

A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

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The Price of Freedom is Eternal Vigilance

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Control, Control, Control (Part 2) By Neville Archibald

In the previous article I dwelt on mostly what was not said in the ‘Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Report’. This time the proposals for our future governance in a, ‘pandemic like’, situation will be discussed.

When I say, ‘pandemic like’ it is for a reason. We have come out of this debacle, possibly thinking that pandemics are rare and a one in 100 or one in twenty year occurrence, we can put it aside and think about it later, breathe our collective sighs of relief and go about our normal lives. Sadly you cannot! The intentions coming out of this response suggest that changes will cover far more than just pandemic disease in humans. The ‘One Health’ objectives are mentioned many times for Bio-security and all that that encompasses.

In this one paragraph the report shows a large part of it’s control related objectives. What I question, is how much control they want. Having come out of an accurate example of what the power hungry will do when they get control (Victoria is a classic example), what will we see if this is enshrined in legislation?

‘We highlight the importance of multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary exercises and plans that consider a ‘One Health’ view. This is needed to optimise health for people, animals and our environment and mitigate converging health threats relating to ‘climate change, biodiversity collapse, stressed ecosystems, antimicrobial resistance, and ageing and increasingly comorbid population’. We support the Australian Centre for Disease Control and the National Emergency Management Agency working with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water and other agencies to better consider the linkages between plant, animal and human biosecurity incidents.

This includes strengthening governance arrangements for emerging infectious diseases using a One Health approach.

A One Health approach to emerging infections must be adopted, with legislative instruments that support information sharing and collaborative response between agencies. – Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases’ page 85.

While the sentiment of ‘*sharing and collaborative response*’ is noble, the underlying ‘One Health’, mentioned many times in this long document, seems like a promise to create a new government slogan to match an intention that they have. As the devil is always in the detail when it comes to these things, the future holds a promise of more to come. More control, more legislation, more bureaucrats (who, if the response report is to have a follow up investigation, will again not be held to account for any abnormalities that may occur)

‘This inquiry aims to use the benefit of hindsight to guide future actions: not to ‘fix’ the actions taken during the last pandemic, or deride the decisions that were made, but rather to harness the innovations that helped us and identify ways to maximise the success of our response whilst ensuring it is proportional to the threat.’ p 9

This document was not aimed at holding anyone to account, rather a positive guide, as they say, to do it better next time. Will there ever be accountability for the overreach and what I see as illegal use of power. If we don’t recognise that this did happen, how then can we stop it from occurring and limit it next time.

In regard to more bureaucrats, we see a huge increase in public sector employment recently:

‘Let’s be precise. Anthony Albanese has blown out the size of the public service from 173,558 full-time equivalent public servants when he took office and is planning to have 209,150 by next year.

That’s 35,592 extra public servants. A 20.5 per cent increase.

How many of these are nurses in hospitals, teachers in schools, or police on the beat? None.

How many are extra women and men serving our nation in uniform? None.’
<https://thenightly.com.au/opinion/simon-birmingham-there-will-be-20-more-public-service-workers-under-labor-but-theyre-not-nurses-or-cops-c-14677963>

This promise for more bureaucrats would appear to be, being set up and prepared for right now. What are all these new public servants to be entrusted with? The creation of ‘One Health’? Or other similar post pandemic adjustments? The creation of an Australian CDC (Centre for Disease Control), Pushing for mis-information laws, and the current under-16 digital exclusion from the web (which will necessitate everyone having some form of digital ID to make it work) are all seemingly a part of this totality of control over us. Trusting in a government to provide the only source of truth and then initiate the controlling mechanisms to enforce that truth is looking more and more likely.

The linking together of all the mentioned departments with an (over-riding?) CDC, would relate to a push for a ‘one health’ relating to everything in the ‘woke’ hand-basket, despite in many cases, no real evidence for the often extreme actions they ask for. A broad controlling mechanism is desired out of this pandemic, more focused on ability to control, than looking for truthful outcome (see also the simultaneous push for the mis-information bill, whose intent is also widespread throughout the whole document - and a real red flag for me.) A ‘climate emergency’ led lock-down or ‘plant disease travel restrictions’ being imposed is not out of the question. A government that was happy to stop you sitting on the beach alone is not to be underestimated!

Another point regularly raising its head are the Biosecurity powers. It will be through these powers that the control mechanisms will work. Legislation that comes in under legitimate commonwealth powers in section 51(ix) Quarantine (Australian Constitution). A non party dependant bureaucracy, that will function as it is described, no matter who is in power, accountable only in a senate inquiry or the like. If you have been following the numerous Senate inquiries of recent times, the public officials seem to: not remember, palm off or obfuscate, when asked difficult questions. The business of getting to the truth of the matter is painful to watch and depending on the chair and the parties involved, often descends into politicking rather than true inquiry. Thus, to me, it appears they get away with things they would not otherwise get away with in private business.

‘It has been suggested to the panel that the Minister for Health could be given a more graduated set of human biosecurity powers under the Act. Also, it was suggested that new powers could be created that allow the Commonwealth to introduce measures to respond to a threat where there is a localised outbreak of a disease (for example, where the disease is present across state/territory borders or is present within a state or territory but has significant flow-on effects into another) before the situation escalates to a blanket national emergency-level response.’ page 109.

Within this ‘One Health’ approach, could this mean avian flu locks down a region? All chooks, including every backyard, are to be eradicated? all species in captivity? Or perhaps a plant virus effecting some local crop. All backyard vege gardens sprayed or wiped out? You think I am being dramatic? I would like to think I am, but we are seeing this in various ways now with bees and within the poultry industry, then read page 111 and 112.

‘...broader impacts should be considered, particularly in decisions to extend determinations under the Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth).’ P 111.

‘whether any changes are needed to better support a future emergency - for example, lessons learnt during the pandemic and informed by current challenges with avian influenza’ p 112.

Looking at the above, which is dot point one on page 112, under strong governance

needed: we can see them already talking about bird flu. The discussions around biosecurity officials or ‘authorised agents’ having the right to enter a premises is already happening and more excuses for this is not needed. The link between local government and Federal or State is a part of an ongoing program to enable local response to things usually outside traditional council responsibilities.

See Victorian Local Government Act 1989 – sect 224

https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/lga1989182/s224.html

More and more control over us is being instituted by local government legislation, from building codes and related housing impositions to business limitations and zoning. In Victoria (the state I am most familiar with) issues arise from bureaucracy rather than councillors, and the reach of these departments seems to be getting further and further out of hand. They are being used as a proxy to implement one-world agendas in many different fields. The federal government working with state government, both appear to be not only okay with this, but would see themselves as another player in this game and using it to enact what they could otherwise not do in the more closely scrutinised ‘representative’ forms of government. See Agenda 21, now Agenda 30.

<https://alor.org/Storage/Library/PDF/global-standardization-of-systems-pdf.pdf>

Another method of control being pushed is under the guise of protecting children from digital harm, the e-digital identity for under 16. Both parties are pushing it, to achieve it we will all need to be included; therefore, a digital ID across the board! David Coleman, liberal, pledges to pass it this year before Christmas see interview on: ‘The Other Side’ *Sky News* :16 Nov 24. This is another push for the all encompassing digital ID. A strong theme in the report is for the upgrade of data collection and contact tracing. Will this become the normal procedure for daily life? Every move you make? every animal you buy? Being logged somewhere? There is already a push for paddock to plate animal tracing with the potential for all such animals to also be ‘immunisation’ logged as well? These discussions need to be widened. Do we want every thing we eat rendered ‘safe’ by this new technology as many are proposing? Injected by mRNA vaccines for everything? The two big mRNA factories being built, one in Monash, Melbourne, will be capable of pumping these out quickly for whatever is decided is a risk.

The whole report appears to take the new inject-able technology as granted. It is as though it is ‘safe and effective’ enough to make it a staple part of our ‘diet’. I cannot stress enough, how the whole ‘biggest drug trial in the world’ is not over, the results are not in, they are not peer review studied. Many opponents studying the outcomes do not get a say, they are still being silenced. There are many questions relating to adverse effects and so called long covid, the rise of turbo cancers, heart attack deaths in younger age groups rising at an alarming rate, a continuing excess death rate despite all the interventions and covid waves that have been through the population. All these concerns need serious study before this is becomes just

another drug on the market, especially if it is going to be mandated, potentially, at many levels.

Yes, the response report is all about instituting more control. Controls that are operative when ‘pandemic like’ conditions exist. Also mentioned is the division of populations into ‘priority’ groupings. This will give ability to make decisions and take actions based on specifics of a group. If there is a group labelled, ‘Vaccine hesitant’ or ‘anti-vaccine’ then potentially will they be able to legislate or take action under these ‘priority’ provisions? The actions taken last time to alienate or exclude non vaccine takers was horrendous, but they made it justifiable by panic.

All in all I thought that the report’s main concern was centred around the loss of trust in government, and by ensuring the mechanisms are in place to get the story straight across all departments and states, it would be a big step towards winning this back. Grave concern was shown about the rise in vaccine hesitancy and the fact that many people may not fall for this again unless they can assure the public they have unity of purpose and the best science communicators to explain it.

While I know pandemic readiness is important, I fear the degree of over-reach can only get worse with the instituting of greater controls over us, and refusing to hold those who already have gone too far, accountable.

As I write this, it appears that the mis-information bill is not going ahead in it’s current format. Be aware that others have still got the intention to make the Governments word, especially during a ‘pandemic’ the only truth acceptable. The Liberals have said they will propose one of their own. This push for control continues. Make sure your local members of parliament are informed of your desires on these matters, local, state and federal - all need to be told and held accountable by their electorates, it is the only way to stop them. ***

On the Spectrum – The Little Box for You to Think Inside **By William Waite**

Economic options are concentrated on what is presented to us as a spectrum. All acceptable choices for economic organisation are to be found on this spectrum and your job as a citizen is to choose “where you are” on it.

On the left are the planners. The Fabians, socialists, even a few commies. For the sake of efficiency and justice the government is to take in hand the control and distribution of production and distribute it equitably according to need. In order to achieve this the people must relinquish private control of the economy and trust the government to faithfully discharge its duty to the common good by administration of the welfare state.

On the right we have the capitalists, favoured in the West, whose perfect world is one of “free enterprise.” Rather than trust owed to the august throne, the organising principle on the right is what is referred to as “the market.” For these free marketeers government interference or regulation of the economy creates distortions which throw the naturally efficient and ever-just scales of market forces off kilter.

The right-wing utopia is the meritocratic, mercantile paradise of boundaryless trade. Left alone the invisible hand sets conditions and the world is made the oyster of the best among us; the entrepreneurs and hard workers.

These are the pure positions which occupy the ends, left and right, of the typical economic spectrum. As an intelligent and reliable person you must take your place somewhere on it. Perhaps you're an economic "radical" or "extremist" and find your view in sync with one of the two descriptions above. The world is becoming increasingly "polarised" they say. But maybe you're more of a moderate. You believe in private property but the government should tax to pay for healthcare and education. Maybe, being in the middle, your position shifts with subsequent political and economic failures. Where you are doesn't quite matter so long as you limit your choice to the range provided and accept the dichotomy as valid. The spectrum is a little box for you to think inside.

In the case of the left the policy is explicitly to centralise control of the economy under the authority of government. It's a blatant play for power. Orwell said, "Every intelligent boy of sixteen is a Socialist. At that age one does not see the hook sticking out of the rather stodgy bait."

But what about the right's insistence that the path to economic freedom lies in letting loose market forces by deregulation?

There are many who rightly maintain that small businesses trading freely, unhindered by excessive government regulation, is a healthy economic scene. In a state of perfect competition the market can actually do its work of regulating prices and allocating resources. Products can be sold at a reasonable profit and no one firm is in a position to corner any vital market. The trouble with this is that it's a fantasy. Back to reality. "Big business in Australia faces less competition than almost anywhere else in the world."¹ Our banking sector is a monopoly with the big four accounting for 90% of the lending market and 20% of the total value of the ASX.² The energy retailers gouge in unison. Qantas and its subsidiary, Jetstar, dominate the airline sector and Transurban owns most of the country's privatised toll roads. Then we're afflicted by the grocery duopoly, Coles and Woolworths, who get it their way with consumers and suppliers. I'm old enough to remember walking around the fruit and veg shop when they were outside the supermarkets. Where did they go? Perfect competition I suppose.

Indeed the business model of big business is monopoly. Just ask Peter Theil, tech billionaire and, with Musk, the influence behind the appointment of J.D. Vance as Trump's VP. In a lecture at Stanford entitled *Competition is for Losers*, Theil says there are two types of businesses; those that exist in an environment of perfect competition and make no money, like restaurants in San Francisco; and monopolies. Once you have a monopoly the trick is to avoid regulation by lying that you don't have one.³ Then, I suppose, if you're big enough you can shore it up with the political influence monopoly money affords.

We've had light-touch regulation for a long time and look where it's got us.

The promise of deregulated and competitive markets advocated by the right, especially the big right, is as much bait as the left's centrally planned utopia. To my way of thinking to regulate or deregulate is little more than a cunning device of the public-private dominator class to head-off real solutions that might curb their coalescing control.

Before moving onto alternatives to conventional economic non-solutions it is worth mentioning the type of regulation which generally escapes scrutiny as such. Monetary policy is a case in point. It's curious to note how the free marketeers generally ignore the interference by central banks and their ham-fisted interest rate interventions. They'll question the decisions, never the authority. How can we make any claims to a free market when market conditions can be altered unrecognizably by the edicts of unelected officials in the Reserve Bank? Oh, that's the banks, they do whatever they want.

The Douglas Social Credit view proposes a different spectrum altogether. At the one end we have an economic organisation which comes together around the principle of freedom of the individual and, at the other we find its opposite, the domination of the individual. Douglas sets up this alternative spectrum:

There are only two great policies in the world today — domination and freedom. Any policy which aims at the establishment of a complete sovereignty whether it be of a Kaiser, a League, a State, a Trust or a Trade Union is a policy of domination, irrespective of the fine words with which it may be accompanied; and any policy which makes it easier for the individual to benefit by association without being constrained beyond the inherent necessities of the function involved, is a policy of freedom.⁴

If we try to locate the left and the right on Douglas's spectrum we will see immediately that rather than being opposed, the results of economic policies coming from both ends of the conventional spectrum amount to the same thing — domination of the individual via monopoly. With both we find "Centralisation of power over initiative as opposed to individual freedom is a persistent and conscious policy."

What is monopoly? Why did Douglas take so much trouble with it? Monopoly is the policy of limiting choice. It's political equivalent is dictatorship. It's opposite is expanding choice, i.e. freedom. The falsity in the spectrum can be found in the presumption that big business and governments are at opposite ends. The fact is that they both have a policy of no choice and that makes them more the same in the most important way — their policy to control the individual. The government is a monopoly. You have to pay what taxes are imposed; you have no choice. They have the monopoly of legitimate force; you have to do what the police and the army say. What is the policy of big business? It is the policy of eliminating competitors until the consumer has no choice. Both government and big business pursue the same policy. This is why Douglas could say:

*You will be puzzled to find that the conflict in the economic world is not between cartels, monopolies, and nationalised industries and property as between all three and small businesses and privately-owned property.*⁵

CreditorWatch reported this month, “Business failures at highest rate since peak of pandemic; Soft household spending hitting hospitality hardest”.⁶ Perfect competition again. Business is concentrating and the government has a lot to do with it. “The ATO is in collection mode, and this will be a source of added stress and insolvencies for the foreseeable future.”⁷ Total non-performing loans have increased, but despite this the credit continues to flow with property lending 18.9% higher in the year to September. House prices have increased 40% since the “pandemic” and there remains “no APRA limits currently in place on higher-risk lending at a system-wide level.” For example on high loan to value ratios and high debt to income lending. APRA notes in their latest update that “household leverage is a key vulnerability” with Australians and Australian banks more exposed to mortgage risk than international peers.⁸ Makes you wonder.

If we are going to fix the problems with this system there is going to need to be some changes, especially to the financial system. The standard by which these changes should be judged is whether or not they will increase individual freedom. We shouldn’t quail at regulation which improves the functioning of the economy for ordinary people. If we are going to break up the monopoly of credit, which is what we propose, then the public authority must be empowered to issue credit within certain limits and manage prices to avoid inflation on essential items. It’s been done before. The question is, would the reform increase individual freedom? Short of a few well-placed defenestrations we think it is the only thing that would. ***

Footnotes:

1 Quiggan, J. Apr, 2024. Big business in Australia faces less competition than almost anywhere else – and likes it that way. *The Guardian*. Available from:

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2 Kohut, B. May 2024. Australia’s Big 4 Banks – Are They A Good Investment?

The Bull. Available from:

<https://thebull.com.au/analysis-opinion/australias-big-4-banks-are-they-a-good-investment/>

3 Theil, P. 2014. Competition is for Losers, how to start a start-up. Available from:

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4 Douglas, C.H. 1922. These present discontents and the Labour Party and Social Credit. Cecil Palmer, London.

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<https://www.socred.org/images/douglas-archives/These-Present-Discontents-and-The-Labour-Party-and-Social-Credit.pdf>

5 Douglas, C.H. 1945. The Brief for the Prosecution. Available from:

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7 Ibid.

8 APRA. Update on APRA’s Macroprudential settings - November 2024, Available from: <https://www.apra.gov.au/update-on-apras-macroprudential-settings-november-2024>