and continue to do that keeps them razor sharp but they continually prove to the rest of us that age is but a number. Legendary Melbourne based entrepreneur, fashion retailer, designer and milliner Margaret Porritt is another example of those 80 somethings that show us it doesn't matter what age you are you can still achieve great things.

Despite still being an inspiration in her 80's it's Margaret's entire journey that is worthy of celebration and huge respect. A journey that included working with Norman Hartnell, the celebrated British couturier and designer of clothes for Queen Elizabeth II, building her own fashion retail business then nearly losing the lot only to rebuild it to more recent years when she was planning to retire but was encouraged to keep going by her incredibly loyal customer base.



With two shops in Melbourne, one in Toorak and another in Brighton the grand lady of fashion shakes her head at the current state of the fashion industry and retail in general. Porritt believes the costs of doing business are now so high they have almost become prohibitive, worse than the 1990's she says, it's never been this bad. As a businessperson that based her entire business on customer service she thinks the core fundamental of retail, for many retailers, is a thing of the past.

Porritt represents a generation of entrepreneurs that did it themselves through incredible hard work, persistence and a never say die attitude. She made hard decisions, she trusted her instincts and today quite rightly is admired and loved by not only the fashion and her customer base but by the world in general.

Her mother was herself a milliner and her father a business man giving Margaret the perfect combination of creative flair and sound business understandings. Returning from London where she worked at Hartnell's she took up a millinery apprenticeship with her mother. It was her mother that taught her the importance of precision that fed into her business principles as well. At 26 she was a single mother of three children and had to get a job. Working at a fashion boutique called 'Orange Poodle' she eventually bought the business and soon after bought a second shop, still while raising a family. She called her shops 'Feathers' and the name remains today.

For twenty or so years ‘Feathers’ was primarily a retailer of other fashion brands, Country Road, Sportscraft, Trent Nathan et al and for all of those years it was a great business model, but then the 90’s hit and Porritt had to quickly reassess her business model. Margaret realised that while she was ordering stock from her suppliers she wouldn’t get all the order as they were being pushed to branded stores, it was then that Feathers own label became a reality.

Dealing with declining revenue and a lack of stock she sold her home, closed shops and redefined her entire brand and business model. She decided that instead of selling other people’s clothes she would move towards controlling the entire process. She designed product, sourced materials, developed manufacturing process, dealt with distribution and made the customer her entire focus. Her gamble on taking complete control over her entire business paid off with one her key successes being the Feathers knit, a stretch knit fabric she sourced from the United States.

In early 2026 Margaret decided to call time on her 50 plus year career, but there was a cry of NO from her dedicated customer base. She decided to stay and consolidated her business into two locations and her online shop. It was a sign of how highly her customer base values her and what gives them.

Margaret comes from the silent generation that had strong work ethics, took personal responsibility and had great respect for authority and institutions. In 2026 she bemoans the lack of the hard work ethic more recent generations have and how governments at both state and federal levels have made it almost impossible for small businesses to survive let also thrive. Religion, education and family were the three core principles Margaret was raised on and ones she has lived her life on. While some people may baulk at those principles look at how they have served one of Australia’s great entrepreneurs and fashion designers.

In the 2025/26 financial year more than 1,000 retail trade companies entered voluntary administration, up from 800 plus the year before. It stands to say that retail has never had it this hard but while things are bad Porritt continues to defy the odds and her age. There can be no doubt we will never see the likes of Margaret Porritt again and while that is saddening from the entrepreneurial and fashion perspective there is only one Margaret Porritt. Long may she and her legacy live.



Peter Nous & JRN Community Housing

Out of tragedy, out of loss, pain, fear and hardship can sometimes come great things. Over the course of the history of Hoodies Magazine we have spoken to a number of people who have shown that adversity can be their greatest inspiration to do great things. Former drug dealer, petty criminal and stand over man Gary Wright and now founder of Hope Cartel is one, Rapper, entrepreneur and now motivational speaker Josepe Cowan is another and now we add founder of JRN community housing, Peter Nous as another.

Peter's brother Joseph passed away in 2016 aged 37 as a result of suffering mental health issues that he tried and ultimately failed to manage himself. As a result of losing his brother Peter set up JRN Community housing. JRN is a community organisation that helps a range of people from the homeless, to drug addicts, to people in urgent need of a fresh start find somewhere to stay and to help them kick start their lives.

It is a very easy thing for people to point to mental health as the reason for their poor behaviours but when you see Peter in action and when you see him posting video on his socials about what's happening in the real world for people you come to see what's real struggle and what isn't. Peter's videos are in some cases deeply disturbing but then deeply joyous. On one video you see a young person with nowhere to go, with no family and lost but then Peter enters the fray to offer them some hope for change. Not only is Peter trying to help people in need of housing but he and his team of volunteers are out meeting people at court hearings, they're out with food trucks and their getting people into rehab clinics. So good is Peter's work that courts across Melbourne are now agreeing to release those that commit crimes or have been in jail into Peter's custody to take them to treatment facilities or housing that can help them rebuild their lives.



“Every Sunday (in Frankston at 5pm) JRN creates a safe place for people doing it tough to come together, share a meal and talk openly about addiciton and mental health

Peter Nous
JRN Community Housing

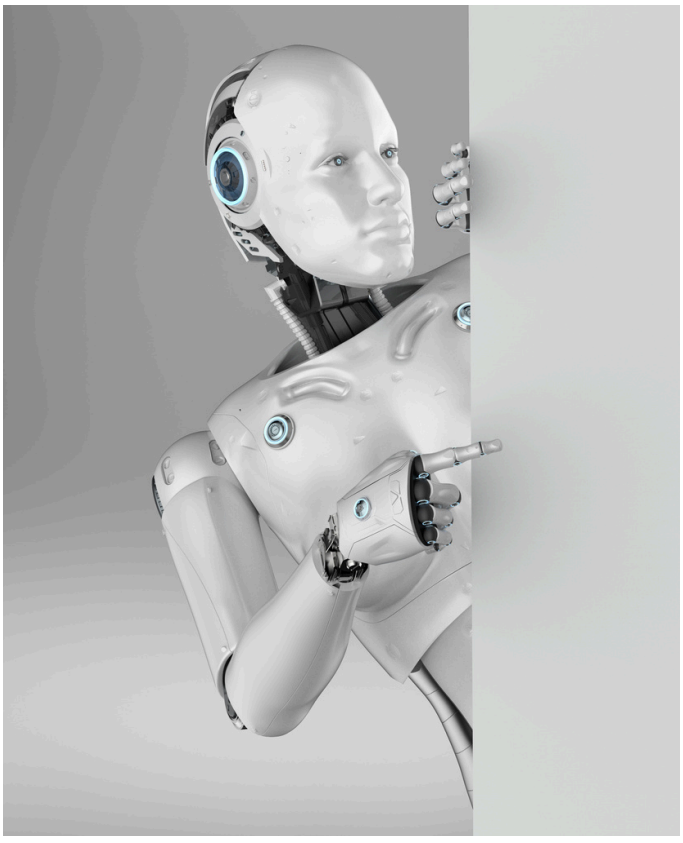
It really is a sad indictment on us as a society and governments that organisations like JRN even exist. We have lost our way when it comes to helping those most in need and we need to do better. While governments, those in power or those that aspire to be promise more jail time or stricter punishments we need to be looking at the root causes of homelessness, of drug addiction and of anti social behaviours. Peter would be one of the first to agree that there are people you can’t help and jail is in some cases the only deterrent but what of the teenage boy who has no family, no home and only his dog to keep him company. These are the people Peter is helping, these are the people we need to help and offer a new pathway in life.

Peter is one of those people that would give you the clothes off his back if he thought it would help you and right now we don’t have enough Peter’s in the world. If you or anyone you know is interested in supporting Peter and his incredible work please search up - JRN Community Housing on Facebook, Tik Tok and Instagram or contact Peter direct on 0422 669 093. As the saying goes not all heroes wear capes and Peter Nous is unquestionably a hero of ours. God bless the great man that is Peter Nous.

What actually is the future of tech?

I remember when I first had access to the internet. A series of beeps, blips and sounds of static all came together to connect us to the magical world of the information super highway. Mobile phones were taking off as well, phones that were used for their original purpose of actually calling someone could also send these things called text messages as well! Not only could we call and text we could also play snake! When Steve Jobs walked onto the Apple stage and launched the iPhone the world changed. What followed were changes to the music industry, how we connected to one another and then social media took over our lives. Apps and websites that promised better connection to one another and that gave us the opportunity to have a voice. Social media made billionaires of the tech nerds who for years had had sand kicked in their faces by the cool kids, it was their time to shine and manipulate and my goodness didn't they relish the opportunities given to them.

As Covid came to a timely end a new form of tech emerged, Ai. Now Ai had been being developed for some time but the post covid world was where it began to fill the mainstream. Today Ai is the dominant form of technology and could either destroy the planet or help the mere minions of the world obtain a universal basic income from the Ai and tech trillionaires of the world. But while the tech elite decide what our future is what is it actually like and will it really kill us all?



Since the dawn of time and whether you believe in god or evolution humanity has always been very wary of new technology. Now I for one have indeed been one of those people that have argued against Ai taking away our creative soul and that it could suck the life out of us, but if we look at just five examples of new tech people were wary of we see that change is eventually welcomed.

HAVE A NICE DAY



1. The printing press (15th century). Scribes, clergy, and authorities worried it would flood the world with cheap, unregulated, and heretical material, and that it would erode memory and scholarship. Instead, it became the foundation of mass literacy, science, and education.

2. Electricity (late 19th century). Many people feared electric light and wiring as dangerous, unnatural, and even harmful to health. Early homes were sometimes wired reluctantly, with fears of fire and electrocution. Within a few decades, it was considered essential to modern life.

3. The telephone (late 19th century). Critics worried it would destroy privacy, end face-to-face visiting, and intrude on the home. Some people were wary of talking into a machine at all. Today it's so woven into daily life that it's hard to imagine being without one.

4. Trains (early 19th century). Some doctors and commentators claimed that travelling at speeds of 30 mph or more could cause illness or madness, and that the human body wasn't built for it. Railways went on to connect countries and become a beloved mode of travel.

5. Recorded music and the phonograph (early 20th century). Musicians and composers feared that recordings would kill live performance and make musicians obsolete. John Philip Sousa famously warned about "the menace of mechanical music." Instead, recordings expanded audiences, and live performance remains treasured alongside them.

Ai is unquestionably an extension of technology but the worry with it is that it potentially has the opportunity to override what we as humans decide, it could take away choice. Now in some cases that might be ok, but what if it decides that launching nuclear weapons against a foreign power was a good idea? What if it hacked the banking system, the intelligence services and game secrets to foreign governments? How do we stop it? How do we keep control?

In the US the Trump administration see Ai or Si as they call it as one of the greatest inventions in human history. It has the potential to basically make America great again and to hell with the consequences. Trump could make billions from the Ai tech bros and create jobs in the US with his flash new bit of tech, but the thing most of the world wants of Ai is accountability something Trump does not.

DREAMS ARE FREE WELCOME TO REALITY!

The whole Jensen Huang situation reeks of a small minded small man who was delusional but who could also have been knowingly or unknowingly exporting Ai chips to the biggest competitor to the US in the Ai sector, China. While Nvidia will survive Jensen the damage done to tech stocks has been huge. It's not all Jensen's fault mind you given it's been on the cards for a while, but him and the Anthropic float seem to have been a catalyst.

So if Ai doesn't become the massive world success the tech bros and Trump want it to be, where does it leave all those companies that have sacked staff thinking the greta Ai revolution will save them millions? What if Ai cant pay back the money they've borrowed? And what if Ai doesn't grow as much as the likes of Musk, Amodei and Altman all say it will? And what if markets and governments become over exposed to the level of debt they're holding in the hope Ai does change the world? Well welcome to 2008!

Ai is the next step in global evolution of technology but the difference this time is that there are so many moving parts of it they're open to manipulation and massive financial gain or loss. Electricity, the telephone, the printing press etc...were simple and brilliant ideas that did indeed change the world but now as we come to terms with the modern version of technological change we don't want to sound nervous, but when has a new piece of tech said it could lead to catastrophic misuse and the erosion of human agency and trust? We must head into this new era of tech with open arms but at the same time understand we must never give up our control of what it is to be human.



Labor's legacy in Victoria



Let's face it the great southern state of Victoria has pretty much always been a labor stronghold, but on Saturday the 28th of November that looks set to change with Labor set to has it's biggest loss at an election for years. Elections are often unpredictable but this one seems a foregone conclusion given the level of hatred for the once might labor party so assuming labor do get booted what is the legacy they leave behind?

When Ben Carroll took over as Premier of Victoria he was handed a poison chalice. His predecessor was tanking in the polls and the general public was screaming for blood over the big build and how bad the roads had become. The party decided it was time for Allan to go and in came Mr Integrity. He wasn't Danial Andrews, he wasn't Jacinta Allan, he was Ben Carroll and things were going to be different. He was wrong. The idea of calling a Royal Commission into the construction industry while noble was bad timing and his continued proclamations of he was different lead to people saying he was in the room for a lot of the poor decisions made.

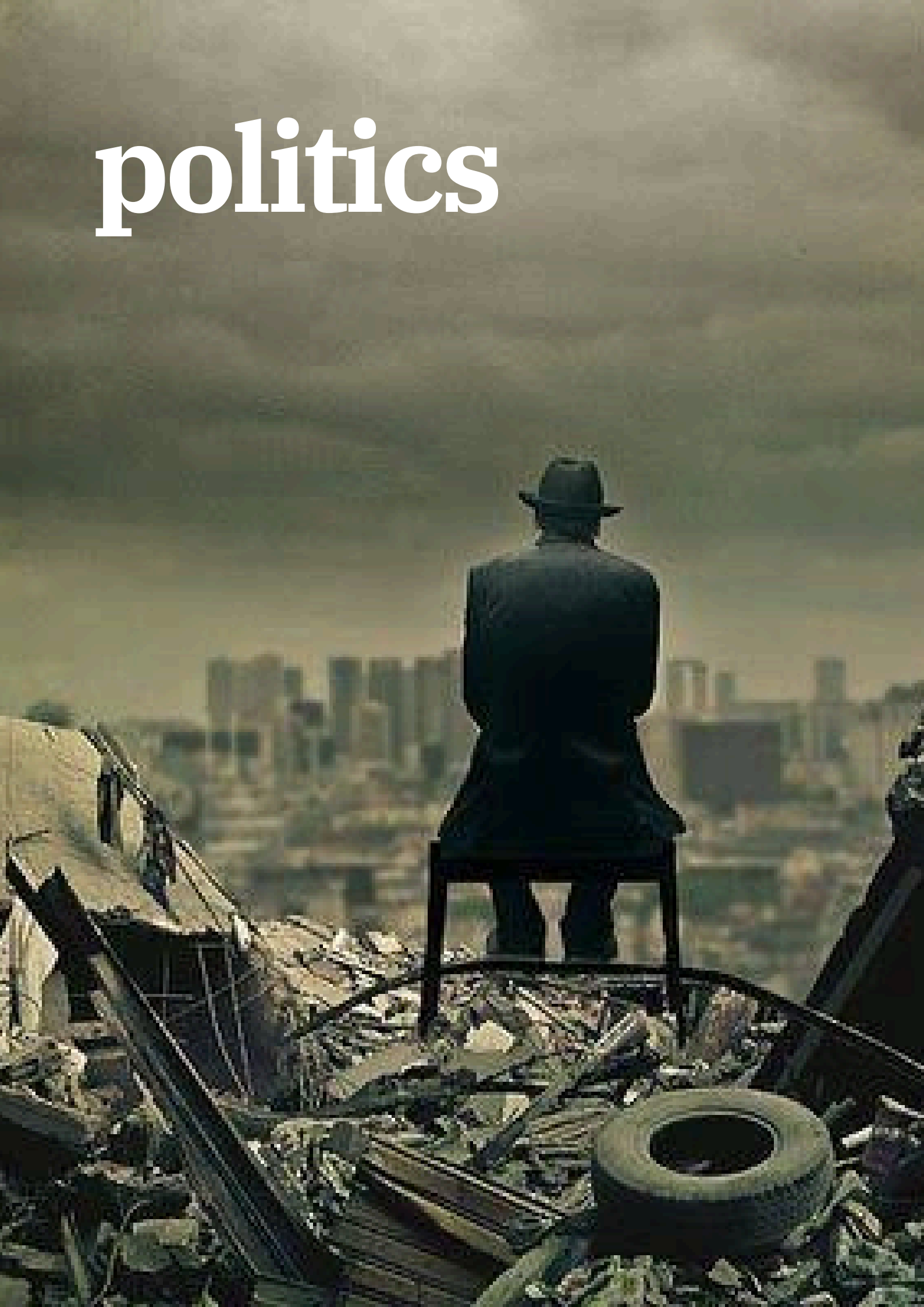
Sadly for Carroll he's got about as much chance of becoming the elected premier as I do playing for North Melbourne next season. He's tarred buy the same brush and as such contributes heavily to what Labor leaves behind.

Labor has unquestionably made a considerable difference to infrastructure in the state, they built hospitals and did make public transport cheaper and for a period free right across the state. But Andrew's oversaw the covid era and Allan made sure the builders got paid. As the state came to terms with the money Andrews spent during covid and the cost blow outs of infrastructure projects under Allan the money began to run out and public services suffered. Roads, mental health, schools, the arts, small businesses and more suffered immeasurably as labor cut back on spending while making sure they looked after their own.

The legacy of labor? To some it will be that they helped guide the state through the greatest health crisis in modern history. To others they will forever be the government that took from everyone and gave to themselves and their mates, corrupt, self serving and incapable of proper governance. They looked after their corporate mates and sporting clubs and made sure those on their side got what they deserved. Many Victorians will carry the $15 billion that no one can remember what happened to as one of the many things they will despise labor for, but now as their time draws to an end the legacy really is self serving failure. No one in the labor ranks is going to jail, no one is really going to be held to account and no one will ever have to cough up $15 billion, but what we must do is make sure we never see this kind of legacy ever left behind again for any political party.

Victoria has a long road ahead of itself to get back to where it once was, but as the journey begins we should never forget the utter greed, incompetence and corruption we have been exposed to over the last 12 years. Thanks for the memories Labor and don't let the door knock you unconscious on your way out, oh and give us back the keys!

politics



Newsom & the end of MAGA?



The US of A has spoken. The mid term results have been a crushing blow to the aspirations of the Trump administration to continue on its merry way unopposed through war, so called peace negotiations and the Ai tech boom. The republicans have been hammered everywhere and that sees the democrats control both the senate and the house. This situation is not uncommon in US politics where a sitting party loses control of the house or the senate or both but what it means is the republicans are now going to be working with one hand tied behind their backs because basically they're now beholden to the democrats. That is unless Trump decides to use his extraordinary powers and over ride everything. This is Trump we're talking about so let's not write anything off just yet but regardless the end of MAGA is nigh and not before time.

The whole idea of MAGA dates back to the Reagan administration but in the world of Trump it means something very different. MAGA has yes been about some form of patriotism or nationalistic pride but it's also been about deep division and celebration where none is warranted. On the other side of the coin you have the Democrats who blew their opportunity in office with the Biden administration because they went too far to the left. They brought in too many celebrity endorsements and failed to connect to middle and low income earners doing it hardest. Enter Trump and his promises to end wars, cut cost of living, make fuel cheaper and to make the US a true super power again, but none of it happened.



The US while it is meeting with the likes of Russia and China is not the global super power it was. The reputation of the US is now one of agitator rather than unifier. Trump's influence on global fuel prices is disgraceful but he's often unrepentant saying had the US not invaded Iran things would've been worse. We shall never know but I'm not sure the world wouldn't have said lets take our chances.

So Trump has basically two years left and now is the time that the wagons will begin to muster to work out who is going to take on the republicans at the next election. While AOC and John Ossoff have been suggested as potential candidates the next President in waiting is unquestionably Gavin Newsom.

Newsom has his critics and they point at his record on homelessness in California. A supposed 58% increase has seen more than 170,000 have nowhere to live and then he was unable to deliver the 3.5 million homes that were required to help solve the crisis. Then there have been failed rail projects and the fact that businesses have left California for Texas and Florida all of which has many looking at the now former Governor as someone that may not be able to deliver the much needed cost of living relief that the US so desperately needs.

His supporters though paint the picture of a very different man. Meals for underprivileged kids at low income schools, homelessness that has apparently decreased based on his teams figures and the successful management of a $4.5 trillion economy with California bering the largest state in the US. There is more to Newsome than home grown matter though, he is an outstanding diplomat, akin to Obama and has age on his side. At 59 he wouldn't be the youngest president but he wouldn't be as old as the last two the US has had!

The sensible choice for the republican nomination is Marco Rubio, smart, articulate, highly educated and experienced and for the democrats as much as AOC and Ossoff represent the future it's Newsom that is the man of the moment and as much as there is considerable irony with it, the man who could indeed make America great again.

The false hope politicians offer us...

The Victorian election campaign has been awful for the Labor party. The Ben Carroll lead labor party at time of writing is behind in every poll no matter its political leanings and look on track to be hammered with carroll potentially losing his own seat of Niddrie. While labor has run an appalling campaign we have to ask, don't we need campaigns that are run on policies that can be accounted should a party win office? And further show us the details. Now we have a parliament that supposedly holds sitting governments to account when the don't deliver on policy but by then it's too late, people have voted and the party elected. I know we shouldn't trust politicians but when people are in desperate need and in swings a politician promising change when they simply don't do what they said they would that's when we need to say enough ie enough. There need to be some kind of commitment made and details given rather than this attitude of give the people what they want and change it all later when we get in.

The best example I personally can give of this is teeth.

Now to some this may seem an odd choice but the Carroll governments offer of FREE dental is the best example of utter bullshit I can personally give you from lived experience. Now we know there are massive issues with corruption, back door deals, invoices not being real, overblown budgets on infrastructure builds etc...but while all of that has relevance to us as tax payers it's things like dental care that change our daily lives.



For years I have had issues with my teeth. A horrific dental experience as a kid had me avoid going to the dentist like the plague. It was never a priority within my neglectful childhood and when I was a poor opera singer with bills to pay it was even less of a priority, but when things began to hurt id only go when the pain became intolerable. My teeth, to me, became a humiliation, they were chipped, broken and rotting in my head. When yet another one became painful and another extraction was done I investigated how I could use my measly superannuation money to have my teeth fixed once and for all. $50,000, five and half hours of general anaesthetic, all my top teeth taken out, three bottom ones taken out, implants put in and more than 6 dental visits post surgery I can smile for the first time in my life without being humiliated. Implants have no feeling given they have no nerves in them so getting used to chewing with no feeling is an experience but aesthetically they look great.

BE WHAT NOT MANY OTHER PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO BE...PERSISTENT



The reality of dental pain is not one many of us that have experienced it would wish on their worst enemy. While I have never experienced child birth dental pain is all consuming and has some people taking things like endone on a daily basis to deal with it. They take the heavy painkillers, why? Because they simply cannot afford to go to the dentist to have the pain taken away or have put in place a treatment plan that helps them long term...enter Ben Carroll and his FREE dental surgeries.

To offer someone in pain false hope is a terrible thing to do and when it comes to those that have suffered or continue to suffer with dental pain, but that's exactly what Carroll has done. There is no doubt that the system that oversees dental treatment needs looking at but with his so called FREE dental clinics Carroll isn't telling the whole truth. When people show up at the dentist wth pain it usually means they have an underlying issue that needs to be dealt with. But show up at Benny's dental clinic with a serious issue with your teeth and guess what? Not everything is quite so FREE anymore! And this is where politicians shouldn't be offering hope to those that experience profound pain because the reality is that yes the check up is free, but what comes next is certainly not. Believe me I know how the bills can stack up if you do need serious dental work.

As much as I can point to the idea of FREE dental as my own example of absolute bullshit we actually need better checks and balances on political promises. No we don't have elections everyday but if we are serious about maintaining democracy as our best form of government then it's well past time to make sure there is follow through and detail from the people we elect to do what they said they would.

What is modern conservatism?

With Victoria about to elect a Liberal government and with the right wing populists in One Nation about to win more seats than it ever has what is modern conservatism? Right wingers are supposedly more conservative in their values than left wingers, with the left being more ‘progressive’, but given we could potentially see the right dominate not only Victoria but also the federal parliament what is modern conservatism and should we be worried or happy for the change?

The original ideology of the liberal party was freedom of the individual, the right to live your life the way you choose. Support for small business, less government, faith, family, education and clearly defined gender roles, with gender being male and female. Jump forward a few decades and conservatism hasn’t really stayed up to date with the world, it’s the big reason why the federal libs have been hammered by Albo and why they have failed to knock labor off for so long, well in Victoria it’s one of the reasons. But the point is conservatives haven’t really been able to define themselves. Yes the boomers still believe in god, king and country but how does that translate into votes from the 20 to 30 somethings?

In Victoria the libs will win not because they’re conservative but because labor are that bad and t is also the potential reason federally but with this inability to define conservatism in walks One Nation. One Nation is indeed a right wing party but they’ve blown past traditional conservatism and used division, race, hate, in some cases violence and supposed support for low and middle income earners to offer a right wing alternative to the labor progressives. One Nation don’t like immigrants, they’re nationalistic (which is good), they’re not supporting government paid for abortion, they don’t trust the media in any form, they believe any form of control over social media is the denial of freedom of speech, they don’t trust educators with history and they think climate change is a hoax. Now some of that is ok, but most of it is dangerous and mindless and certainly not a new definition of conservatism.

So what is modern conservatism? Well it unquestionably starts with freedom, the freedom to live your own life without government involved in it. Yes a government needs to supply public services etc…but as for intruding on the lives of citizens? No. Next there must be nationalistic pride and if you don’t like that then don’t stay. Embrace the culture rather than fight against it. We have a proud multi cultural history and population that we proudly embrace but we must maintain our identity as a unified Australia. Equality, religious freedom within the confines of decency, support for small business, the encouragement of overseas investment and the support of Australian industries across tech, mining, agriculture and education (to name a few). A fair go, a place to call home, a place not divided by hate but unified in its desire to indeed be the lucky country and one of great opportunity for this that come here and those that have been here for millions of years.

It’s not actually that complicated but sadly the agreed definition of modern conservatism while a common sense approach for some seems impossible to comprehend for most. You simply can’t be everything to everyone all the time but you cant teach stupid to be smart.

The media & the rise of the populist right wing version of it

I am of the firm belief you should be able to source what ever information you want. Yes there are lines of human decency and of course the law, but in a world full of misinformation and so much choice as to where you can find information we have a responsibility to source our own information.

Some news sources are better than others, some are left wing, some are right wing and some try to sit in the middle. Hoodies is unquestionably centre right but we do everything we can to offer credit where its due and criticism also where it's due. Some other agencies simply don't bother to offer one side over the other and it usually is the attitude delivered by right wing almost extremists news services. Across the world we have right wing media I mean the Murdoch family have made billions out of it, but it's the podcasters, those that post short form video and the media outlets that cause division over actual journalism that are a real issue.

The likes of Two Worlds Collide podcast, Rebel News and to some degree the Karl Stefanovic show are just some examples of right wing media that is indeed aiming to divide rather than unite. If we stick with just these three as our subject matter we can see how some have gone from wanting to be a voice of common sense to now pushing into the headline grabbing statements or stunts to raise brand awareness.



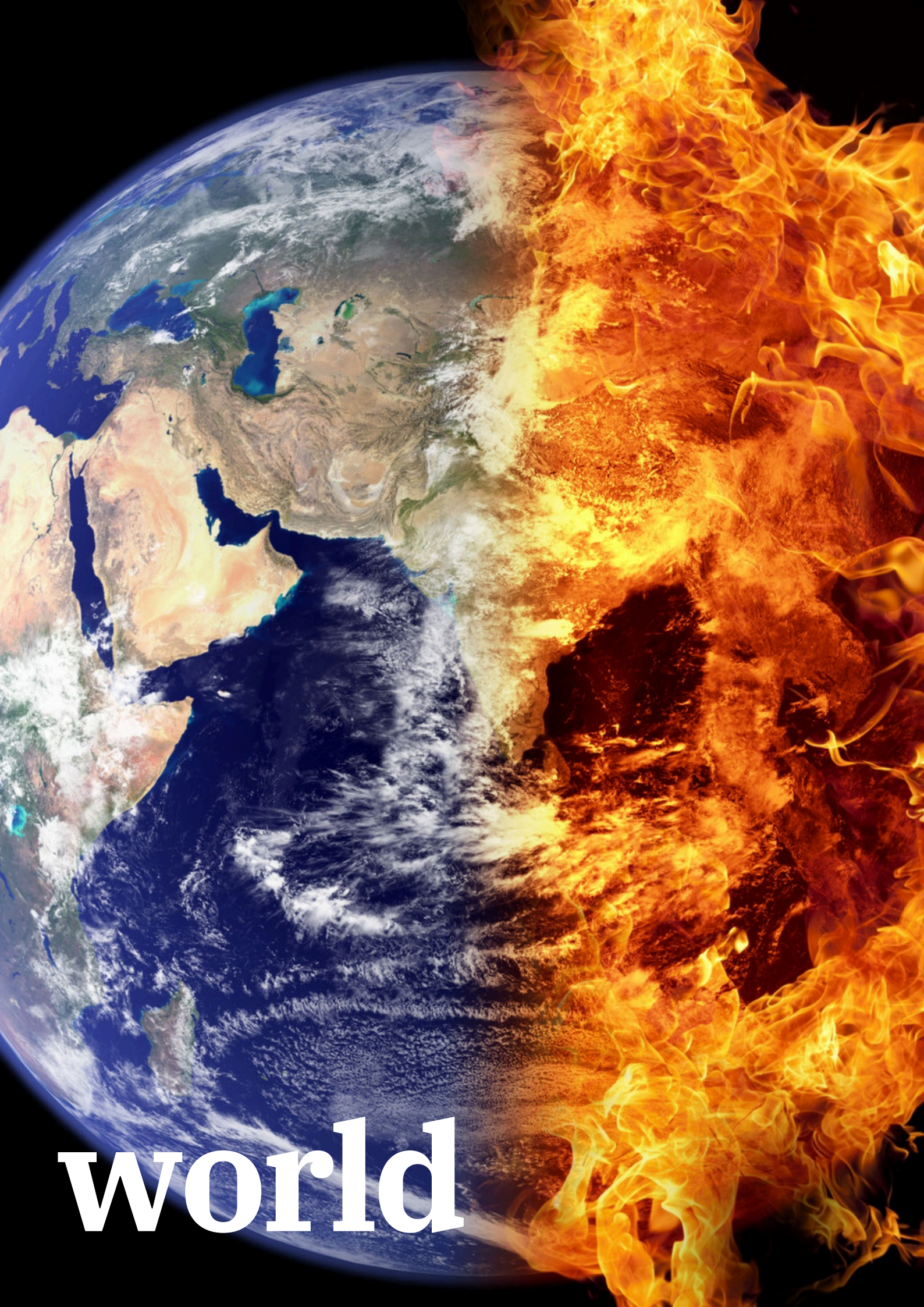
The Two Worlds collide podcast did indeed arts off as an ex serviceman wanting to make a difference, Sam Bamford wanted to and did call out the utter hypocrisy of the federal government when it came to support for veterans. Jump forward past the 120 or so episodes that he's done and its gone from being stories of resilience to right wing extremism that are hate laden swearing rants about the government. Why? Because as we've seen with hospitals One Nation have played the state election campaign in Victoria division in the algorithm gets eyes balls and what do eyes balls get? Money.

Over at Rebel News Avi Yemini is selling his version of anti Palestine rhetoric as freedom of the press. Avi shows up with his trusted minions to video all thats going on when he antagonises anyone that disagrees with him. In a recent attempt by Avi to cause more disruption he showed up at a rally in the Melbourne CBD only to be told by police to leave the area as his presence would enflame an already tense situation. What did Avi do? Antagonise police and get himself, arrested. Since being arrested Avi and Rebel news have started a campaign to fund his defence bia media lawyer, Justin Quill, Avi doesn't want a cheap lawyer by the looks. This isn't journalism, it's protesting for clicks and possible revenue. Does it make a difference in the world? In some cases yes because while One Nation were locking out the ABC and SBS from their press conferences who did they let in? Rebel News and Avi Yemini.

Then there's Karl Stefanovic. The man who left channel 9 in a blaze of glory, but then shame as he decided meeting up with toxic UK right winger Tommy Robinson was a good idea. In the post Tommy wash up Karl blew his own life up, not really from a financial perspective given he'd been making millions for years, but from the perspective of having any kind of real credibility in the media.

Karl ended up in court with his now former business partner over the rights to the podcast he'd started and now fields a series of right wing guests who are barely relevant to the world air large. The big difference between what some one like Karl is doing and what the likes of Joe Rogan do is that they diversify and in Rogan's case admit (to some degree) when they're wrong. Rogan has publicly criticised thee Trump administration after being such a massive support of the President, whereas Karl is all in on Pauline Hanson and has zero time for either of the major parties.

The bottom line for this whole populist right wing media industry is that it is less about credible journalism and more about making money with clicks and eye balls. There's nothing wrong with wanting a news outlet to make money but when people start taking the words these right wingers have to say seriously then thats when Houston we have a problem. My advice? Read as much as you can, listen to all sides of an issues and make informed choices not ones yelled at you under shroud of supposed credibility.


world

Are we in need of a reset?

With Gavin Newsome questioning the future operations of the UN and its role in geo politics is it actually time to start looking at how the world should adapt to what it is faced with now and into the future? The answer is a resounding yes, but what exactly should we be moving to? This isn't about conspiracy theories or offering tech oligarchs yet more power it's about coming to terms with a world that is a very different one to when the UN in particular was founded in 1945.

The UN does indeed do some fantastic humanitarian work but when it comes to economic controls or helping end global conflict it doesn't hold that much sway. The arrival of social media has barely been a talking point for the UN and now with the rise of the almost unaccountable world of Ai and its founders we need much better controls around who can do what when and how.

While there are indeed several global organisations charged with various protections of the world we need to adapt to the ever changing world and reassess how we unite rather than further divide. There's no doubt that there would be massive push back from all manner of countries and political parties to new global organisational accountability but we seem to be allowing the gap between the very rich and the very poor to be widening. It may be the case that the world's second tier countries, like Canada, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, France, Germany etc form the basis of these new organisations, but for a range of new global accountability organisations to be truly successful they would need the likes of the US, Russia and China involved at some level as well.

So what does the future look like for global accountability?



1. World Peace and Security Council
An independent conflict-resolution body with representatives from all major regions. Its job would be early intervention, mediation, ceasefire negotiations and monitoring breaches of international agreements.

2. Global Technology and AI Authority
International standards for AI safety, autonomous weapons, deepfakes, digital privacy and algorithmic manipulation. Independent scientific oversight rather than politicians writing technology rules they barely understand.

3. Global Economic Stability Council
A watchdog for systemic global economic risks, trade disruption, sovereign debt crises and financial contagion. It would coordinate with existing institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, not simply duplicate them.

4. Global Information and Media Integrity Commission
An independent body examining coordinated disinformation, foreign influence campaigns, manipulation of social media and the transparency of major digital platforms. Crucially, it must protect free speech rather than become a global censorship authority.

5. Global Human Development Council
Focused on poverty, education, health, food security, water, population pressures and the future of employment. A practical institution measured by improvements in people's lives rather than declarations.

A monumental amount of work would need to be done to make any or all of these organisations a reality and no one nation should have control, but as we head towards an uncertain future it’s time for change. It’s time for new accountabilities and it’s time people of the world at least took back some control of their own futures.

The hypothetical world



Coming from the over educated family of dysfunctional lawyers that I do I remember being forced to watch but then enjoying watching the much acclaimed series by Human Rights Barrister, Geoffrey Robertson, ‘Hypotheticals’. The series was Robertson taking the news of the day and putting it into a hypothetical world expanded upon by a panel of guests all experts in their chosen fields. I am nowhere near the writer or orator that Robertson is, but given the current state of the world I thought we could offer a hypothetical look at the world and the global super powers of ping Pang and Pong. A world that is trying to shift away from social media and to a new world of anti intelligence.

It’s the year 2026 and a technology called Anti intelligence is taking over the world. The goal of anti intelligence is to drop the intelligence levels of the world’s population so tech companies can make trillions of dollars for themselves and for governments that are now aiming to rule their respective countries with a decent mix of fear, division, hate, racism and misinformation. It’s incorrect to suggest the world is living in a 1984 simulation but instead a reality that is far away from the freedoms and joys generations that by gone eras would’ve known.

One of the tech companies that enables the Anti intelligence soft ware is a company called Wanda. Wanda was set up and is owned by one man, Doug Davies and Doug loves life. Doug’s signature clothing at his big meetings is a black caftan with matching black crocs. Doug is not a tall man and as much as he’s a very wealthy man he often seems to wear said caftans that are a little short causing him to sometimes trip over the hems of his clothing. But Doug is a smart successful and very wealthy short Scottish man who at 5’4” and weighing in at 110Kg’s is a catch for the right woman.

Doug’s company Wanda makes the buttons that go on the anti intelligence machines that the tech companies make and Wanda is one of only two companies in the world that makes these buttons. To give you some context the anti intelligence machine is not unlike your standard mobile phone, but it is only for anti social media. The anti social media device or machine was launched to counter the toxicity and damage actual social media was doing to society. The tech companies and governments worked together to develop the anti social media machines that united people, that gave them the opportunity to discuss issues of importance and to discuss them in an unfiltered and inclusive environment. They machines or devices have been a huge hit and more than 96% of the population has one.

The anti social machines hold everyone's data and while the three world super powers of, Ping, Pong and Pang are supposedly at war with each other to get control of the global anti intelligence race secrecy between the three countries is of critical importance. Doug Davies and his company Wanda are based in Ping, but Doug has been wanting to sell his buttons to Pong. The previous government of Ping wouldn't allow the deal to go through, but when President Dump took office he allowed Wanda to sell Pong a few buttons, but not enough for Pong to get a hold in the Anti intelligence market, yet.

With Doug Davies being a man in his late 50's and being very wealthy when a nice lady from Pong said smiled at him and said she liked his caftan he instantly fell in love. Davies left his wife and 11 children for Mandy, the nice lady from pong and said she could have whatever she wanted. Back at the office of President Dump one of his minions told the president that Doug had left his wife for a woman from Ping and there might be an issue with buttons. President Dump said don't worry about it as it was all part of his son in laws plan to get buttons to Pong because the Dumps had done a deal with Pong.

Upon hearing of Doug's relationship with Mandy president dump organised a zoom call with king of pong, Steve Ping and President of pang Jose smith. Dump told Ping and Smith that everything was on track and that they would soon control the entire world between them and hang the blame on poor old Doug.

Several months later a report in the highly regarded Old Duke Clock news paper it was revealed that the anti intelligence software was a threat to national security and that the leaders of ping, pang and pong along with Doug had colluded to try and control the world for their own political and monetary gain. In the wake of the damming article a Ping senate hearing decided that all anti intelligence machines must be made illegal and destroyed. The senate went on to say that the world should shift back to 'social' media and turned its attention to bringing back social media apps that were readily available on mobile phones.

In the end ladies and gentlemen a crisis was averted but was it?

Promised Melbourne or the Melbourne we really need?

MANSI PARSANA



There is something about how we talk about Melbourne's future. Every few months, we are given a new image of the city: a new plan, new planning reforms and new policies. And somehow what we imagined becomes memory now and then. As a planner, I understand why the city changes, but as a citizen, I struggle. We see Melbourne with bikes. We see electric cars quietly gliding through streets, and those streets with apartment towers where once we had houses. We have offices that are in the process of their own transformation to housing. Even the familiar image of a quiet street, people sitting outside a café and talking without rushing anywhere, starts to feel like something we are slowly turning into a memory. As a person, I feel nostalgic, but as a planner, I want to understand how we can change the city without losing the experiences that made us live here in the first place.

To me; Life happens, not planned. Cities are no different. They are a collection of aspirations, decisions, and experiences; layered over one another. What planners imagined is one part; the story is about how people actually live and adapt a place. And today we are about to face a real test of aspirations and reality. Victoria needs around 2.24 million homes; where at least 70 per cent in the established area rather than pushing development to greenfields.

The future is here. New Melbourne. Now the question is: whether we are sensible enough to cater for the housing issue and aspiration together, or it would be no way around. And nowhere is that tension more obvious than in the way we move through the city Transport is another addition to that. Bicycles and Bike lanes. Electric vehicles and charging points. Fewer parking spaces and increased usage of public transport. Suddenly, all govern how people should be living their lives rather than giving them a choice to opt for their most suitable mode. Changing the mode of transportation does not lead to a better life or a better city. Choices and adaptability do. A planner should start with a question: how do people actually live?

A young professional living in Carlton or Richmond may happily cycle to work, while a family in the outer suburbs might require two cars. A tradie won't replace a ute with a bicycle, while an older person may prefer to drive as the nearest tram stop is too far to walk. For a parent, driving would be convenient to school, sports, and to run errands. When we start designing around this, it gets complex.

I believe that future Melbourne should provide choices, not just a case to opt for. There is another side to this conversation as well. We can choose to say no. No to everything: the houses, apartments, development; everything. But a city cannot be paused. Melbourne grows. Melbourne is growing. Melbourne is evolving. The Victorian government projected that by 2051, more than eight million would call Melbourne home. They need a place to live. They need schools. Jobs. Emergency services. Infrastructure, Transportation. They need necessities.

So how do we do this? Increasing density? Development in greenfields? Readapting abandoned buildings? How? Perhaps the answer is not one, but a combination of all in the right place and at the right scale. Victorian Housing Strategy addresses this by increasing density around locations that have strong public transportation, jobs, shops and community services. Housing diversity is catered to. Though housing affordability is a question. Infrastructure comes with housing.
Building homes with insufficient schools, parks, transportation, and local services won't thrive people. Here Melbourne changes its character. With new housing, the built-open ratio changed; now backyards get less while built-up gets higher. More apartments. More Townhouses. No backyards and courtyards. Rescode strives to respond to the neighbouring context, though it contradicts itself. With such development that doesn't tie to the neighbouring context and amenities. This is not the diversity and density that Melbourne needs.

It is not about how many homes we can fit on a site but asking whether people who live there enjoy the place around them. Density without amenities is not leading anywhere.
Once we start asking what happens to the spaces we already have, another comes into view: empty offices and shops. Walking through the CBD or any suburb centre, I observe that it is changing rapidly. Say, for example, walking through the Auburn centre, there were empty shops, and suddenly you see shops with new facades and occupied. Or say we spent decades building the CBD; then the working style changed. Now the designed city feels empty.

We started by converting offices to homes then. Obvious decision: empty buildings and housing shortage. Problem solved. Except urban planning is not as simple as it seems to be. Not every office building could become a good apartment. The functionality and purpose of the building changes everything. Minute details matter. Balcony matters. Structure matters. Location matters. Money matters. Everything. Answering housing need with an abandoned building isn't the implication of good planning. That doesn't mean we should ignore the opportunity.

Instead, it should be pursued. Housing is beyond the term; it could be student accommodation, it could be hotels, shared accommodation. Adaptive reuse should not be only housing; it could be any functional usage. It is about valuable urban land. It is about people.

A young person is not able to afford a home, while older people are not able to manage theirs. A family moves to affordable housing. An inclusive community is not just about catering to crises, but needs access to daily and basic life amenities. With newer development, maintenance of existing infrastructure and amenities is as important. Fix potholes. Provide enough parking. Make cycling safe. Public transportation frequency in the outer suburbs should be improved.
Making planning decisions faster and more precise, where proposals not only meet standards but suffices the contextual environment. This is evolution. This builds a city. Here the contradiction about Melbourne becomes obvious.

The dilemma comes when you have to opt for one or another, either a house or an apartment, a car or public transport. A good city is not about opting for one; it is about balancing the competing needs. This is what planning addresses. A young person may want an apartment close to work. A family may want a backyard. An older resident may want to stay in the same neighbourhood but move into a smaller, more accessible home. A tradie may need a car. Another resident may never need one. Someone may cycle to work every day, while someone else may need to drive. Life coexists. Melbourne's planning framework talks about this. Plan Melbourne identified the need for housing close to jobs and services, integrated transport, greater housing diversity, urban renewal and affordable housing.

Plan for Victoria further carries the same ambitions. Melbourne has visions. What we lack is confidence to turn them into a coherent city. The challenge is not about image; it is about whether we are willing to change, what we are determined to keep, and how we can coexist together.
Looking forward to Melbourne 2050 not just as a futuristic city but a city where suburbs absorb growth without losing their unique identity. I see people opting for things that they need. Social housing being a part of an ordinary neighbourhood. Development and infrastructure come hand in hand. Evidence-based planning decisions which interests long-term city rather than just a political argument. Building a city for people is what we look forward to. Melbourne does not need to become a perfect city but a better version of itself.

Life happens, not planned.

As a planner, the job is not to control but to create flexibility.



Cop31



TWell if anyone needed more proof that the world was totally divided on the future of climate change and how best to handle it if at all then they need but look at what's happened at Cop31. The climate summit in Turkey ends with no agreement being reached and federal energy and climate change minister staring down into a black hole that could take his job. No matter how you look at this it's a massive failure for Bowen and the federal government.

The two key issues out of Cop31 were that the oil rich states in the Middle East didn't want the agreement to mention fossil fuels and secondly poorer nations pointed to article 9.1 of the Paris agreement to say that more developed countries, ie ones that are wealthier have an obligation to these smatter poorer countries to help fund their shift to renewables. The conference could not agree on either point and delegates left with no agreement.

For Bowen who has made a number of promises on renewables he leaves Turkey looking like one. Going into the last election Bowen said power prices would come down by $275, they haven't. Australia would have 82% of its power generated by renewables by 2030, that's not happening. In fact the federal government are now looking at cutting the home battery rebate as a cost saving measure. A 43% emissions cut by 2030, again not happening and of course he promised a deal at Cop31.

Now Bowen like the rest of the Labor party are masters at saying no no no look at all the other good stuff we did like torch the housing market and kick on inflation, but you cant help but think Bowen might be on shaky ground here. The idea of Bowen going to Cop31 was to put Australia on the map as a leader in the renewable market, but given we account for less than 2% of global emissions and that we can't seem to organise an agreement as to the right way forward on climate change you'd think Bowen might be in trouble.

Leaving Chris Bowen aside if the world is genuinely serious about lowering emissions and if it is serious about climate change (even if the right wingers deny it's existence) then we need to do better and we need to go over the heads of those that proliferate emissions and make billions off the sale of fossil fuels. Change is about hard decisions and doing hard things and right now the world is not ready for either.

What happened to privacy?



In the last few days I've and several unpleasant encounters with people over what they think is their right to video and photograph me or people in our little cafe in Baxter. It leads me to ask what happened to people's privacy or their right to not feature on other people's socials even if it is perceived by them as being of benefit to someone.

The rise of the influencer has seen the hospitality sector in particular inundated with those that show up with phones and or handheld cameras videoing everything from coffee being made, to drinks being poured and plates being put down on tables. Social media is part of the industry nowadays but when does consent become a real thing? I wouldn't walk up to a person the street with my phone pointed at them, they'd quite rightly get upset, but in a restaurant or cafe? All bets are off.

At school concerts now where kids are present we are quite rightly reminded not to film and neither should we, but when you look at the type of intrusions some people have to endure you think shouldn't we have better protections in place? The recent photos and video of Pat Cummins and his wife, Isaac Heeney and his partner all arguing or in deep conversation was recorded by some absolute scum bags and then no doubt sold to various media outlets for everyone to see. How was that an invasion of privacy?

People will argue that if you're going to put yourself in the public domain you get what you deserve but really? With the advent of smart glasses where does it end? Yes said glasses are under review but we are entitled to our privacy. We live in a world of social media and instant gratification but while we seem happy to hand over our information to social media companies we have a right to privacy no matter who we are.



culture & soul

Marco, Gordon & Heston sit down for lunch

There are three names within the modern hospitality world that are revered, respected and that will live on for generations to come. They are Marco Pierre White, Gordon Ramsey and Heston Blumenthal. All of them have had massive success, especially Ramsey and all are no at ages where they can look back at what they achieved in an era of absolute brutality within the hospitality industry.

The BBC in the UK has made a documentary that can be seen on You Tube in Australia about these three chefs. The series is in three parts with the first two episodes telling each of their life stories. Marco at Le Gavroche, Ramsey at Harvey's and Heston with Raymond Blanc were all chefs that showed incredible talent and commitment but also a fearless dedication to hard work and brutality. But it is in the third episode where the three men are brought together for a lunch where they each eat a dish made famous by the other chefs.

To see the three of them sit down together is quite the event and god bless the team that served them but for me it's Marco that is the King of them all. Ramsey would no doubt disagree with that given his extraordinary success right across the world but for me it was Marco that put the UK on the map when it came for top end cooking. Yes there was Le Gavroche and Blanc but it was Marco that was the first rock star chef and he did not give a single flying fuck if you liked his food or not, but if you didn't you could really fuck off.

The kitchen at Harvey's was manic and completely unsustainable. Caviar ordered like it was as cheap as fried chips, foie gras, meat, premium wines and enough staff to feed 1,000 it was the picture of excess and it was brilliant. It was all that hospitality was and to some degree still should be.

The world of Gordon Ramsey is corporate turning over hundred over millions each year and is a machine. Id the passion still there for cooking from Ramsey? Yes but it's also about much much more nowadays. For Blumenthal he has struggled with serious mental health and drug issues and even though he's slowly coming back to the world as he comes to terms with taking lithium on a regular basis he shares Marco's almost unrivalled passion for food. Blumenthal is a genius of that there is no doubt and sadly it nearly killed him, but what this documentary series shows us are three men who have loved their journey and have luckily given us a small insight into how they did it all.

I'm sadly not sure when the series will be available on a streaming g service but it is available on You Tube and despite the annoying ads it is well worth watching.

The changing world of hospitality

GIUSEPPE SANTORO

I have spent most of my working life in hospitality. I have worked in kitchens, managed restaurants, trained people and supervised multiple venues. I have seen businesses grow, struggle, close and sometimes come back stronger.

My hospitality experience has taken me across Australia, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, including Italy, Iran, Dubai, India, Singapore and China. Working across different cultures, markets and generations of hospitality has given me different perspectives on how our industry is evolving.
And if there is one thing I have learned, it is this: A busy restaurant is not necessarily a profitable restaurant. That distinction has probably never been more important than it is today.

Walk through Melbourne on a Friday or Saturday night and many restaurants look healthy. Tables are full. The docket printer doesn't stop. Staff are running. Delivery drivers are waiting outside.
From the dining room, everything looks successful. Then Monday morning arrives.
Wages. Superannuation. Rent. Electricity. Ingredients. Insurance. Packaging. Merchant fees. Delivery commissions. Repairs. Suddenly that busy Saturday night looks very different. Australian hospitality doesn't simply have a revenue problem. It has a margin problem. And increasing prices every time costs rise is not a long-term solution.

The industry changed. Did we?
One of the biggest mistakes we can make is comparing today's hospitality industry with the one we knew ten or fifteen years ago. It is a different business. Customers have changed. Employees have changed. Immigration has changed. Technology has changed. Costs have changed.
But in many restaurants, the management model hasn't. Australia's hospitality industry has benefited enormously from immigration. I am an immigrant myself, so I say this from experience rather than from the outside. Generations of people arriving in Australia from different parts of the world didn't simply fill jobs. They brought knowledge, recipes, techniques, culture, work ethic and ambition. They helped create the extraordinary food culture Australia enjoys today. But immigration and the labour market have evolved. For many migrants in previous generations, hospitality became a profession, a family business or the beginning of a new life in Australia.

Today, for a significant part of the workforce, hospitality can instead be a temporary stop: something done while studying, travelling, waiting for another opportunity or building a different career. There is nothing wrong with that. The mistake is expecting today's workforce to behave exactly like the workforce of twenty years ago.

You cannot build a 2026 hospitality business around a 2006 workforce model. Recruiting somebody is not the same as developing somebody. And having enough names on a roster doesn't mean you have a professional team. We need to make hospitality a profession again

For years our industry has complained: "We can't find staff." Perhaps we should ask a different question: Why should talented people choose us? If hospitality wants professionalism, hospitality has to offer a professional environment. Training cannot consist of putting a new employee next to somebody for two shifts and hoping they learn. People need standards, leadership, feedback and opportunities to progress. Most importantly, they need to understand why things are done, not simply what to do. A trained employee costs money. An untrained employee costs much more.
Mistakes, waste, poor portion control, incorrect orders, inconsistent service, customer complaints and staff turnover quietly destroy margins every day. The solution isn't always another person on the roster. Sometimes the solution is making the people already there better. Stop managing percentages. Start managing the restaurant. Food cost is important. Labour percentage is important. Rent is important. But numbers without context can become dangerous.

I have seen operators spend hours negotiating a few cents off a product while thousands of dollars disappear through poor rostering, unnecessary preparation, oversized portions, incorrect ordering and waste. That isn't cost control. It's cost theatre. Real cost control begins with understanding what happens inside your restaurant every day. How much product goes into each dish? How much gets thrown away? How many people do you actually need at 3pm? Which dishes sell? And, importantly, which dishes make money? Those are not necessarily the same thing. Your most popular dish can also be one of your least profitable. That is why menu engineering is no longer optional. Every operator should understand the real contribution of the products they sell. Sometimes removing three dishes can improve a business more than adding ten new ones.

A smaller, smarter menu can mean less stock, less preparation, less waste, faster service, easier training and more consistent food. Complexity has a cost. Stop trying to be everything to everyone This may be uncomfortable, but I believe many restaurants have lost their identity.Pizza, pasta, burgers, breakfast, cocktails, delivery, takeaway, specials, twenty desserts and a menu that requires a small book. Why? Customers should understand what you do within seconds. Some of the strongest hospitality businesses are successful because they have learned to say no. They know their product. They know their customer. And they execute consistently.You don't need seventy dishes. You need enough great dishes that customers want to come back for.

Technology should remove work, not create it Hospitality has embraced technology rapidly.POS systems, reservations, online ordering, delivery platforms, scheduling software and automated purchasing can all help. But technology is useful only when it simplifies the operation. I sometimes see restaurants with five different systems that don't communicate with each other and managers spend ing hours transferring information between them. That isn't innovation.

It's administration. Technology should give managers more time on the floor, with customers and with their teams. Because hospitality, despite everything that has changed, remains a people business. Don't cut the thing customers came for. When margins tighten, businesses often panic. Reduce the portion. Buy a cheaper ingredient. Remove one employee. Reduce training. Cut cleaning hours. Slowly, the customer notices. And once customers stop believing you offer value, getting them back is incredibly difficult.

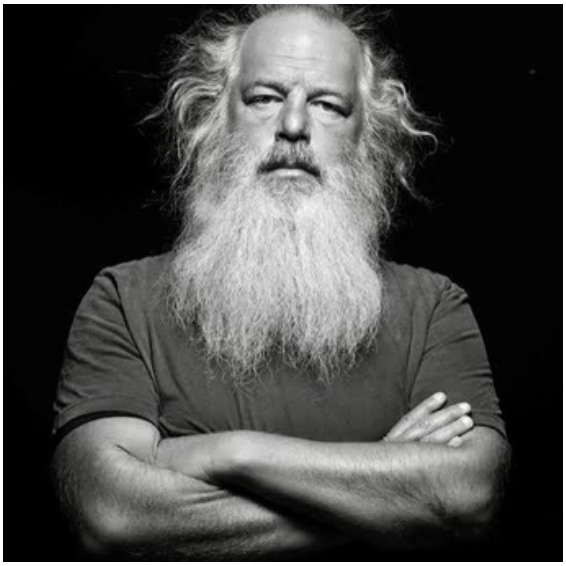
Cost cutting and cost management are not the same thing. Never save $1 if it destroys $10 of perceived value. Instead, simplify the operation behind the customer experience. The customer doesn't care if you have six suppliers instead of twelve. They care whether their food is good, the restaurant is clean, the service feels genuine and the experience is worth the money. Protect those things. Leadership still matters

There is one final issue we don't discuss enough. Leadership. Hospitality cannot be managed entirely from a spreadsheet. Numbers tell you what happened. Your restaurant tells you why it happened. Owners and senior managers need to spend time inside their businesses. Talk to the dishwasher. Watch the pass during service. Look inside the cool room. Ask customers what they enjoyed. Ask employees what slows them down. Some of the most valuable information in a restaurant will never appear on a P&L. The businesses that survive the next few years won't necessarily be the biggest or the cheapest. I believe they will be the ones that understand their identity, know their numbers, invest in professional people and adapt to Australia's changing workforce without forgetting the fundamental reason hospitality exists: the customer.

Hospitality is going through a difficult period. But difficult periods also force industries to evolve. Perhaps that isn't entirely a bad thing. Because we don't need to return to the hospitality industry we had before. We need to build a better one. There is still much more to discuss: menu profitability, labour productivity, training, purchasing, leadership, technology and the real numbers behind a restaurant. Each of those deserves more than a paragraph. So perhaps we should leave those conversations for the next column.



The man behind the beard belongs in the hall!



Rick Rubin has never been the loudest person in the room. He sits barefoot behind the console, bearded and silent, while the artists make the noise. Yet for four decades, the records that shaped rock, hip-hop and metal have carried his fingerprints, and on November 14, 2026, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame finally made it official.

Start with the sound. In the early 1980s, Rubin co-founded Def Jam from a New York University dorm room and stripped hip-hop down to drum machines, raw samples and ferocious attitude. His work with Run-DMC and the Beastie Boys proved that rap and rock guitars could collide rather than politely coexist, and his label launched Public Enemy. Then he gave Slayer's Reign in Blood its brutal clarity, showing that metal could be savage and precise at once.

Then there is the rescue work. In the 1990s he sat down with Johnny Cash, a country legend who had fallen out of favour with the industry, and recorded him with little more than a guitar. The American Recordings albums introduced Cash to a new generation and produced some of the most powerful music of his life. Rubin did similar things for Neil Young, Tom Petty and Metallica, coaxing veteran artists back toward what made them matter in the first place.

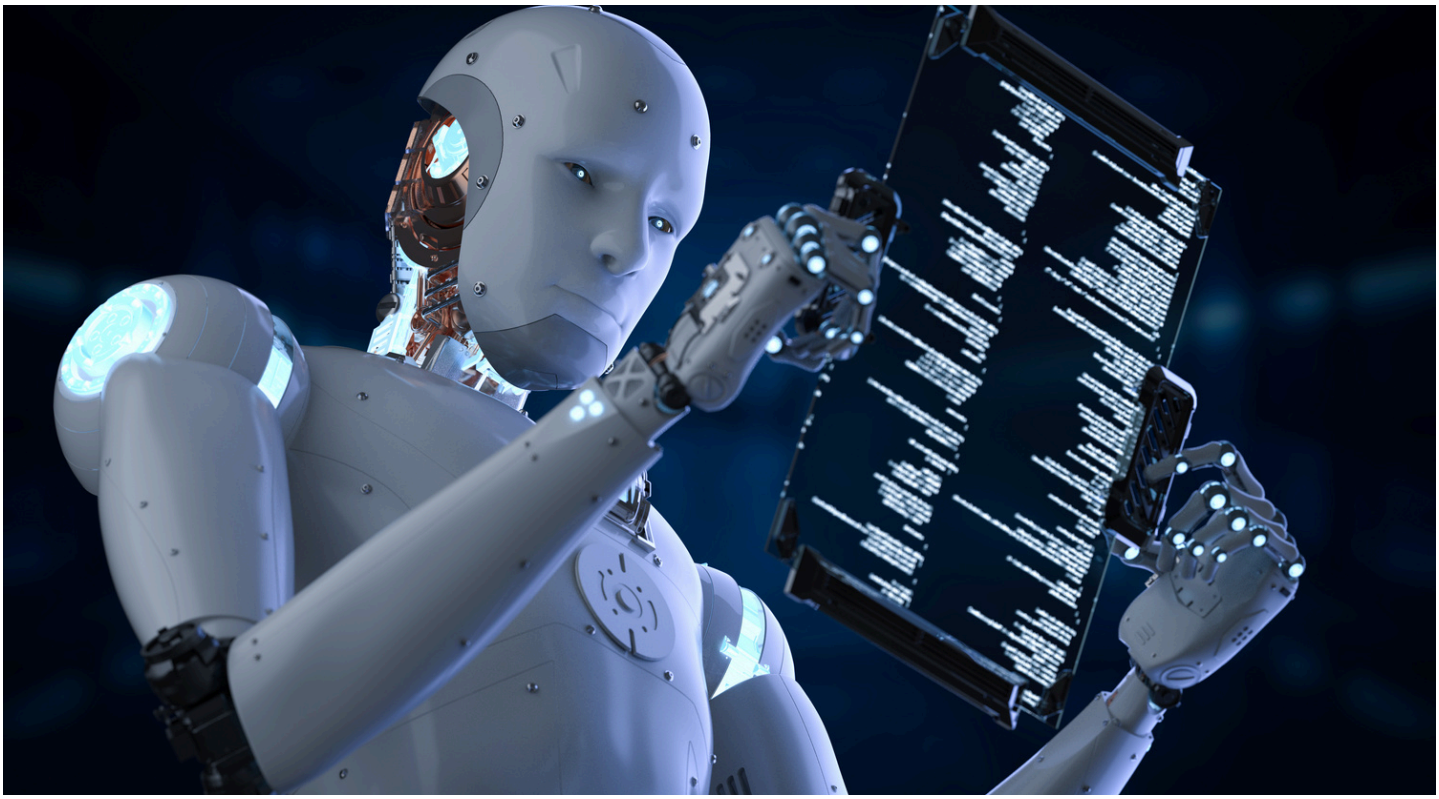
And nobody illustrates his value better than the Red Hot Chili Peppers. He guided eight of their albums, including Blood Sugar Sex Magik, Californication and Stadium Arcadium. Those records turned a funk-punk band from Los Angeles into global stars, and they remain the sound many listeners think of when they hear the band's name.
Critics sometimes argue that producers sit outside rock's story because they do not play the instruments or write the songs. That misunderstands the job. A great producer is an editor, a coach and a filter, deciding what to keep, what to cut and when to leave a mistake alone. Rubin's genius lies in subtraction. He removes the clutter until only the song and the performer remain, which is why so many of his records still sound immediate decades later.

At the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles, Rubin received the Musical Excellence Award, with Neil Young presenting the honour. The Red Hot Chili Peppers performed dressed as Rubin himself, complete with white wigs, bushy beards and orange sunglasses, a fittingly irreverent tribute to a man who has always preferred the music to the spotlight. It was the right way to honour someone whose influence is everywhere yet rarely announced.

Fittingly, his acceptance speech was shorter than most introductions. He had said everything with the records, and in one sentence he proved it, leaving the stage with these final, defiant words: "You can't kill rock and roll. Thank you."



Ai & creativity



Rick Rubin has never claimed to play an instrument or understand a mixing desk. His genius, by his own account, lies in taste: knowing what to keep, what to strip away, and when a work is finished. That is why his relaxed view of artificial intelligence deserves attention. If creativity is largely about choosing, then a machine that generates options might simply be another tool in the studio.

History supports him. The synthesiser was once accused of killing musicianship. Photography was said to threaten painting. Sampling, auto-tune and drum machines each triggered panic before becoming instruments in their own right. Every new technology widens the palette, and the artists who thrive are those who bring intention to it. An algorithm can produce a thousand melodies; it takes a person to know which one matters.

But accepting AI as a tool is not the same as surrendering to it as a replacement. Human creativity is not merely an output; it is a way of being. It grows from heartbreak, joy, boredom, memory and risk. A singer who spends years training her voice is not just producing sound. She is shaping herself, and that struggle is what listeners feel. A machine trained on the past can imitate that feeling, but it has never lived it.

This is why we must protect human creativity deliberately rather than assume it will survive. If cheap, instant content floods every platform, working artists could be priced out of existence, and fewer people would bother learning to paint, write or sing. A culture that stops practising its crafts eventually forgets how. Eradication would not arrive with a dramatic announcement; it would arrive as a thousand quiet economic decisions.

So Rubin may be right: AI creativity can be fine, when it serves human vision. The line we must hold is simple. Let machines assist, but never let them replace the people who make art because they have something to say. Protect the learning, the paying of artists and the human stage, and technology becomes a collaborator rather than a successor.

***Now that you've read these last two articles that include Rick Rubin, the master of music production and who has a magnificent grasp on all things creative we wanted to see what Ai would say on the topics Rubin is key to. Rubin when interviewed on a podcast recently said it was still up for debate the impact Ai would have on creativity, would it have a positive or negative impact? He said it would depend on what parameters the Ai model was given, so what do you think? Did Ai get these two issue right or should we have written them ourselves? Email us at news@hoodiesmedia.org to offer your opinions.**

Thank you & goodnight!

That’s it for Issue 28 and thank you for reading. It has been a while since issue 27 but we’re now back to a monthly offering that ill include some of the articles from the Hoodies daily and from our own investigations and other musings.

Next week we release another new publication, called ‘The Well Made Men Magazine’ an online publication that focuses in on men and what it is to be one in the modern era. Watch our socials for the website and when exactly it will be released.

Thank you for reading if you liked this issue please share it far and wide and thank for being part of the world that is Hoodies Media.

Cheers
Ben