




ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"It was the establishment of the 'Bank of England' in 1694AD that finally gave complete Holiness to the idea of a 'Bank' as something special; something untouchable! Previously,... the idea that the word 'Bank' conveyed, was embodied in the expression as used by the Earl of Anglesea in his protest against this enactment ('An Act for the Encouragement of Trade' [1663 AD]) ... 'it is dangerous to the peace of the Kingdom when it shall be in the power of half a dozen or half a score, rich, discontented or factious persons 'to make a bank' of our coin or bullion beyond the seas' ...*

"The Bank of England is where we first see clearly and boldly this 'phenomenon' of private money creation sweeping the all-important Money Creative powers of the State, as it were, into the ash-can. For with the power to write money 'ad infinitum'... it merely did what any counterfeiter would suddenly do having been given the sanction of Sovereign power for his previously criminal activities."

– "The Tallies: a Tangled Tale and The Beginning and the Ending" by David Astle, 1997

GST WOES INCREASE by Jeremy Lee:

Those who imagined the GST was now an accepted fact may yet be startled at the mounting anger among Australia's small businesses. An operator in Tasmania has now sent a bill for \$500 to the Australian Tax Office for the time it took him to complete the Business Activity Statement. A debt collector has already served a demand for the \$500 on the Hobart ATO office. Mr. Watson, the complainant, said:

"...They expect us to do their work for them, but if I'm to be a tax collector, I should be reimbursed," Mr. Watson said. 'The Government is supposed to be in favour of the user-pays principle. In this case the Tax Office is the user'" (Australian Financial Review, 17/11/2000).

Meanwhile, investigations prompted by the Nick Petroulias affair, conducted by former National Crime Authority chairman Tom Sherman, show that 2,000 tax officials have been issuing private rulings, totalling between them millions of dollars:

"...It is evident that favourable rulings can benefit taxpayers by many millions of dollars; those who issue them exercise considerable power,' the report said. 'Any system which involves the combination of discretion, secrecy and large amounts of money is susceptible to corrupt influence' ..." (AFR, 17/11)

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GROWING RESENTMENT AT BAS: It is quite clear that the GST is really biting for the first time. The forms for the Business Activity Statement are over-complicated and confusing, and the guidelines complex. Brian Toohey (*AFR Weekend*, 11-12/11/2000) was quite blunt:

"Australia is now two countries. One has to gather data for an activity statement. The other doesn't.... The more disturbing problem for the Government stems from the resentment at the extra workload created by the DAS and IAS among its core constituency of voters who are proud to be small business operators or self-funded retirees. Not surprisingly, complaints focus on the amount of energy that has to be diverted from their entrepreneurial endeavours to completing forms which go far beyond what is needed to collect the GST."

"If only 1 or 2 percent of these voters decide to punish the Coalition, Labor should romp home at the next election"

Heaven forbid! They'd be just as bad as the Coalition!

THE BUDGET SURPLUS: Adding to the anger over the GST is further fury at the surplus the Government has obtained from obscenely-high levels of taxation, and its refusal to ease the pain in the community with the extra money received. A spate of letters in *The Australian* (17/11) made some thrusting points:

"How does any Australian government, let alone the Federal Government, accumulate a budget surplus of \$4 billion? By denying the taxpayers – us – the infrastructures and facilities for which we pay our taxes" said one. "....The balance looks great on the bank statement. But the house's fence is falling down, the electric wiring is burnt out, the kids are hungry, have no clothes and don't go to school, you're too tight to go to the doctor, the dog has fleas and you won't put petrol in the car to go on a picnic. Numbers on a piece of paper. We're worth more than that, aren't we?" asked another. ".... We now know that spending the surplus will put too much pressure on interest rates, except when it's spent on roads in marginal National Party electorates" pointed out a third. A fourth made the point: "If you're honest with yourself – a budget surplus is overtax. If you have spent heaps of previous overtax on tax reform and another billion of overtax on tax reform education, then if your reformed tax system overtaxes the now educated taxpayer by roughly FOUR BILLION, you should be able to buy a country of your own ..."

In fact, the insistence on Budget Surpluses by orthodox economists and the bankers who met Howard in Sydney just after his party gained power has fudged any genuine discussion. There once was a policy that NO capital works should be paid from taxation – even in 'marginal National Party electorates'. Instead, all capital works should be funded by long-term loans at nominal rates of interest, paid over the life of the item. A road which lasted 50 years would be paid over 50 years. The key would be the use of the Reserve Bank to create and make available the necessary funds – as the Commonwealth Bank did in wartime – at a rate of issue no greater than the cost of administration – probably about half-a-percent. This would allow an immediate and considerable reduction in taxation, far bigger than the half-fulfilled promises by the Howard Government.

It would mean the Government telling the private banks to 'get nicked' if they objected – as they undoubtedly would.

BANK BRANCH CLOSURES CONTINUE: The 'bottom line' which has given the "gang-of-four" their biggest profits ever (\$8.4 billion between them), is still depriving local communities of banking

facilities. In the year to June 2000 the ANZ closed seven branches, the Commonwealth closed 86, Westpac closed 220 and NAB closed 24. Since then the four have between them closed a further 134 branches.

PRIVATISED PRISONS: The whole sorry saga of privatised prisons, a running sore in America, is bursting into the open in Australia. Apart from owning several prisons a US company, Australasian Correctional Management (ACM), runs all six Immigration facilities in Australia. It now transpires that there have been reported cases of rape at the Woomera Detention Centre that have been hushed up because there are penalty clauses in the contract between the Government and the company if events at Woomera embarrass the Federal Government.

A lengthy report in *The Australian* (17/11/2000) said:

"....Staff employed by ACM, a US company that runs several jails and all six Immigration facilities in Australia, were often prison guards with no training in sexual abuse issues. Wackenhut, ACM's parent company, is under fire over stabbings, riots, sexual assaults and prisoner abuse at its prisons in the US"

TREATIES – ANOTHER SCANDAL: The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Denis Burke has called for the Commonwealth's treaty-making powers to be subject to parliamentary scrutiny, and review by the States and Territories. Campaigning for the 1996 election when in opposition, John Howard promised that all future international treaties would be subject to parliamentary examination and approval. One result was the establishment of a parliamentary committee on treaties. This committee has the legislative power to examine all treaties, and approve or otherwise their signature by Australia. This is a watering down of Howard's promise, and the States still get no say, even though they, the Constitution and the Federal system may be directly affected.

At the end of October the parliamentary committee on treaties was preparing advertisements for a public inquiry into Australia's signing the Statute of the International Criminal Court. *The Australian* (6/11/2000) reported the wording of the advertisement, in part: *"The task of the treaties committee is to report to the Parliament on whether it is in the national interest to bind Australia to the terms of the statute"*

Before the advertisements had been published or the treaty committee had reported, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Attorney-General Darryl Williams issued a joint press statement on October 25th that the Government intended to legislate by the end of the year for the ratification of the Statute. After an unholy row in the 'corridors of power' the Treaty Committee forced Downer and Williams to back down. It's nice that the odd bit of sanity occasionally prevails.

Neither the UK nor the US have ratified the Statute of the International Criminal Court. US expert Gary Dempster told the US Congress:

"The ICC's draft statute is replete with unresolved issues and alarming possibilities. Specifically, the court threatens to diminish America's sovereignty, produce arbitrary and highly politicised 'justice' and grow into a jurisdictional leviathan"

Why would Alexander Downer ("the terror of the South Seas") and Williams want to commit Australia to such a project?

SHED A TEAR FOR THE WTO: Elena Lonergan, writing in *The Weekend Australian* (11-12/11/2000), said:

"Shock, horror, tragedy. The World Trade Organisation is in a quandary. It doesn't have anywhere to hold its next big bash (and we use the term advisedly).

"It seems that since Melbourne's jolly gathering, all the interesting cities of the world have taken a second look at the abundant, skull-cracking footage. They've added up the cleaning bills. They've done a quick estimate of dental expenses for all the broken front teeth. And they've said: 'Forget it'...."

What a shame! There must be an old disused gulag somewhere in Russia they could use – or perhaps President Mugabe of Zimbabwe would welcome an international conference?

BUMPER STICKERS: There is a reported new bumper sticker being seen in the troubled electorally-rorted State of Queensland – "DON'T BLAME ME! I VOTED LABOR, 20 OR 30 TIMES!"

HAD ENOUGH? VOTE SITTING MEMBER LAST – from Neil Baird's website: Most people when asked, "What do you think of our Politicians?" react very negatively – usually qualifying their statement with "They're all as bad as each other, so who do you vote for?" These same people are fed up and angry with our politicians as they see them working for overseas interests rather than the people they are supposed to represent, the Australian people. If you agree, then you are not alone.

We have known for some time that the big parties have fixed the electoral system, aided and abetted by the news media; this gives little or no chance to Independents or those who could raise a voice against them. These same politicians feel safe in the knowledge that they can destroy any usurper with cute labels and innuendo.

As you are aware, the "Preferred Party System" is a very fragile thing – where a few votes in the right place means the making or breaking of a candidate?

This is the **ONLY** way to get the message to them. **Vote the Sitting Member Last!**

Why? Voting for the opposition or voiding your vote tells them nothing. They will continue selling us out, because they know no better or choose to turn a blind eye.

Effect! If 5% of all voters did this, then ALL current politicians would be looking for a new job after the next election. The political parties will be shattered and they will know that if they act without the support of those they represent, then they risk being sacked again.

How to! At the next election vote the sitting member last; vote for the other candidates as your conscience dictates. For example, if there were six candidates you would put a six next to the name of the sitting member and the rest of the candidates you would put one to five next to their names in the order you desire. This way you are rejecting the sitting member – **ABSOLUTELY!**

Result! The message sent is clear and unambiguous, we are fed up with their remorseless and callous betrayal of the Australian people. Your vote counts and it is now up to you! Do you want more of the same or are you also FED UP? **Vote the Sitting Member Last!**

NOTE: When voting you must put a number in every square or your vote is voided!

This tactic could be tried at the next West Australian State election which is expected to be held early next year.