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1. Lost opportunities

Being embedded in the policies of the United States has meant that we in Australia have missed an opportunity to take our place in the region in which we are placed geographically and politically. By now Australia, a multi-national, multi-cultural country should have had the ability to speak and be respected but we are not, we continue to act and be seen as an appendage of the United States of America.

As we are nominally still ruled by the Queen this is one of the deterrents to planning for full independence from both the UK and the US.

The act of federation of the Commonwealth in 1901 still stands in our constitution

"WHEREAS the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established: And whereas it is expedient to provide for the admission into the Commonwealth of other Australasian Colonies and possessions of the Queen"

It is time for Australians to demand full independence under a new constitution one that acknowledges the history of all people's who reside in this country, most importantly the First Peoples, and encompasses the hopes and dreams of all for a peaceful secure (in the full sense of the word) future.

2. Human needs

In my view there is evidence of an addiction to war and its weapons systems in Australia. I was disgusted when then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced government grants to companies manufacturing weapons in Australia in 2018 <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/defence-exports-turnbull-unveils-3-8b-fund-to-boost-foreign-sales-of-australian-arms> followed soon after by announcing the ambition to be amongst the top 10 global arms exporters

I agree with the then leader of the Australian Greens Richard Di Natale said "the announcement showed Mr Turnbull wanted Australia to become a "massive exporter of death", criticising Australia's history of selling defence products to Saudi Arabia."

The government has allocated \$270 billion to be spent over 10 years on a range of offensive v defensive materiel, interoperable with US systems. This is staggering in contrast to the withholding of federal revenue spending on human needs such as unemployment benefits and housing.

A recent estimate stated that over 10 years a similar figure of approximately \$270 B would be required for the whole country to transition to a fossil fuel future energy supply.

Oft stated by leaders is the jobs growth that come with arms manufacturing industries but many more jobs would be created with the transition to renewable energy systems and manufacturing.

Twiggy Forrest on the Boyer lectures this year has outlined the exciting opportunities for that transition and the incredible value both monetary and human to come to Australia.

Health

The physical health needs of our people are of a high standard when compared globally. However, there is always room for improvement particularly in the areas of preventative health measures. The diseases of the 'west' mostly relate to lifestyle factors including inactivity and diet which have become established in the post WW2 period. A major well-funded health promotion would see our government concentrating on health education in schools, workplaces and the mainstream media, as well as more regulation on companies selling products which are known to be detrimental to health. This would be achievable if the defence budget was not prioritised.

Unfortunately, the epidemic of mental disease is largely being ignored for if we were to address this seriously, major changes in how we structure our society would need to be made. I believe that media film and television, coming out of the US for the past 70 years has had significant impacts on the

psyche of Australians. Violent abusive content has become accepted and it must have at the very least have created a normalising of violence effect.

The horrific reality of domestic violence (DV) leading to statistics of one woman per week on average is unacceptable. This needs to be understood within the militaristic culture that has developed as well as recognising the reality of DV and mental health issues occurring in the families of members of the ADF, many of whom have great difficulty with PTSD following time served in war zones as well as the culture of the ADF while training. This culture has been the subject of the recent Brereton report into war crimes committed by service men in the SAS. I have personal knowledge of the treatment of those who while protesting at Swan Island training base for SAS troops experienced degrading violent acts committed by those on the base who responded to them entering the base.

Genuine Security

This is an important human condition to consider properly as the word Security has in my mind been hijacked by the military establishments, the Defence Department, weapons company's and corporations, the media and significantly by our political representatives and government. An example could well be the decisions made in relation to people who have come to our shores seeking refuge and asylum, legitimately, according to international laws Australia has signed on to, and yet the messages coming from the government was/is that these people threaten our 'security'.

On another level there is a lot of effort made by our leaders to instil fear of people in countries where there are differences of race religion or culture and this fear is then used to justify the gross amounts of money being spent on arms and obedience to the political and military policies of the US.

This is what has led to Australia supporting the wars of Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and even Palestine and Yemen. All that unnecessary suffering of people who have lost millions of loved ones, who have been forced to flee their homelands makes me determined to keep working for a safe secure future free from war and environmental destruction.