

LHSSA LABOUR HISTORY NEWS Winter 2026



The defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way.
George Orwell

LHSSA:

- LHSSA AGM (Sunday August 30): *Timor-Leste independence (Andy Alcock & Sandra Dann)*
- In case you missed it: Mike Rann's launch of Geoff Goodfellow's new book *Nostalgic Adelaide – poems political, cultural and social*
- Geoff Goodfellow: *Going, Going Gone*

AUSTRALIA

- Kings Birthday Honours 2026 – some eminent South Australians
- Failed dreams of building 'New Australia' utopia in Paraguay jungle in the 19th Century, Jennifer Douglas, *ABC Radio*
- Australia is facing a new 12.5% tariff over anti-slavery claims – are these claims right?
- Frank Bongiorno: Once a Liberal - Pauline Hanson's Press Club speech
- Denis Muller, A right mess: how mining media and politics are combining to influence public debate in Australia
- Mark Cully, Australia was built on migration, but it's long been a love-hate relationship

THE WORLD

- Politicians have long misunderstood the 'working class' - the rise of the far right shows how mistaken they have been
- Bill Mitchell: Towards a progressive rebuttal of the Far Right narratives
- Richard Stone: The US-Iran war
- Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* - a graphic novel of growing up in Iran

THE REST IS HISTORY

- Stewart Sweeney: Four missed moments in history
- Decolonising democracy (first of an eight-part analysis)

POST SCRIPTS

- Chris Yiallouris, Pedalling into censorship
- Finding Fanny Finch (ABC radio)
- Survey seeking readers' feedback on the LHSSA Newsletter
- The Oral History Australia Awards for 2026
- *Earth's Greatest Enemy* – Documenting the environmental cost of history's biggest empire

LHSSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2025

The 2025-26 LHSSA Executive Committee is:

President: Ron Slee

Vice-President: Vini Ciccarello

Vice-President: Jim Phillips

Secretary: Roz Averis

Treasurer: Kevin Kaeding

Elected members: Nix Herriot, Liam Horwood, Habibah Jaghoori

Co-opted members: Doug Melvin, Ralph Clarke

Trade Union Liaison Officer: Doug Melvin

Branch Representative on National Executive of ASSLH: Doug Melvin

Editorial Collective: Ron Slee, Ken Bridge, Roz Averis, Habibah Jaghoori, Doug Melvin

LHSSA representative on History Council of South Australia: Ron Slee

LABOUR HISTORY SOCIETY (SA) PUBLIC MEETING & AGM

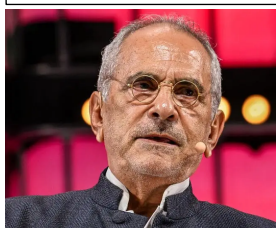
2-4pm SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST 2026

Box Factory Community Centre, 59 Regent St (Sth) Adelaide

TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENCE – THEN AND NOW



The East Timorese people suffered many atrocities in their struggle for self-determination. When their Portuguese colonial masters withdrew in 1975, Indonesia claimed the territory for itself and ruthlessly suppressed the independence movement. Eventually the UN supervised the territory's transition to independence on 20 May 2002 under Xana Gusmao (L above) as first president. Jose Ramos-Horta (L below) was elected President 2007-2012, and again from 2022. ([BBC](#))



Heavily reliant on energy exports, Timor-Leste's economy has pivoted to oil and gas revenue from the Timor Sea, but in one-sided negotiations with Australia over a maritime boundary treaty for the lucrative Greater Sunrise gas field, the very profitable outcome for Australia has soured relations between the two countries.

SPEAKERS

ANDY ALCOCK: Information Officer, [Australia East Timor Friendship Association SA](#)
Former OH&S Industrial Officer at Public Service Association/[Community & Public Sector Union](#)

SANDRA DANN: 20 years as Director of the Working Women's Centre, now a [Digital Artist/Photoshop Educator](#) and an active member of the [Semaphore/Largs Dunes Group](#)

AGM

At 3.30pm, immediately following the discussion, LHS (SA) will hold its Annual General Meeting.

All executive positions will be declared vacant, and elections will take place.

Financial members are eligible to participate in this meeting.

2026-27 membership fees are now due and are payable as follows:

Waged member: \$30.00. Non-waged: \$15.00

Payable to Labour History Society (SA) Inc. BSB 805 050, Account No. 2313116.

Or by cheque posted to PO Box 520 Torrensville Plaza SA 5031.

(Please include your surname and initials with your payment)



Mike Rann's launch of Geoff Goodfellow's *Nostalgic Adelaide: poems political, social and cultural*
At the North Adelaide Institute during *History Month*, Sunday 10 May

For four decades Geoff has taken his poetry and performed it in schools, prisons, youth detention centres, universities, pubs, factories, construction sites, police academies and board rooms as well as at literary festivals around Australia and overseas. His poems have been translated into Mandarin (where they apparently rhyme), Greek (where they don't), Italian and Spanish.

Geoff is also a member of a group that meets once a week at the Central Market. These meetings are conducted in the manner of Socratic Dialogues which, given the *amicus curiae* nature of its membership, often discuss the deepest issues of jurisprudence and normative ethics as well as current affairs. However, Geoff's poems focus on the everyday experience and challenges faced by working class people - people like him, dealing with real life and its small triumphs and sometimes much bigger tragedies. I was very moved by a previous collection of his poems "Waltzing with Jack Dancer: A Slow Dance with Cancer" but I will talk about that a little later. Where does Geoff fit in the poetry spectrum? What is his genre? Who are his inspirations? I thought about that and settled on Alan Ginsberg, known for his raw, conversational and counter-cultural poetry exemplified by his anti-capitalist poem "Howl", an intense critique of American society and "Father Death Blues", a poignant poem confronting mortality. Geoff's "Poems for a Dead Father" was similarly acclaimed here in Australia. But even though the two poets connected personally in the US my analogy doesn't really work. I just can't see Geoff follow Ginsberg to become a Hare Krishna. Ginsberg was the leading anti-establishment figure of the Beat Generation and Geoff has always been more of a Bodgie than Beatnik, with stylish clothes and Teddy Boy winkle picker shoes, a fashion cross fertilisation of Col Joye and Johnny O'Keefe, with a touch of Peaky Blinders.

In Europe I could trace similarities to marvellously named Italian poet Salvatore Quasimodo who received the Nobel Prize for Literature, and was an outspoken anti-fascist who is often remembered for his famous poem "Life is not a Dream". There are also connections to Hungary's Jozsef Attila, the proletarian poet who wrote provocative and revolutionary poetry and was expelled by the Hungarian Communist Party because of his interest in Freud and advocacy for humane socialism. But in my world-wide search the closest to Geoff I could find was Sam Hunt, a Kiwi icon who writes in a colloquial and uncomplicated way about everyday life, family, landscapes and love – and like Geoff often reads his poetry in pubs and schools. Sam performs his poetry, with a similar gravelly voice, giving his work energy and power. Meanwhile the poets Geoff most admires are Charles Bukowski, who also focused on the blue-collar experience and whose poetry readings were legendary – sometimes with a drunken raucous audience fighting with a drunk, angry poet. We'll see how we go this afternoon. Geoff also admires Pulitzer Prize winner Sharon Olds who has written in raw and unflinching language about domestic and political violence, sex, intimacy and family relationships; and he likes Raymond Carver, of the "dirty realist" school.

Geoff is most associated with Semaphore and Adelaide's western suburbs, plus a love of the Port Adelaide Football Club, but as a child his family home was in Broadview, not far from the Islington Railway Workshops which, as he points out in one of these poems, is now a Bunnings. Geoff's Dad Johnnie was a Desert Rat during WW2 and in peace time became a technical and scientific glass blower, nicknamed Captain Hornblower; later in life he became a salesman. Geoff's Mum, Lois, of Scottish descent, was a seamstress and dressmaker. Both contributed to Geoff's fashion sense. His Dad was a snappy dresser and his Mum taught him about quality fabrics and told all four kids that "poor people can't afford to wear cheap shoes".

Young Geoff was enrolled at the Holy Family primary school in Enfield and then moved to Hampstead Primary. His High School years were spent at Adelaide Boys Tech – from which he was expelled – and then at Nailsworth Tech. He and his siblings were introduced to poetry by his father who, when he was in his cups, which apparently was quite often, read poems...sometimes with an Irish accent...and often from a book called "Around the Boree Log and other Verses" published in 1921 and written by poet Patrick Joseph Hartigan, who was a priest in the Riverina but who wrote under the pseudonym John O'Brien. It was a collection of simple, accessible verses about life in the outback and Irish-Australian culture. This clearly influenced Geoff.

I mentioned that Geoff was a pugilist who fought as an amateur and once professionally. This may have assisted his early working life as a bouncer at the Finsbury Hotel. Boxing was a family tradition. His Dad was South

Australia's featherweight champion in 1938 and his late brother Mark was welterweight champion of South Australia in 1973, then lightweight champion in 74, 75 and 76. Their other brother Brian was featherweight champion in 1971. Meanwhile his late sister Annette was a swimmer and champion in freestyle, breaststroke and backstroke in the 1960s.

Geoff has always been Labor and knew many of the party's characters over the years –he had a particular affection for Nick Bolkus and John Bannon. After Geoff won the inaugural Carclew Fellowship in 1988, John wrote a terrific letter of introduction that was helpful to Geoff in setting up his poetry tour of Canada, the US, Europe and China. Years later, in 1997, JB and Geoff joined with Keith Conlon at the State Library to give a poetry reading together to celebrate "Bloke Day".

Geoff became a builder's labourer working on construction sites, and later a self-taught carpenter who set up his business focusing on outdoor living, building decks and pergolas. That all stopped when Geoff, aged 32, badly hurt his back. That was the turning point in his life when he pivoted towards poetry, a career not often associated with financial reward and a move derided by many. He became the CFMEU's poet in residence and in addition to performing on building sites, became writer in residence at Yatala Labour Prison – reading his poems in prisons in every state, including Pentridge, Long Bay and Fremantle jail. In 1990 Geoff spoke at forums in Hobart and Launceston on combatting violence in Australian society. Three of his poems prefaced sections of the official report of the National Committee on Violence.

All of us have a vision of Adelaide's past and those places and experiences which became signposts of our own life stories. Geoff's poems, for many people here today, will revive memories of their childhood and teenage years. As Chris Sumner reminds us in his foreword: "Familiar local items from the 1950s, most now a distant memory, make an appearance: valve radios, Bush Biscuits, Balfours Frog Cakes, Simpson Pope appliances with wringers and levers, Actil sheets, Hills Hoists, Castelloy pressure cookers, Lightburn concrete mixers and the Green and Gold Cookbook". I didn't come to Adelaide until the late seventies, but I found fascinating Geoff's glimpse of our city in earlier times – its sinews, back alleys, its community based footy culture and the pubs where a young Geoff sold hot meat pies – as he explores the artefacts of his memory trawled over three quarters of a century. I'm sure you will too. Reading this wonderful collection also made me think that, with South Australia's bicentenary of European settlement just ten years away, thank God we have people like Geoff telling our stories and leaders like Jane Lomax-Smith fighting to protect our city's heritage.

Geoff's book prompted my memories of my first experience 49 years ago of safari suits – which I'd only previously seen worn by David Attenborough. In Don Dunstan's office all the blokes wore safari suits. Don's was made of the finest cotton and was ivory coloured (not white), while mine was polyester and almost the shade of blue I'm wearing here today. In commending this book to you, there are a couple of other things I want to say about Geoff. Even though he has a disdain for literary pretension I believe he should be our State's or city's Poet Laureate – given his role as both a chronicler of our times and as a bridge to young and marginalised people. Without Geoff's influence and encouragement most would have had little or no opportunity for poetry to enrich their lives, let alone have seen lives like theirs featured as the focal point of Geoff's poetry and advocacy over the decades. He truly is the People's Poet.

Many people in their 70s and 80s endure lives interrupted by medical appointments, and conversations with friends of the same age often become 'organ recitals'. Geoff has fought cancer, of so many different varieties, for 18 years. He has been saved by the medical profession and at times been treated very badly by some members of it. But through all the tests, biopsies, MRIs, surgery and chemo Geoff keeps going. He keeps writing, teaching and travelling, with Tasmania a favourite destination.

Geoff honours his commitments to friends and family, and the people from whose ranks he comes and whose side he's on. Geoff is not only defined by his surname but also by two other attributes: firstly, a raw, unflinching honesty which is at the core of his credentials. He doesn't back down on his principles. He punctures pomposity and pretension. He means what he says. Finally, for me Geoff exemplifies courage in the face of hardship, pain and peril. He doesn't throw in the towel. He fights cancer and injustice with the same determined strength of will. Geoff is above all resilient: each time he is struck down, he gets up off the mat, just like the brave pugilistic poet he is.

Going, Going, Gone

Geoff Goodfellow

The mid-70s through to the early 90s were
the turning point in the streets of Port Adelaide
& Semaphore

yet many of those images are etched into my
consciousness today

it may have well started with the slow
disappearance of the navy blue singlet
& the blue check flanny shirt

the black tracky pants hung far low with
half a bum crack on display

the mis-matched thongs or 'Japanese work
boots' as they were often laughingly referred to

the brown stained teeth & the missing teeth
the odd arm at rest in a white triangular bandage

fresh bark starting to scab up on elbows
& noses & foreheads

the black eye from 2 o'clock last Tuesday
on the point of turning to a soft yellowy-green

the bloodshot vacant eyes that seemingly
looked straight through you to the back of your skull

a roly hanging from the bottom lip in the corner
of a mouth that might possibly sneer & then bark

wadda you lookin' at if you'd looked too
closely as they stooped to pick up butts from a
gutter or footpath or leaned in to empty the
council butt bin

nicotined stained fingers in varying shades
of yellow brown & black

& further down the street the brown long neck
in a paper bag resting on a lap like a baby in sunshine
as they sat on the council street bench doing it easy
while others closer to delirium might be nursing
a bottle of Port or Conto or Stone's green ginger wine

mumbling to themselves or no-one in particular
the metho & milk drinkers having been the first
to go had always left me wondering how they carried
the weight of those ex-Army greatcoats on their
withered frames

but i thought too that many of them seemed
to have carried the weight of the world on their
shoulders through their relatively short lives

& there would always be the odd bloke or more
with a couple of missing fingers from a factory
press that hadn't been fitted with a safety guard

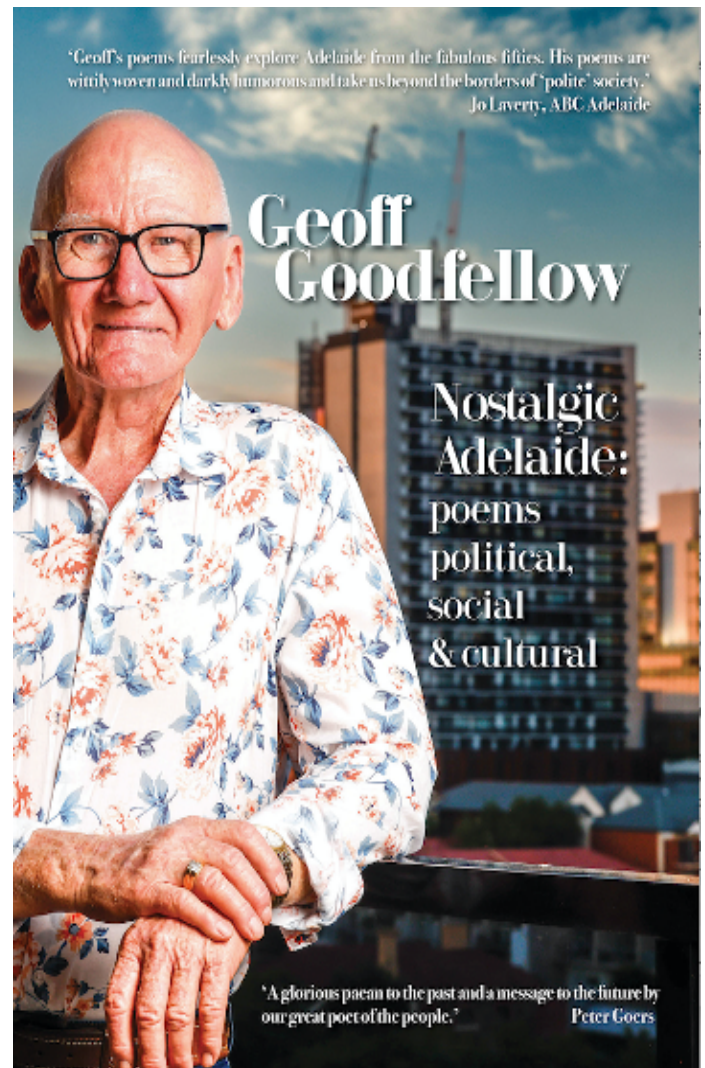
& the factory certainly didn't want them
hanging around the place even as a sweeper

& anyway they set a bad example
& without a job the wife didn't want them

& a bottle became their salvation

it was these & other men you'd likely spot

on the drunk's parade at the Magistrates Court
of a Monday morning at 10 o'clock in the forenoon
but now that crowd has well moved on.



AUSTRALIA

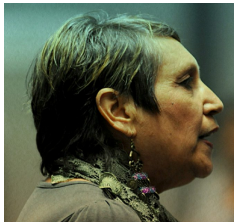
2026 KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS – Recipients who were born in SA or lived & worked here:

Fran Kelly AM



Born Frances Margaret Kelly, one of six siblings, Fran grew up in Adelaide. Schooled at St Dominic's Priory College in North Adelaide, she completed a BA at University of Adelaide majoring in literature and classics. As an undergraduate she was active in the women's movement, theatre and music. After graduating she worked as student activities officer at Flinders Uni and from 1980 at La Trobe Uni in Melbourne where she also became lead vocalist and rhythm guitarist for *Toxic Shock*, an all-female band. She changed career and city in 1988, moving to Sydney to work on *The Drum* on *Triple J*. It was her 'distinguished service to broadcast journalism (over 30 years in the ABC), to the advancement of social justice, equality, and advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community' for which she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia.

Jenni Caruso AM



Dr Jennifer Lorraine Caruso is an historian and former university lecturer, and a survivor of the Stolen Generations. She and her siblings were stolen from their family in Alice Springs and placed in the Croker Island Mission, 290 kms east of Garramilla (Darwin). Her AO was awarded for 'significant service to the Indigenous communities of South Australia'. Jenni is an elected member of the SA First Nations Voice to Parliament for the Central Region. In 2018, she completed a PhD at the University of Adelaide. Its focus was a personal reflection on being taken from her family and through historical investigation and analysis she revealed the race-based policies behind the removals.

Susan Sheridan OAM



Dr Susan Sheridan was recognised for her 'service to the arts, and to the humanities.' An author, editor, reviewer and researcher, she is Professor Emerita at Flinders University where she taught in English and Women's Studies until her retirement in 2006. Susan's scholarship charts the achievement of Australian women writers and their impact on Australian literary culture, and examines women's experience, influence and engagement with Australian feminism at key moments in Australia's history. Susan is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She was instrumental in building Women's Studies as a formal discipline in Australia, taught in that area for much of her career, and was Reviews Editor of *Australian Feminist Studies* from its inception in 1985 until 2005.

Mike Young AO



Emeritus Professor Michael Denis Young was recognised for 'distinguished service to conservation and the environment, to water resource management, and to tertiary education.' After working for CSIRO for 30 years, he joined University of Adelaide in 2006 as Research Chair of Water Economics and Management, and Founding Executive Director of the Environment Institute on 2009, where he served until 2011. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Scientists in Australia and a Distinguished Fellow of the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society. He was South Australian of the Year in 2009 in the Environment category. In 2013-14, he held the Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard University.

Tanya Hosch AM



Born in Adelaide in 1970 and schooled at Enfield High, Tanya is a Torres Strait Islander social activist and business executive, having held leadership roles in sport, the arts, social justice and public policy. She started work at the SA Women's Information Switchboard in 1980, where colleagues encouraged her to study social work at . Tanya held advocacy and consulting roles in the public sector including the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and 2012-2016 was joint director of the *Recognise* campaign. She was appointed social inclusion manager to the AFL in 2016, the first Indigenous Australian appointed to an executive position there. In 2021, she was South Australian of the Year and was an active campaigner for Yes in the 2023 Voice Referendum. Her 2026 AM was for 'significant service to the community through social policy, and as an advocate for diversity and inclusion.'

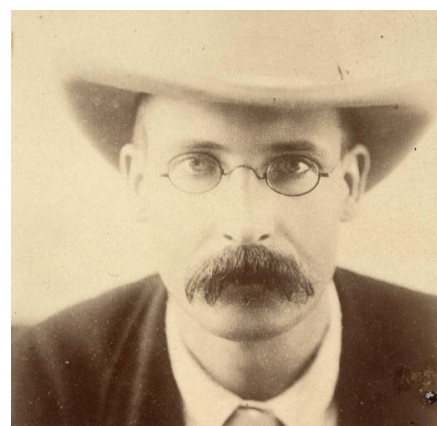
Failed dreams of building 'New Australia' utopia in Paraguay jungle in the 19th Century, Jennifer Douglas, ABC Radio, 27 November 2022

With a nod to the Aus/Par 0-0 draw in the World Cup. (Extract only – for the full article, [click here](#))



Would you give it all up for a new life in a tropical utopia? That's what more than 500 Australians did in the 1890s, led by a radical socialist, but the venture didn't quite go to plan. It turns out that combining Australian shearers with the South American jungle, jaguars, parasitic insects and strict rules about booze and sex was not the secret to a utopian new life.

Life in Australia was tough in the late 1800s with massive shearers strikes, colonial government crackdowns, devastating drought and depression looming. Conditions were perfect for the ambitious South American plans of controversial journalist and radical socialist William Lane. His promise of a New Australia commune, one that offered a fair deal for all, was enticing for a group of mostly unionists, disgruntled shearers and socialist Christians who sold everything to fund the arduous adventure. Mr Lane took advantage of an offer by the Paraguay government to gift 75,000 hectares of free land to migrants in an attempt to repopulate the country after up to 90 per cent of the nation's male population was killed in the war against Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina.

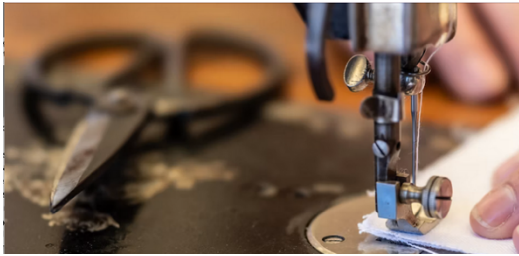


The first group of Australians set off in search of a better life in 1893 on the Royal Tar, a tall ship built with the collective funds of Mr Lane's devotees. After months at sea, they arrived, via Argentina, in Paraguay's wet and wild jungle that couldn't be further from the utopia they were promised. The group, who'd given up all their worldly goods to start on an even footing, set to work clearing the jungle by hand, under the constant threat of stalking jaguars, disease and skin-burrowing parasitic insects.



The environment may have caused cracks, but Mr Lane's rules and regime potentially did more damage to the fledgling community's long-term hopes. He immediately set very strict rules banning alcohol or any fraternisation with the local women, which proved particularly difficult for many of the young single shearers. After almost three years, *New Australia* comprised a few small villages and farms, but many settlers had left to seek a better life in larger cities.

In response to falling numbers and failing finances, and appalled by the behaviour of the young shearers, Mr Lane abandoned the community. He then led another attempt with an even more devoted group of 60 Christian socialists, who built a new community named Cosme. That too failed. Five years after leaving Australia, Mr Lane ditched his socialist utopian dream and moved to New Zealand. In a twist, he returned to journalism, this time for a conservative newspaper *The New Zealand Herald*. Among others who returned to Australia was poet Mary Gilmore, who believed in socialist ideals throughout her life and wrote about her time in South America. To this day, there are descendants of the original New Australians in Paraguay, with names like Woods or Burke. Gone are the Aussie accents, but some traits of red hair and fair skin remain.



Australia is facing a new 12.5% US tariff over anti-slavery claims – are they actually right?
[Justine Nolan, The Conversation, June 4, 2026](#)
*Justine Nolan is Professor of Law and Justice and
Director of the Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW*

The United States is threatening to impose trade tariffs of up to 12.5% on 60 countries, including Australia, over their inaction on forced and slave labour worldwide. On Wednesday, US trade representative [Jamieson Greer said](#): “The failure of our most important trading partners to address the importation of goods made with forced labor is unacceptable”. Australian Prime Minister [Anthony Albanese responded](#) that a new tariff on exports to the US was “unjustified”, as Australia has “robust, comprehensive and world-leading legislation addressing forced labour and modern slavery”. Who’s right? And are the US claims about other nations turning a blind eye to forced and slave labour – where a person is either forced to work, or even owned by someone else – actually true?

Which countries could face new tariffs

In a [new report](#) released by the US Trade Representative, 54 countries – including [Australia](#), [China](#), [New Zealand](#) and the [United Kingdom](#) – were found to have: “failed to impose a legal prohibition on the importation of goods produced wholly or in part with forced labour and to effectively enforce such a prohibition.” All of those countries face a proposed 12.5% tariff on their exports to the US.

Another six economies – including Canada, the European Union and Indonesia – face lower 10% tariffs. They were seen to have done more overall, but failed to effectively enforce their own laws.

Forced labour is a form of modern slavery, [defined under international law](#) as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily”. This definition is consistent with an almost century old US law, [Section 307 of the US Tariff Act of 1930](#). It’s now being used to legally justify this latest round of tariffs.

The US has a strong history of taking legislative action against forced labour. Section 307 prohibits imports of goods mined, produced or manufactured by forced labour. In 2022, the US also established the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, prohibiting goods being imported from China’s Xinjiang Uyghur region, where there are “[credible](#)” allegations of [widespread forced labour](#).

These [proposed forced labour tariffs](#) appear to be less about labour rights and more about trade. This latest move comes after US courts blocked US President Donald Trump’s sweeping international tariffs announced over the past year. That prompted [Trump to pledge](#): “We get one ruling, and we do it a different way.” As former Australian ambassador to the [US Joe Hockey said](#) about the new forced labour tariff today, “America is running out of money and they need to get it from somewhere”. These tariffs are still subject to [public consultations over the next month](#).

While using tariffs as a way to strengthen action on forced labour is questionable, there is some substance behind the US allegations. An estimated [50 million people](#) around the world – and rising – are trapped in modern slavery, more than half of those in forced labour. Australia is estimated to have [more than 41,000 people](#) working as forced labourers or other forms of modern slavery, including child marriages. Reports to the [Australian Federal Police](#) of [human trafficking](#) have nearly doubled in the past five years.

In 2018, Australia established its Modern Slavery Act. This law was hailed as a critical first step in acting on modern slavery. The law requires large business to report annually on the risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. Since 2019, 17,000 modern slavery statements from more than 27,000 businesses have been lodged on Australia’s [modern slavery registry](#). Yet in 2023, [an independent report](#)

found: “(t)here is no hard evidence that the Modern Slavery Act in its early years has yet caused meaningful change for people living in conditions of modern slavery. That’s not surprising: there is no enforcement built into the law. Australia’s laws are not world-leading!

What more needs to be done? If Australia does want to have “world-leading” laws – and a stronger case to argue for lower US tariffs – what needs to change? While the Modern Slavery Act has raised awareness of the problem in Australian boardrooms, it is not improving the working conditions of supply chain workers, here at home and overseas. So Australia needs to move quickly to strengthen that law with enforcement, and establish a forced labour import ban.

A 2023 review of the Modern Slavery Act recommended penalties for companies failing to comply with reporting requirements and the introduction of a human rights “due diligence obligation” – similar to European Union laws and emerging [requirements](#) in South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia. This sees companies working to reduce human rights harms not just in their own factories, but through their suppliers’ suppliers too.

The Albanese government [partially accepted](#) some of the 2023 report recommendations, including the need for penalties. Three years on, it’s failed to take serious action. The Australian government should also establish a forced labour import ban, like one [the EU passed two years ago](#), now being phased in across all 27 member states. This would stop specific goods suspected of being produced with forced labour at the border. Whether these proposed tariffs come into force or not, this new US forced labour investigation could actually do some good. Right now, millions of people are working in dangerous, dehumanising conditions to make goods sold in Australia and worldwide. It’s long overdue to do more to stop it.

Frank Bongiorno, *Once a Liberal*, *Inside Story*, 20 June 2026

Pauline Hanson’s Press Club speech provided plenty of ammunition for at least some opponents



Pauline Hanson’s address to the National Press Club was the talk of the town - well, of Canberra, anyway - for a few days last week. But *GetUp!*’s banner stunt and Hanson’s intemperate abuse of *Guardian* journalist Sarah Martin have distracted analysts from the best evidence we have so far of what *One Nation*, in the guise of a putative mainstream party of the right, now stands for. If it is no longer a minor party of protest rooted in rural and regional grievance and reaction, what exactly is it?

For full disclosure, I should say that I am among those who doubt *One Nation* will be able to sustain its momentum. It is therefore possible I found what I was expecting or even hoping to find in her address. Still, it is striking that once she no longer had a script written by someone else in front of her – after question time began at the Press Club: her discipline slipped and we got to see the old *One Nation*, and the old Pauline Hanson. In substance she sounded much like the right-wing Liberal she was before she lost preselection in February 1996 - even while her message was delivered in the familiar populist style that, through word, tone, facial expression and body language, constantly announces Hanson has “had a gutful.”

In her seemingly interminable speech she was making a pitch to keep a hold on that 30 per cent of voters who are already saying they will vote *One Nation* and to add perhaps 5 per cent more. After refusing to give a “divisive Welcome to Country” (she presumably meant “Acknowledgement,” but never mind), Hanson spent most of the next three-quarters of an hour continuing to tell us who and what she hates.

Hanson remains, in that sense, what she has always been: a bundle of resentments and a harvester of grievance. But her present efforts meet with the most favourable of seasons for such a politician and movement: an energy crisis, a cost-of-living crisis, a housing crisis, high immigration coming out of Covid, and the Bondi terrorist attack. On the political front, the Coalition is a mess, its leadership ineffectual. Meanwhile, Labor stumbles on - paradoxically, given its enormous majority would normally be considered unassailable in a single election.

Predictably, Hanson treated immigration as the cause of the housing crisis. She then went on to link the problem to “the utterly flawed policy of multiculturalism.” Australia is “multiracial,” she said, but should be “monocultural.” Future Liberal leader Billy Snedden said much the same thing in 1969: “I am quite determined we should have a monoculture, with everyone living in the same way, understanding each other, and sharing the same aspirations. We don’t want pluralism.” But back then, to call for “monoculture” still meant something: Australia had barely passed out of the era of Britishness, and the White Australia Policy, while on the way out, was still in place. Even the politicians contributing to the dismantling of that old order still assumed the place would remain a white nation even when they politely refrained from saying so. But what could “monocultural” mean today, unless it is a nostalgic appeal to an Australia outside the living memory even of ageing Gen Xers like me?

As a populist, Hanson naturally claims the privilege of defining what that culture is: she represents real Australians, not the kinds of people who read *Inside Story*. More than half the population was either born overseas or had a parent born overseas: “Is that what Australia wants?,” she complains. It is a startling pitch, vaguely reminiscent of the old-time bragging that Australia was 98 per cent British and that it needed to stay that way notwithstanding the covetous Asian hordes to our north.

Populist politics is obsessed with drawing boundaries between those who truly belong and those who do not. But it is surely risky in an immigrant nation that has had an official policy of multiculturalism for about half a century to draw the line where she and her advisers seem to have decided to draw it. Who does Hanson think is living in all those suburbs she wants to win back from the Labor Party if not migrants and their children?

All the same, Hanson more or less held it together during her haltingly read text. Australia is “predominantly a Judeo-Christian society” and “Western civilisation and its values are under siege.” “Radical Islam” and the “transgender insurgency” menace the country. Net zero is a “hoax.” Anthony Albanese is a “liar.” And a few specific policies. Nuclear energy for Australia. More control of artificial intelligence. Abolish SBS. Turn the ABC into a subscription service for city people. End government financial subsidies to renewable energy: after all, “the bloke in the corner store” doesn’t get this kind of help. (To which the obvious retort is that “the bloke in the corner store” no longer exists. There’s that nostalgia again.)

I don’t doubt the popular resonance of this kind of appeal in our present moment, even while I am sceptical whether most Australians support having broadcasts of the World Cup football taken from them because Hanson objects to the existence of a multicultural broadcaster. That said, it is in keeping with the basic joylessness of her politics. Hanson began her political career, in local government, with a campaign to prevent the building of a library in Ipswich because she thought it was a waste of ratepayers’ money. It is hard to discern much change in her outlook thirty years later. She is one of life’s straighteners.

Alongside her selective nostalgia, Hanson combines a vision of homeliness, an articulation of resentment, and a performance of authenticity, however contrived. Even while *One Nation* takes Rinehart’s money and Hanson drops in on Donald Trump at Florida’s Versailles, Mar-a-Lago, she continues to play the outsider challenging the political establishment, the real taking on the fake. All of this is well calculated to appeal

to people who believe the world is hurtling outside their control, nothing is what it seems, and that politicians - insiders all - won't listen to them.

And to be fair, it is hard to have much sympathy with the mainstream politicians who looked on complacently for decades while house prices went through the roof and now find themselves berated for it by a gifted, tested political opportunist. Hanson spent a lot of time in her address talking about poverty, hunger and homelessness, too - perhaps part of an effort to give her cause some moral ballast and confound the accusation she is the puppet of filthy rich "Mrs Rinehart," as she likes to call Australia's wealthiest woman and *One Nation's* most generous financial sponsor. Still, Hanson had no policy to offer the poor and the battler apart from suggesting less government spending and more coal would reduce their cost of living.

In this connection, *One Nation* has a problem - and that materialised once the question and answer session started. It was then that we got our reminder that Hanson, for all her longevity, is not a particularly creative politician. Successful populisms elsewhere have mixed and matched, assembling bits and pieces from the left and right to create a broad constituency and thereby take the wind out of more centrist opponents' sails.

If she were one of these types, Hanson would have said that she intends doubling the parental leave allowance and spending even more on childcare by taking funding away from Indigenous people or universities or the ABC - or from other of the many "rorts" she believes are being perpetrated under our collective noses. Instead, she said businesses should not be expected to pay women who were not at work and that government funding of childcare is "out of control" and requires "investigation." Come election time, all of this is likely to go down in Australia's suburbs about as well as Peter Dutton's working from home policy.

In short, as she entered full, unscripted flight, all of the familiar instincts came into play. She sounded like a reactionary who, even now, could find a home on the right of the Liberal Party - the place where she began three decades ago. When asked by Mark Riley from *Seven* about her consistent parliamentary record of doing over workers, she sturdily defended business in its efforts to deal with lazy employees - they should be easier to sack. She complained about abortions. She harped on about government spending like a hardened 1980s economic rationalist. But some areas of expenditure were especially unwarranted: money would be taken out of Aboriginal affairs and placed in "consolidated revenue."

On *One Nation* itself, she said some remarkable things that have barely featured in media coverage. She recounted how she had refrained from creating branches when *One Nation* Mark II emerged in 2015 because there were 350 the first time round and "I had nothing but trouble." That's a pretty remarkable confession even by the standards of Australia's somewhat reduced political parties: the rank and file can't be trusted, so let's not have one. But *One Nation* does now have branches, although they seem to operate under bizarre controls and restrictions. Hanson's support for constitutionally enshrined freedom of speech doesn't apparent extend to them. Why? Because "I have to be in total control of it."

There is also the not inconsiderable issue of how a party whose current lower-house presence amounts to two seats - one of them the result of Barnaby Joyce's defection from the Nationals - will be translated into a credible competition for executive power. Interestingly, much of the media has been so entranced by Hanson's verbal abuse of Sarah Martin that nobody picked up that while she was in full flight she indicated she intends to run for the Senate again.

No journalist asked the obvious question of whether she - or her new colleague Joyce, for that matter - would be standing for the House of Representatives now *One Nation* is supposedly vying for government. Indeed, there is a surprising indifference in the commentariat about this hardly trivial matter: it is as if it is

imagined the sheer force of populist passion will sweep away all institutional barriers in the name of the people's will. Those who recall the Joh for PM fiasco of 1987 will understand how magical that kind of thinking is in a parliamentary democracy.

It is often being said that *One Nation* is a more professional outfit than it used to be. Probably not certainly has plenty of money and is working social media with apparent success. Nonetheless, it is also still Hanson's show. Her deepest instincts appear to remain those of an ageing minor-party leader more interested in saying what the 5 or 10 per cent of voters who form her traditional base still want to hear. The parallel with Peter Dutton's retreat into culture wars and Sky appearances during the last election campaign is striking.

Coalition strategists seem as likely to remain as at a loss about how to respond to the *One Nation* threat following Hanson's Press Club address as they were before it. Labor strategists, on the other hand, have been given a generous allocation of material to work with.

Denis Muller, [A right mess: how mining, media and political interests are combining to influence public debate in Australia](#), *The Conversation*, June 11, 2026 (Denis Muller is Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Advancing Journalism, The University of Melbourne)



Mining billionaire Gina Rinehart is [bankrolling the acquisition](#) of a 9.5% stake in Southern Cross Media by Bruce McWilliam, who worked for Murdoch's News Corp for nine years and is also a former Seven Network executive. This venture is costing Rinehart \$26 million. It does not buy her a direct stake in Southern Cross, but if McWilliam cannot uphold his side of a security deed he has signed with her, [she could take control of it](#). Southern Cross is one of Australia's biggest media organisations. It owns the Seven Network, 7news.com.au, the Triple M and Hit radio brands, a raft of regional radio stations, and West Australian Newspapers.

The Rinehart-McWilliam-Murdoch axis is a formidable force, part of a new combination of media, political and mining interests, reminiscent of that which formed the Liberal Party in the 1940s. The other key figures are News Corp chair Lachlan Murdoch, One Nation leader Pauline Hanson and Liberal Party director Tony Abbott. This is the lens through which it is instructive to assess the media's coverage of One Nation's rise since the Farrer byelection on May 9. To see the parallels with the 1940s, we need to join a few dots.

Rinehart is a benefactor to Hanson. She [recently bought her](#) a light aircraft worth \$1 million. She is also a benefactor to Lachlan Murdoch. Her company Hancock Prospecting is sponsoring Sky News, owned by Murdoch's News Corporation, to the extent of a little over \$1 million for a [Sky event in Dubbo](#) called the Bush Summit. Lachlan Murdoch is chairman of News Corporation. In 2023, he [appointed Tony Abbott to the board](#) of the News subsidiary, Fox Corporation, a day after Rupert Murdoch announced his retirement. In May this year, Abbott was elected unopposed as federal president of the Liberal Party.

Lessons from the 1940s

The parallels with the 1940s can be seen in volume two of Sally Young's magisterial two-volume history of the Australia media, [Media Monsters](#), where she describes the machinations that led to the formation of

the Liberal Party. The right was in disarray. Robert Menzies' comically ill-named United Australia Party had been trounced by Labor at the 1943 election. In the aftermath, Menzies was re-elected leader but made it a condition that he had the right to form a new party. He was backed by an entity called Collins House. This was a collection of companies connected by networks of powerful business figures who dominated mining and manufacturing. An influential figure was Lachlan Murdoch's grandfather, Keith Murdoch. As managing director of the all-powerful Herald and Weekly Times (HWT) newspaper group, he provided a vital connection between the Collins House group and the most senior level of politics. The HWT and other major media proprietors of the day anointed Menzies and his proposal for the new Liberal Party, at a dinner of Collins House magnates in Melbourne in 1944.

The difference between the political circumstances of the 1940s and those of today is that today there are two right-wing political parties contending for supremacy: the Liberal Party and One Nation.

Rinehart seems to be having a million quid each way on which will prevail. By contrast, if the recent coverage of One Nation by The Australian is any guide, Lachlan Murdoch has already cast his vote decisively for the Liberal Party.

For a fortnight after One Nation's historic win in Farrer, the media, including News Corp media, were intoxicated by the attendant excitement and controversy: the shredding of Liberal Party support; Hanson's ambition to be prime minister; the possibility of a Liberal-One Nation coalition. Then, led by The Australian, the media began to sober up. On May 23, its editor-at-large, Paul Kelly, [wrote that](#) the Nationals, Liberals and One Nation were locked in a bitter competition with "life or death" consequences.

From that point on, The Australian applied the blowtorch of journalistic scrutiny to One Nation, and The Age and Sydney Morning Herald swiftly followed. With its customary disregard for journalistic ethics, The Australian [made a point](#) of reporting that One Nation's South Australian parliamentary team was looking like a "rainbow coalition", one of its MPs having come out as gay with a partner who was an Indonesian Muslim. But then it got into some serious public-interest journalism. For two days it [pursued the party over its handling](#) of rape allegations against an adviser, Sean Black. It [accused Hanson](#) of shirking her parliamentary duties by being absent from 88% of Senate estimates hearings over the past decade. It also [drew attention](#) to the fact One Nation had failed to lodge audited financial records for three years in Queensland, and disparaged its policy proposal for citizen-initiated referendums. On June 3 it drew on all this to publish a [thundering editorial](#): One Nation was drifting further out to the fringe; it would be divisive and disruptive; it had appeared to lurch into blind confusion; Hanson was "not fit in any sense" for the role of prime minister. On June 6, it led page one with a [full-frontal attack](#), carrying the self-revealing headline: "Hanson hit". It said Hanson had been caught out misleading voters, raising further questions about her capacity to be prime minister.

The Age and SMH were by then taking up the theme. Suddenly Hanson was [reportedly not sure](#) if she would pitch for the prime ministership. She had admitted having had to close down party branches that had been "infiltrated by extremists". She had insisted she would not be influenced by Rinehart despite having adopted one of Rinehart's key policies. In other words, she was all over the place. On June 6, the papers' political and international editor, Peter Hartcher, [described her](#) as a firebrand provocateur who specialises in grievances without solutions and turns to scapegoats instead – Asians, First Nations people, Muslims. He pointed out that Hanson had answered "no" when asked by another journalist whether she could think of any error that Donald Trump might have made since taking power. The same day another Age/SMH commentator, Paul Sakkal, [wrote about](#) what he called the collection of right-wing forces barracking for Hanson: openly white supremacists, people who rallied alongside neo-Nazis, supporters of the so-called sovereign citizen Dezi Freeman, who had killed two policemen. "A serious governing party cannot retain these relationships."

A right mess

The big question after all this is how the forces brought together through the new media-politics-mining combination will resolve the obvious tensions involved in creating an effective force on the right of Australian politics. Murdoch, through The Australian, has clearly signalled his contempt for One Nation, and already has Abbott on his team through Fox Corporation. Rinehart, with her substantial holdings via McWilliam in Southern Cross Media, could go either way: backing Hanson or the Liberals. And her record indicates she would use her power to influence editorial decision-making to support her choice. In 2012 she became the largest shareholder in the Fairfax company, with 14.99%. However, she refused to sign the company's charter of editorial independence, and as a result was refused a seat on the board. She [sold out](#) in 2015. Her history in refusing to sign the Fairfax charter is a strong indicator she would want the option of using her position on any media board to influence editorial decisions. The old Fairfax newspapers, The Age, the SMH and the Australian Financial Review, are now owned by the Nine Entertainment Company, and stand outside the new cabal. A crucial question is whether they might prove to be a countervailing force. One Nation set off this earthquake in Australian politics, but how the media play into the aftershocks will be a significant factor in the shaping of the new landscape.



Mark Cully, Australia was built on migration, but it's long been a love-hate relationship, *The Conversation*, June 30, 2026

The history of immigration policy in Australia is full of yes-no contradictions: fear jostling with hope, exclusion with openness. Australia has been pulled in different directions by the strength of its British ties and the demands of its Asia-Pacific geography. The British and their descendants, never meaningfully reconciling with the original sin of having invaded a continent, then constantly added people to it, most of them in their own image. Writing about the [Immigration Restriction Bill](#), commonly known as the White Australia Policy, being debated in the federal parliament in late 1901, Alfred Deakin said: *Australia should tolerate nothing within its dominion that is not British in character and constitution or capable of becoming Anglicised without delay. For all outside that charmed circle the policy is that of the closed door.*

The exclusions, the door closing first on one group, then another, are well-known: saying no to convicts (1840s); saying no to Chinese migrants (1855–1900); saying no to South Sea Islanders as indentured workers (1901); saying no to “coloured peoples” more generally (1901-73) saying no to European aliens (1920s), until the “populate or perish” imperative forced an abrupt reversal after World War II; and finally saying no to “boat people” (1989–present). **But obsessing about the closed door misses the main story: how 12 million people born overseas came to arrive in Australia to commence new lives over the past 200 years.**

This is an introductory extract only – for the full article, [click here](#)



Mark Cully was chief economist for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Department of Industry, as well as chair of the OECD's Working Party on Migration. As head of macroeconomic policy in the Treasury, he led the design of the JobKeeper program during the pandemic. He is an expert panel member of the Fair Work Commission and a visiting fellow at ANU's Crawford School of Public Policy. He is the author of Waves of Plenty: Immigration and the Making of Australia, which will be published by Black Inc. in September.

David Peetz, [Politicians have long misunderstood the ‘working class’](#). The rise of the far right shows how mistaken they have been, *The Conversation*, June 5, 2026



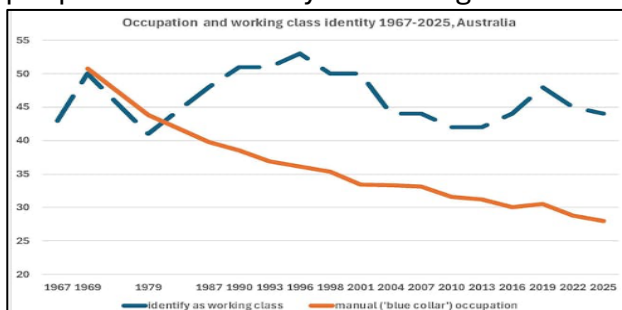
‘Class’ has always mattered, and now social democratic parties that sprang from the working class (eg the ALP) are finding out why. David Peetz is the Laurie Carmichael Distinguished Research Fellow at the Centre for Future Work, Griffith University Business School.

Over many years, and in many countries, a growing view among political actors and within political science was that class was losing its punch. The line was something like this: The working class once voted for labour parties. The middle class voted conservative. But [over many years](#) that difference between how the classes voted got smaller and smaller. In some places it disappeared.

The “[decline of class](#)” narrative suited the leaders of labour and social democratic parties. They could safely adopt market-based neoliberal policies, with a human touch added, in the knowledge their base wouldn’t desert them. But their base was changing. It was becoming more middle class, more individualistic, more awake to the benefits of market solutions to complex problems. Now, those politicians are shocked by the rise of far-right political parties that now claim to represent the working class all over the world. In **Australia**, *One Nation* is [close to matching Labor](#) — in [some polls](#), it is [already ahead](#). In the **United Kingdom**, *Reform* is leading in [all the polls](#), while the governing Labour party is below 20%. In **Germany**, the neo-nazi *AfD* is presently leading in [all opinion polls](#), while the Social Democrats are [below 14%](#). In the **United States**, the *Republican Party* has gone full Trump, on an agenda with aspects that look [eerily reminiscent of prewar Germany](#). In **France**, the *National Rally* candidate [is ahead in all opinion polls](#) for the next presidential election.

‘Blue collar’ is not the same as ‘working class’

In many countries, the labour and social democratic parties are mere shadows of their former selves. Perhaps the labour parties mistook the decline in “blue-collar” (manual) jobs for the decline of the working class. In Australia, the blue-collar share of jobs fell from [44% in 1979](#) to [28% in 2025](#). It’s fallen in the **UK**, the **US** and elsewhere. Union membership, once a mostly “blue-collar” phenomenon, declined in most industrialised countries. It fell from an average of 30% of employees [across the OECD](#) in 1985 to 19% in 2005 and 15% in 2023. The fall was even greater in Australia. But these changes did not reflect how likely people were to identify as working class.



In Australia, national attitude and election surveys give us a good idea of trends in people’s views. Between 1979 and 2007, the proportion of respondents in a [standard national survey](#) defining themselves as working class or lower class temporarily grew from 40%, to the low 50s in the 1980s and ‘90s, then back to 44% by 2007. In 2025, after a bit more movement, it was still 44% working class.

A British survey in 1983 found 58% of people claimed to be working class. By 2005, those identifying as working class had barely fallen to 57%. In [2023](#), still 53% of people identified as working class. **In the US**, where the phrase “working class” appeared absent from public discourse for decades until Trump, a differently worded question showed that in 1976, 51% of Americans thought of themselves as either working class or lower class. In 2006, the same survey showed 52% identifying as either working class or lower class. Within this period, numbers had fluctuated from year to year — but always between 48% and

55% expressed working or lower class identity. A [Gallup poll](#) added “upper-middle class” to the options, and the proportion claiming working or lower class status was only 39% in 2006. In 2024, that number was 43%. In **Canada**, the proportion identifying as working or lower class was 36% in 1980 and still 36% in 1995. In 2017, a different poll [found 37%](#) identified as working class.

In short, while “blue-collar” jobs have sharply declined almost everywhere, the experience of “working class” has been relatively stable, within some fluctuating bounds. Differences in class identity between countries seem more notable than differences over time, perhaps due to how questions are asked or how different cultures interpret them. This is not to say that giving a “working class” response to a forced-choice survey question is the same as a deeply thought position on class. But if people no longer thought of themselves as working class, you would expect to see some pretty big changes over time in answers to these questions.

How the working class was left behind

- Sure, jobs changed, a lot. But there has never been much middle-class glamour in the “white collar” jobs at the checkout counter, behind the hamburger hotplate or in the call-centre factory.
- Class relations didn’t weaken. In fact, inequality worsened in [many countries](#). Neoliberal policies, including those adopted by social democratic parties, made the rich much richer, but they [slowed the growth](#) in the wellbeing of the majority of people, and left the working class behind.
- The proportion that thought [big business had too much power](#), and [income and wealth should be redistributed](#), became larger.
- Unions lost ground [not because](#) their ideas became unpopular with workers. It simply became much harder for unions to recruit and retain members in the face of [increasingly hostile employers, governments and laws](#).
- Working class voters didn’t have solutions to hand. But nor were they offered any by social democratic parties that barely spoke their language. Now the door has been opened to far-right parties, presenting alternatives that appeal to some facing those class problems.

There’s life in ‘class’ voting yet, just not in the way we thought of it.

Towards a progressive rebuttal of the Far Right narratives ***William Mitchell, Modern Monetary Theory, June 18, 2026***



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On June 17, 2026 the leader of the far Right party in Australia (One Nation) gave her first ever – [Speech](#) – to the National Press Club in Canberra and announced that Australia cannot be a multicultural society and that “we must be monocultural”. The question of culture and national cohesiveness is a subject that I am working on as part of my aim to publish a sequel to my 2017 book – [Reclaiming the State: A Progressive Vision of Sovereignty for a Post-Neoliberal World](#) – which I co-authored with Thomas Fazi. The question that the sequel begins with relates to what defines a viable currency area and what legitimates government fiscal policy. I see this issue as a central extension of the work on Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) because it provides a sociological basis for currency sovereignty...The adoption of the mainstream macroeconomic fictions by the traditional social democratic political voices around the world has prevented them from being able to voice the concerns of the working class who are being damaged by neoliberalism. Indeed, the formerly progressive political forces are now seen as facilitators of neoliberalism; giving voice to the uncertainties and anxieties of the precariat has been left to the emerging far Right political movements. And with that, a whole array of anti-progressive narratives have accompanied the ‘concerns’ expressed for declining living standards.

The above is an extract only - [click here](#) to read the full text of the Bill Mitchell blog

The US-Iran war 2026: outcome of 'Operation Strawman'? Richard Stone (South Australia independent journalist), May 2026



Revelations emerging about the military planning of the US-Israeli bombing of Iran have raised a number of questions. It was conducted along lines more in keeping with a desperate gamble than a carefully planned defence and security operation. Some studies of the major players behind the scenes reveal clearly obtuse, questionable positions and reasoning. The whole plan, moreover, also invariably failed to achieve objectives; it has been shown, furthermore, to be seriously counter-productive for US-Israeli hegemonic positions.

On 28 February the US and Israel launched what was considered a surprise attack upon Iran, killing the Supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, and some of his government and religious officials. Iran responded immediately as a real-war scenario unfolded in the Middle East. The fact that months later the US-Israeli military planning would appear to have failed to achieve objectives has left numerous questions unanswered. Iran's ability to close the Straits of Hormuz has had a serious impact upon global oil supplies and created an energy crisis. Revelations emerging in late May about the US-Israeli military planning, however, throw light upon a failed covert operation to bring about regime change to Iran. (1) Following the attack on the Supreme Leader, the US-Israeli military operation targeted the home of former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was technically under house arrest. The attack was intended as a 'jail break', releasing Ahmadinejad and placing him back in office to serve 'US interests'. (2) Since ending his term of office in 2013, Ahmadinejad had quietly slipped from being a public figure to a shadowy cyber-based entity 'better known for his regular online praise of American rapper Tupac Shakur, than his political activities'. (3) Whether his chosen interests were designed to mobilise younger generations of Iranians keen to follow western fashions and popular culture has yet to be established. The military plan also included Iranian protest groups storming government buildings and participating in a nation-wide insurrection. It failed. Observers of the military plan recently concluded that the Trump administration created the covert operation with Israeli counterparts following their plan to remove President Maduro from office in Venezuela. It was 'a model that Mr Trump appeared to think could be replicated elsewhere'. (4)

The military plan was, furthermore, formulated amid concerns about the general state of Trump's cognitive abilities; erratic behaviour is regarded by some commentators as symptomatic of far deeper and serious mental problems. In fact, some well qualified medical personnel have noted that Trump was 'cognitively incapable of serving in the office'. (5) His administration, likewise, has been assessed as 'a government of the least qualified'. (6) There remains ample evidence to conclude the claims are quite credible. Some of the senior members of the Trump administration also include leading figures such as Defence Secretary, Pete Hegseth, and Vice-President J.D. Vance, who are closely associated with Christian nationalism. The far-right ideological belief borrows heavily from mythical interpretations of the bible as a driving force to make the US a 'Christian nation' guided by divine authorities rather than a secular democracy. The advocates of the 'integralist' movement are closely associated with the far-right and see the war with Iran as a modern-day Holy War. (7) The far-right, furthermore, have strong links into the Christian-Zionist movement, which actively promotes Israel and settlements on the West Bank. It was noted, interestingly, by some observers that the US-Israeli military plan was little other than 'a hair-brained scheme concocted by Israel'. (8) It would appear MOSSAD were planning to create a 'straw-man' type leadership in Tehran, to serve 'US interests'. Ahmadinejad had been chosen to replace the present Iranian leadership as he was regarded as 'an open critic of the theocratic government'. (9) He, furthermore, was regarded as capable of establishing a coalition inside Iran capable of 'running Iran's political, social and military system'. (10)

Interestingly, Ahmadinejad was quoted in a 2019 interview conducted by the New York Times in which he ‘praised President Trump and argued for a rapprochement between Iran and the US’. (11) As the military plan conspicuously failed to achieve objectives, Iranian state organs unleashed a massive clampdown on political opposition, the very people the US and Israel were supposed to be supporting. (12) It took place amid a growing awareness in Tehran that the whole country had a serious problem with infiltration from foreign-backed adversaries. As the protesters emerged, they were open prey for repressive measures.

Western-backed intelligence measures against Iran have a long history. Iran was used by the US during the previous Cold War as a geo-strategic hub; the country was used as part of a highly secret network of surveillance and signals-intelligence (SIGINT) facilities on an arc from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. It swung from *Silvermine* in South Africa, to Abu-Musa in Iran, Kagnew in northern Ethiopia, Subic Bay in the Philippines and Pine Gap, Central Australia. (13) The *Silvermine* facilities were correspondingly linked to counterparts in Argentina, linking defence and security provision of the Indian Ocean with the South Atlantic: the US-led Southern Ocean Defence Plan. Iran became a central player in the US Cold War surveillance and intelligence-gathering of the former Soviet Union. Networks of secret listening posts along Iran’s northern borders monitored military communications in the southern part of the country. (14) The 1979 Iranian Revolution was, therefore, a severe blow to US regional defence and security provision although a substantial number of the population retained pro-US sympathies who were their previous employers and paymasters. The subsequent Iran-Contra scandal provided evidence the US had support in the country, in high-level positions. (15)

Revelations about the extent of the pro-US infiltration problem and its influence on recent protests inside Iran remain problematic. Evidence, nevertheless, exists about US-backed bodies based in the US providing extensive anti-Iran propaganda and financial support to the political opposition inside the country. (16) The US-Israeli military plan for regime change in Iran has, nevertheless, failed. It began as a calculated risk and has proved totally counter-productive; murmuring amongst some of the most strategically vital US-Israel allies in the region has suddenly become quite audible. Political leaks from the highest level of the UAE governmental system, for example, have revealed discussions and questions have already taken place about ‘the US bases it hosts may have been more of a liability than an asset’. (17) Elsewhere, in the wider Middle East and further afield, a number of other governments have questioned ‘whether US bases around the world represent a security asset or a liability’. (18)

Meanwhile, despite streams of western propaganda focussing on Iran as a failed state, an Israeli Lieutenant- General, Eyal Zamir, recently warned the whole Israeli Defence Force was at risk of collapse with chronic manpower shortages. (19) Inside Israel facts emerging about ‘dozens of Israelis have been charged with spying for Iran over the past two years’, likewise, remain a matter under official investigation. (20) The Iranian political system would appear, meanwhile, to have endured the US-Israeli military plan and emerged in a stronger, regional hegemonic position.

1. Early war goal, The New York Times, 19 May 2026, and, Ahmadinejad ‘was US, Israel pick to run Iran’, The Australian, 22 May 2026, and, Corrupt hypocrite ‘with blood on his hands’, The Australian, 22 May 2026.

2. Ibid.

3. Ahmadinejad, Australian, *ibid.*, 22 May 2026.

4. New York Times, *ibid.*, 19 May 2026.

5. See: Trump’s former lawyer says he’s become a madman, Alternet., 4 May 2026.

6. Ibid.

7. See: There’s a moral vacuum at the core of JD., The Australian, 20 April 2026, and, Hegseth quotes Bible, or is it Pulp Fiction?, The Weekend Australian, 18-19 April 2026.

8. Ahmadinejad, The Australian, *op.cit.*, 22 May 2026.

9. New York Times, *op.cit.*, 19 May 2026.

10. Ahmadinejad, The Australian, *op.cit.*, 22 May 2026.

11. New York Times, *op.cit.*, 19 May 2026.

12. Motherhood itself is now a punishment, The Australian, 27 May 2026.

13. Essential instruments of US strategy – two new gendarmes: Iran & South Africa, Le Monde Diplomatique, December 1976.

14. See: www.spyflight.co.uk/darkgene.htm, + *US foreign policy and the Iranian Revolution*, Christian Emery, (London, 2013).

15. See: Iran – Arms for Hostages, The Iran-Contra Scandal, Edited Peter Kornbluh and Malcolm Byrne, (New York, 1993), Part Two, pp. 213-324.

16. See: [20 things you need to know about the protests in Iran](#),

17. What have the US bases done for us, asks UAE., The Australian, 22 April 2026.

18. Hesitant US leaves Gulf States exposed, The Australian, 2 May 2026.

19. Strained IDF ‘is at risk of collapse’, The Austrn, 30 March

20. Iranian spies on Jew-hate missions, The Australian, 25 May 2026



Marjane Satrapi's masterpiece *Persepolis* transformed the world's understanding of Iran

Shadi Rouhshahbaz, *The Conversation*, June 5, 2026

([Shadi Rouhshahbaz](#) is a PhD candidate, Peace and Conflict Studies, The University of Melbourne; University of Newcastle)

Marjane Satrapi, best known for her memoir and film [Persepolis](#), has died aged 56. The death of this much loved Iranian–French artist, graphic novelist, film-maker and activist has been met with widespread celebration of her life – and its dedication to resistance, freedom and humanity. French president Emmanuel Macron [paid tribute](#) to “a great artist who transformed an Iranian childhood into a universal fable”.

Satrapi was born in Rasht (like my own mother) in 1969, then raised in Tehran. She came of age during the Iranian Revolution and the turbulent years that followed. As political repression intensified, members of her family and wider social circle were arrested, persecuted – and in some cases, executed, like her uncle Anoosh, a former political prisoner and exile, executed by the Islamic Republic.

First published in 2000, *Persepolis* created a transformative shift in comics, memoir and political storytelling. Eventually extended into four volumes, it follows Satrapi's childhood, her adolescence in Vienna (where her parents sent her to study in 1983) and her later struggle to navigate belonging between Iran and Europe. Satrapi [returned to Tehran](#) to attend university in 1989. In 1994, she moved back to Europe. Satrapi finished her studies in France, where she settled, gaining French nationality in 2006. [Last year](#), she refused France's prestigious *legion d'honneur*, over its “hypocrisy” in its dealings with Iran. Satrapi illustrated the dislocations of revolution, migration, adolescence and return in such a way that her memoir travelled far beyond her home country. Through its deceptively simple black-and-white illustrations, *Persepolis* became globally influential because it offered an intimate account of revolutionary Iran and exile that challenged dominant stereotypes. For many readers, Satrapi is still the woman who explained Iran in the simplest, yet most powerful way.

Today, reading *Persepolis* with a cup of tea and a candle lit in Satrapi's memory, I am struck by how little my reaction has changed since first watching the film at a university screening in France in 2019. Like Marjane, I grew up between worlds: the child of returnees in the early days of the revolution, a girl who wore the compulsory hijab, listened to Western music, argued with authority, fell in love, had her heart broken and dreamed of lives beyond the horizon. Later, I welcomed political activism, harassment, migration and multiple exiles into my life. Yet what made *Persepolis* so powerful was not that it reflected my experiences of repression, but that it captured everything beyond.

Satrapi reminded the world that Iranians are not merely subjects of geopolitics or victims of authoritarianism. We have families, friendships, humour, terrible fashion choices, impossible romances and complicated identities. Like all great memoirs, *Persepolis* made the ‘particular’ universal. It allowed readers to see themselves in an Iranian girl from Tehran. In doing so, it made it harder to deny our shared humanity. Her art has the kind of charm that allows everyone to see themselves in one corner of it or another.

In Satrapi's hands, exile was neither heroic nor tragic. It was disorienting, lonely, creative and politically productive. Her enduring legacy, however, lies not simply in what she told the world about the country she left behind, but in what she revealed about the experience of living between worlds as a human

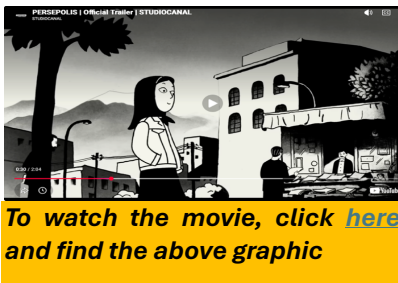
being. “I was a Westerner in Iran, an Iranian in the West. I had no identity.” Few lines from *Persepolis* capture the condition of exile more powerfully than this one.

Reading *Persepolis* at different times of one’s life offers a language for contradictions that often feel impossible to explain: loving one’s country while criticising it, belonging to multiple places while feeling fully accepted by none, and carrying memories across borders that others struggle to understand. In telling her own story, Satrapi captured something far larger than herself. In her 56 years of life, she stayed true to herself and never forgot where she came from.

Iran: misunderstood and dehumanised

After the Islamic Revolution, the hostage crisis in the United States, the wars with Iraq and the emergence of a new world order after 9/11, Iran became a misunderstood country, its population dehumanised. Satrapi’s memoir restored its complexities and nuances to the imaginations of readers from different backgrounds.

The power of *Persepolis* comes precisely from its ordinariness. Readers follow the life of a rebellious teenager. They learn about her family, grandparents, friends, teenage crushes, a failed marriage and the arguments that liven up any dinner table. Marjane’s story – garnished with music, humour and grief – reveals how extraordinary historical events are experienced through the mundane rhythms of everyday life. Yet *Persepolis* is equally about leaving behind familiarity and home. Throughout, family becomes both refuge and history. In one of the book’s most moving sections, Satrapi’s beloved Uncle Anoosh tells her, “Our family memory must not be lost.” Decades later, those words resonate for me. Reading them, I often think of my own uncle, Kambiz, whom I lost long before my birth, when he was executed by the Islamic Republic aged 23. But the significance of this moment extends beyond the boundaries of any single household. In authoritarian contexts, where states often seek to monopolise history and memory, families become custodians of alternative narratives. In stories passed down by parents, grandparents and relatives, Satrapi preserves memories of political imprisonment, resistance – and hope that official accounts might prefer to erase.



Satrapi returned to Iran before eventually settling in France, where she built the artistic career that would make her one of the most influential voices of the Iranian diaspora. She created several graphic storytelling books. She co-wrote and co-directed the animated 2007 film adaptation of *Persepolis*, and was nominated for an Oscar, becoming [the first woman nominated](#) in the category of best animated feature. She went on to direct feature films.

Satrapi’s alternative view of Iran is so compelling because she refuses to romanticise her own country, or to idealise Europe or the West. She rejects both nostalgic nationalism and complete assimilation. Instead, she inhabits the uncomfortable space in between. For many Iranian migrants and exiles who came after her, this condition feels deeply familiar. Loving a country while criticising it. Belonging to multiple places while feeling fully accepted by none. Carrying memories that others cannot quite understand. Satrapi transformed these contradictions into a language that could be shared. She critiqued the repression of the Islamic Republic while remaining critical of Western hypocrisy. She condemned fanaticism without embracing cultural superiority. “Between one’s fanaticism and the other’s disdain, it’s hard to know which side to choose,” she wrote in *Persepolis*.

Importantly, Satrapi never positioned herself as the sole voice of Iran. Rather, she understood her work as a form of translation. As Iran enters yet another period of uncertainty, marked by regional conflict, repression and deepening social fractures at home and in the diaspora, Satrapi continued to insist on the humanity and complexity of Iranian lives. Her activism included supporting the [Woman, Life, Freedom movement](#), following the death of Mahsa Jina Amini: a 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman

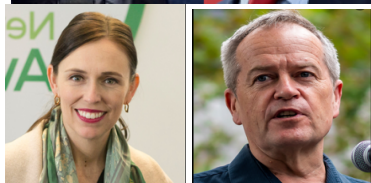
detained for allegedly not properly wearing the Islamic headscarf in 2022. Her final years were spent challenging both the authoritarianism of the Iranian state and what she saw as the West's persistent tendency to reduce Iranians to geopolitical abstractions, rather than people with histories and agency.

For many Iranian exiles, Persepolis remains more than a memoir. It is a map. A guide to memory, identity, belonging and survival. It reminds me that exile is not simply a matter of geography, but of consciousness. It has taught me that dignity can be an act of resistance and that memory itself can become a political act in times of political amnesia. Her characters rarely find liberation through departure alone; instead, they grapple with loneliness, reinvention and the persistent question of belonging. Yet Satrapi approached these themes with humour, tenderness and an insistence on complexity. Marjane Satrapi spent her life ensuring that humanity, resistance and the memory of Iran is never forgotten. In doing so, she gave generations of readers and exiles a more sophisticated language for understanding home, freedom and what it means to remain human between worlds.

THE REST IS HISTORY



Stewart Sweeney, The four missed moments: when social democracy failed to change course, *Pearls and Irritations*, June 30, 2026



The Sanders, Corbyn, Ardern and Shorten moments were missed chances to renew social democracy through structural reform, leaving genuine economic grievances to be harvested by the populist right.

Every generation offers political moments that, in retrospect, appear as forks in the road. In the past decade, four such moments emerged across the English-speaking democracies: the rise of Bernie Sanders in the United States, Jeremy Corbyn in Britain, Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand and Bill Shorten in Australia. Each was different in ideology, personality and political circumstance. Yet together they represented something larger: opportunities to reverse the long retreat of social democracy from its founding purpose.

For much of the twentieth century, social democracy sought to civilise capitalism. It accepted markets but insisted they should serve society, not dominate it. Progressive taxation, strong trade unions, public housing, universal healthcare, quality education, publicly owned infrastructure and competition policy were not merely welfare measures. They were structural reforms designed to spread power, opportunity and security throughout society.

Beginning in the 1980s, however, many social democratic parties accepted much of the neoliberal settlement. Markets became the primary instrument of public policy. Public ownership gave way to privatisation. Finance and property became increasingly dominant. Governments shifted from shaping markets to managing their consequences. Labour parties became increasingly centrist, managerial and technocratic. Elections were won or lost on competence rather than competing visions of society.

The Sanders, Corbyn, Ardern and Shorten moments each challenged that trajectory in different ways. **Bernie Sanders** revived class politics in a country where many had declared class irrelevant. He spoke directly about billionaires, monopoly power, universal healthcare, free education and the dignity of work. Although he never secured the Democratic nomination, he transformed American political debate and made democratic socialism a legitimate part of mainstream political conversation. **Jeremy Corbyn** attempted something similar within Britain's Labour Party. His program challenged austerity, proposed public ownership of key utilities and sought to rebuild an active economic role for the state.

While Labour fell short of government, his 2017 campaign demonstrated that an unapologetically social democratic platform could mobilise millions of younger voters. **Jacinda Ardern** represented a different possibility. She governed with empathy and restored faith in political leadership during extraordinary crises. Yet despite commanding unprecedented public trust and an outright parliamentary majority, her government stopped short of fundamentally reshaping New Zealand's political economy. Housing, wealth inequality and productivity remained largely untouched. **Bill Shorten's** 2019 campaign perhaps came closest to proposing structural reform within Australian Labor's modern history. Changes to negative gearing, capital gains tax concessions and dividend imputation sought to redirect Australia's economy away from speculative wealth accumulation towards productive investment. His defeat became a cautionary tale that encouraged Labor to become more electorally cautious rather than more economically ambitious.

These moments were not simply missed opportunities for social democracy. They were also missed opportunities to pre-empt the contemporary rise of the populist right. Across all four countries, voters were expressing remarkably similar concerns: stagnant wages, insecure employment, unaffordable housing, declining public services, regional decline and growing distrust of political elites. These were fundamentally economic and democratic problems.

Where social democracy increasingly offered competent management, the populist right offered emotional explanation. Instead of identifying monopoly power, financialisation and concentrated wealth as the sources of insecurity, it blamed migrants, globalisation, cultural change, environmental regulation and political elites.

The tragedy is that the underlying grievances were often genuine. The diagnosis offered by the right was frequently false. Had social democracy embraced more ambitious structural reform – tackling housing speculation, monopoly capitalism, declining labour power, tax privilege and regional inequality – it may not have eliminated right-wing populism. But it might have deprived it of much of the social and economic terrain on which it flourished.

This points to a deeper lesson. The central political divide today is not simply between left and right. It is between those willing to reshape capitalism and those content merely to manage its increasingly unequal outcomes. For too long, many social democratic parties have become administrators of an economic model they once sought to transform. Their founders understood that democracy itself depended upon widely shared economic security. When inequality becomes extreme, when housing becomes speculative, when wages stagnate while wealth concentrates, democracy weakens. Citizens lose faith that politics can improve their lives. Into that vacuum step those offering easy enemies instead of structural solutions.

The Sanders, Corbyn, Ardern and Shorten moments now look less like isolated episodes than chapters in a common story. Each illuminated the possibility of renewing social democracy for the twenty-first century. Each demonstrated significant public appetite for a politics that challenged concentrated economic power. Yet each, for different reasons, fell short of establishing a durable new settlement.

History rarely offers identical opportunities twice. But it often returns to unresolved questions. The unresolved question confronting social democracy remains the same as it was a century ago: will it once again seek to civilise capitalism through structural reform, or will it continue managing an increasingly unequal system while others harvest the anger that follows? That question may determine not only the future of the centre-left, but the future of liberal democracy itself.

Stewart Sweeney is a writer and public policy advocate with a longstanding interest in the evolution and future of capitalism. He migrated from Scotland to Adelaide in 1975 to work with Premier Don Dunstan on industrial democracy. A former academic and trade unionist, he continues to contribute to public debate on economic justice, democratic reform, and sustainable development.





John Keane, [Decolonising democracy](#) (part 1) Pearls and Irritations, June 8, 2026

John Keane is Professor of Politics at the University of Sydney. Renowned globally for his creative thinking about politics, history, media and democracy, he is the author of the best-selling *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (1995), *The Life and Death of Democracy* (2009), *Power and Humility* (2018), *The New Despotism* (2020) and *The Shortest History of Democracy* (2022), which has been published in a dozen languages or more. He was nominated

for the 2021 Balzan Prize (Italy) and the Holberg Prize (Norway) for outstanding global contributions to the human sciences. His latest books are *China's Galaxy Empire* (2025) and *Demagogues and Despots: Democracies on the Brink* (2026).

This article was drawn from notes prepared for public lectures in Nanjing and Oxford, May 2026

Our world is passing through a moment of mounting political nervousness and confusion about the breakdown of the post-1945 rules-based international order. Some spectators speak of its terminally catastrophic breakdown. Others say we are returning to an era of 'sovereign' nation state rivalry or instead predict its replacement by a new world order variously described as 'multi-polar', 'heteropolar' or as a form of 'new medievalism'. There is general agreement that in fields such as cross-border investment and trade, migration, environmental protection and nuclear policy, states and regions need resilient and predictable rules of the game. On the other hand, there is a surplus of conflicting opinion about how to define the old order, why and to what extent it is nowadays crumbling, and whether a new and more desirable world order is on the horizon.

How to make sense of the global order has become a profoundly political matter. The struggles among IR scholars and pundits about how to categorise the world are perplexing. Especially bothersome is their silence about the impact of the crumbling global order on the spirit and substance of democracy. That's why the following notes aim to make better sense of chaotic trends around the globe by focussing on questions about democracy and its future. This is an unfamiliar interpretation, a perspective so far largely missing from the commentaries offered by public intellectuals, journalists, think tank reports and government documents.

The broad thesis is that our world is witnessing the breakdown of an empire that once played the key role in building and securing the complex of global rules-based institutions – where some, mostly rich, white and privileged, liberal democracies flourished. The weakening global grip of the United States is one of those epochal moments when a clutch of cross-border institutions, built and backed by an empire, lose their legitimacy. They become seen as biased or hopelessly ineffective. In their place, bullying and fear of destructive lawlessness flourish.

The notes further suggest that the breakup of the American-led global order is impacting heavily on democracy in territorial states. A victim of the imperial boomerang effect, democracy is not only facing degradation and breakdown within the United States. Many (mostly Atlantic region) democracies depended heavily on the old global order in matters such as economic growth, cross border trade and investment, diplomacy, political stability and military security. The current trends are brash reminders that outlier democracies have relied upon their imperial masters for their survival and flourishing. When empires begin to crumble and fall, outlier democracies experience confusion and paralysis and are even confronted by life-and-death survival.

Democracies in Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Spain, Greece, Australia and New Zealand are struggling to make sense of the decline of the American empire and the global rules it once enforced. Pushed hither and thither, they are being forced to adjust to a new reality of turbulence and confusion. The notes conclude with an assessment of what these democracies can do to decolonise themselves:

to protect and nurture their own democratic institutions and ways of life against the shocks gnawing away at their coherence, morale, stability and future resilience.

What was the post-1945 American-led liberal democratic world order? It is often spoken about – misleadingly – as if it was a homogeneous period. But historians, economists and international relations scholars remind us that this post-Second World War geopolitical order, centred in the Atlantic region, came in two connected phases.

There was the so-named ‘golden era’ of welfare state-regulated capitalism founded at the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference and later shaped by a clutch of new institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the United Nations and NATO. This was also the period of the unregulated spread of nuclear weapons and chronic military tensions with the Soviet Union. Hallmarks of the golden era were free trade, controlled inflation, fixed rate currency exchanges, progressive tax rates, strong labour unions, reduced barriers to corporate investment, and the sanctification of private property in ‘social market’ form. There were celebrations of ‘liberal democracy’, an oxymoronic phrase that had first begun to flourish only during the 1930s, along with the proliferation of popular works on democracy by mainstream liberal thinkers such as Robert Dahl, Seymour Martin Lipset, Karl Popper and Joseph Schumpeter.

For three decades, emboldened by leaders’ commitments to ‘pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty’ (John F Kennedy), talk of a ‘liberal’ and ‘democratic’ international order flourished. But democracy was only for the loyal friends of America; it was mainly a white-skinned affair. The flipside of peaceful cooperation with (say) subservient British governments were cocktails of dirty tricks, assassinations, torture, disappearances, economic sanctions and military interventions in countries such as Iran, Guatemala, Congo, Brazil, Chile, Granada, Panama, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya.

The stagflation and exchange rate crises of the 1970s brought this global ‘liberal democratic order’ episode to an end. There followed a radical reshaping of the Bretton Woods arrangements into what came commonly to be called the age of ‘neoliberalism’. The United States still played the role of master dramaturg and protector-manager of the ‘free world’. Under the nuclear-tipped dome, in the name of ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’, terms still used interchangeably, there were more than a hundred US military interventions and untold numbers of engineered coups d’états, CIA-led assassinations and covert operations. This period also saw dramatic policy shifts in favour of anti-democratic, market-based freedoms championed by neo-liberals.

Intellectuals, policy advisors and politicians openly insisted that inflation, fiscal problems, political instability and the shrinking authority of ‘overloaded’ government were caused by an ‘excess of democracy’ (Michel Crozier, Samuel P Huntington and Joji Watanuki). Currency speculation, hot money flows, and the opening of markets to foreign investment were normalised. Corporate tax rates were lowered, while the super wealthy evaded taxation altogether by moving their assets to safe havens. Backed by US-dominated bodies such as the World Bank, IMF, and the World Trade Organisation (established in 1995), the global offshoring of production, local plant closures and job losses became commonplace. There were regional integration initiatives, some of them at odds with the spirit and substance of neo-liberalism, such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the European Union, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). China returned to the global order. The Soviet empire collapsed. Efforts to privatise state industries, welfare programs and other public services multiplied. Rising public and household debt and widening income and wealth gaps predominated. The seeds of citizen resentment were planted.

*This article is the first of an eight-part series, political theorist John Keane examines the effect of disruptions to the world order on democracy and its future. **Read the full eight-part series here***

POST SCRIPTS



Peddalling into censorship, Chris Yiallouris (long-standing supporter of LHSSA) Pearls and Irritations, June 27, 2026

The Big Ride for Palestine SA's agreement with a sportswear manufacturer to create a jersey for its winter ride has been stymied by concern about its branding.

There is something quietly absurd about a cycling jersey becoming a flashpoint for corporate cowardice. Yet that is precisely what happened when an Australian sportswear manufacturer refused to produce a winter, long-sleeved jersey for the Big Ride for Palestine SA – a community cycling group raising awareness for peace in one of the world's most devastating conflicts.

This is a introductory extract only – for the full article [click here](#)



ABC REWIND →

Finding Fanny Finch

Sat 23 May 2026 at 11:30am

▶ Play ↻

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ABC Radio National

When Bill Garner began exploring his family history, a puzzling gap in the family tree led him to discover a most extraordinary ancestor: **Fanny Finch**.

Finch was a well-known and controversial figure during the Victorian gold rushes. A London-born woman of African heritage, she pushed a wheelbarrow from Melbourne to the goldfields in 1852, where she became a sly grogger and restaurateur. She **actively resisted police corruption**, supported women and children against domestic violence and in 1856, **cast a vote** in municipal elections, decades before women were granted suffrage. And yet her story was not passed down to her descendants.

When Bill met historian **Kacey Sinclair**, who had been researching Finch's life, a fascinating and sometimes challenging conversation began.

In Finding Fanny Finch, Sinclair joins Finch's direct descendants, Bill and his daughter Alice, in a theatrical reconstruction and reflection on the life and legacy of an unforgettable woman.

To listen to this ABC program, [click here](#)

We'd like your ideas about the LHSSA Newsletter

Dear members and supporters, the LHS (SA) Executive invite you to take a survey on your opinion of the LHS (SA) quarterly newsletter – which is sent out by email four times a year. We urge you to take the survey so that we continue to produce a newsletter that is relevant to you.

To participate in the survey click [this link](#):

We look forward to receiving your response

In solidarity

Doug Melvin

On behalf of the LHSSA Executive

The Oral History Australia Awards for 2026 are now open

Nominations and applications are now being accepted for the 2026 Oral History Australia (OHA) awards.

The deadline is **31 July 2026**. **For further information [click here](#).**

Three awards are on offer:

- **the Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History, a lifetime achievement award**
- **the OHA Book Award**
- **the OHA Media Award.**

Applicants for the OHA Book Award must have had their book published in the period 1 September 2024 to 31 July 2026. For the OHA Media Award, the media production must have been produced, published, exhibited or performed in the same period - 1 September 2024 to 31 July 2026.

To apply or nominate for an OHA award you must complete the relevant online form. Winners will be announced at the 2026 OHA Biennial Conference in Adelaide, South Australia, from 3-6 December.

A FILM BY ABBY MARTIN

EARTH'S GREATEST ENEMY

DOCUMENTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF HISTORY'S BIGGEST EMPIRE

FILM AND DISCUSSION WITH ABBY MARTIN, FILM MAKER

CAPRI CINEMA GOODWOOD

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