

EDITION 1 | 2023

# princes political review.

**a journal of philosophy,  
politics, and economics**

SPONSORED BY



PRINCE  
ALFRED  
COLLEGE

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior consent of the publishers.

Disclaimer: Although this is a school-supported project, writers retain authorial independence. To that end, their articles and contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of Prince Alfred College. Additionally, the views of authors do not necessarily reflect that of our sponsor, the Centre for Effective Altruism, their affiliated funding committees, or the Effective Altruism community. The publication of articles and interviews does not necessarily indicate the editorial committee's endorsement of those views.

Essays & interviews © retained by the authors.

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

Printed and bound in Australia by Mie Print Pty Ltd trading as The Book Printing Company

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Email: [princespoliticalreview@gmail.com](mailto:princespoliticalreview@gmail.com)

Post: Princes Political Review  
PO Box 571  
Kent Town SA 5071 Australia

Editor: Max Thomas.

Deputy-editors: Nicholas Henchcliffe, Thomas Henchcliffe.

Editorial committee members: Henry Brill-Reed, Sidhak Dhingra, Hugo Evans, Thomas Haden, Hamish Searles, Tianyu Sun.

Management: Chris McGuire.

Many thanks to Sam Huang, Brian Wong, Varshini Venkatesh, Tejas Subramaniam, Michael Oomens, Caleb Parikh, Juliette Meinrath, Sam Crafter, Will Ellis, Jacque Sexton, Chris McGuire, and Greg Atterton for your support.

## Contents

<i>On Teaching</i> by Brian Wong	8
<i>Moral relativism and the universal morality</i> by Tianyu Sun	11
<i>Work, climate, and social justice</i> with Senator Barbara Pocock	15
<i>Does pure altruism exist today?</i> by Hamish Searles	22
<i>In conversation</i> with Noam Chomsky	27
<i>Housing affordability in Adelaide</i> by Don Bui	31
<i>The Science of Teaching?</i> by Mark Foy	37
<i>The Guide to an Ethical Life</i> with Peter Singer	44
<i>The case for Modern Monetary Theory</i> by Vasilis Michalakis	50
<i>A discussion with Hon. Lucy Hood</i>	55
<i>A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing</i> by Nicholas Henchcliffe	61
<i>On Longtermism</i> by Max Thomas	65
<i>Reflections on leadership</i> with Steven Marshall	71
<i>Let's put human nature to bed</i> by Kyan Jenkins	76
<i>Humanism, atheism, and Brexit</i> with A.C. Grayling	79
<i>Absurdism, purpose, and a migraine on Christmas Day</i> by Miles Falahey	91
<i>Taming the Beast of the Future</i> by Sidhak Dhingra	95
<i>Whitlam Dismissal and an Australian Republic</i> with Jenny Hocking	99
<i>A Curriculum for the Anthropocene</i> by Chris McGuire	107
<i>Freedom and justice: an inevitable contention?</i> by Owen Chen	110
<i>Transport, energy, and the Labor Party</i> with Tom Koutsantonis	112
<i>Global debt: lessons, misconceptions, and myths</i> by Nicholas Whyte	119
<i>Modern slavery, gender, and youth engagement</i> with Linda Reynolds	123
<i>The 'Effectiveness' of Effective Altruism</i> by Hugo Evans	128
<i>The Future of Hong Kong</i> by Henry Brill Reed	130
<i>The Economics of the AFL</i> by Fraser Newman	133
<i>A World on Fire</i> by Thomas Henchcliffe	135

## Contributors

**Henry Brill Reed** is a Year 12 student at Prince Alfred College. He is interested in modern Chinese history, the philosophy of consciousness, debating, and music.

**Don Bui** is a Year 12 student at Prince Alfred College. When not studying, you can find Don on the badminton court. He hopes to pursue medicine after school.

**Owen Chen** is a Year 10 student at Prince Alfred College. He is a member of the school Ethics Olympiad team and is a talented pianist.

**Noam Chomsky** is an American public intellectual, linguist, political activist, and philosopher. Known as the 'father of modern linguistics', Noam is one of the most cited scholars alive. He is a Laureate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Arizona and an Institute Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**Sidhak Dhingra** is a Year 12 student at Prince Alfred College. He has many interests including philosophy, sport, and how to make a positive difference in the world.

**Hugo Evans** is a Year 11 student at Prince Alfred College. When he's not debating or studying, you can find him shredding on his jazz guitar.

**Miles Falahey** is a Year 11 student at Prince Alfred College who thoroughly enjoys an existential crisis with his cup of tea. When away from his teacup, he enjoys writing, reading, exercising, and procrastinating from study.

**Mark Foy** has taught philosophy and theory of knowledge at Prince Alfred College for 19 years.

**Anthony Grayling CBE** is the Founder and Principal of the New College of the Humanities at Northeastern University, London, and its Professor of Philosophy. He is also a Supernumerary Fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford. He has been a columnist for the Guardian, Times, New Statesmen, and has written over thirty books.

**Tom Haden** is a Year 12 student at Prince Alfred College. His interests include English literature, international relations, the economics of black markets, and graphic design.

**Nicholas Henchcliffe** is a Year 11 student at Prince Alfred College. He is keen debater, public speaker, McDonald's employee, and a passionate supporter of the Green Bay Packers NFL team.

**Thomas Henchcliffe** is a Year 11 student at Prince Alfred College. He is interested in U.S. politics, the philosophy of law, and enjoys spending time debating and playing with dogs.

**Jenny Hocking** is a political scientist, historian, and biographer. She is Emeritus Professor at Monash University, Inaugural Distinguished Whitlam Fellow at The Whitlam Institute at Western Sydney University.

**Hon. Lucy Hood** is the Member for Adelaide in the South Australian House of Assembly. Before standing at the 2022 election, she was Director of Policy for SA Labor Leader and now Premier, Peter Malinauskas, and served as Education Editor at *The Advertiser*.

**Kyan Jenkins** is a Mathematical Sciences (Advanced) and Sociology student at the University of Adelaide with interests in debating, cooking and sociology. He graduated from Prince Alfred College in 2021.

**Hon. Tom Koutsantonis** is the Member for West Torrens and the longest serving member of the South Australian Parliament. Since March 2022 he has served Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and Minister for Energy and Mining in the Malinauskas ministry.

**Hon. Steven Marshall** is the Member for Dunstan in the South Australian House of Assembly and served as the 46<sup>th</sup> Premier of South Australia between 2018 and 2022. He led the state through the COVID-19 pandemic, and is passionate about space, cyber technology, and entrepreneurship.

**Chris McGuire** is the Head of Boys' Education and Professional Learning at Prince Alfred College. An economist by training, he has interests in sustainability economics, and is also the coach of the senior debating team.

**Vasilis Michalakis** is an advanced computer science student at the University of Adelaide, and has interests in economics, trombone, and coding. He graduated from Prince Alfred College in 2022.

**Fraser Newman** is a Year 11 student at Prince Alfred College who enjoys music, mathematics and debating, as well as basketball in his spare time

**Barbara Pocock AM** is a South Australian Senator, representing the Australian Greens. An economist by profession, she has worked in the Reserve Bank, and is Emeritus Professor at UniSA. She has written numerous books and academic journal

articles on the labour market, work-life conflict, unionism, low pay, inequality, and vocational education.

**Linda Reynolds** is a Western Australian Senator and member of the Liberal Party. She has served as Minister for Defence, Minister for Defence Industry, Minister for Emergency Management and North Queensland Recovery, and Assistant Minister for Home Affairs.

**Hamish Searles** is a Year 12 student at Prince Alfred College. He is interested in psychological studies, the sciences, and keenly follows the Golden State Warriors in the NBA.

**Peter Singer** is the Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics in the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University. Arguably the most influential living philosopher, Singer is often credited as the founding father of the modern animal rights movement and effective altruism philosophy.

**Tianyu Sun** is a Year 12 student at Prince Alfred College. His interests include mathematics, science, and philosophy, and he also enjoys debating, formally or not.

**Max Thomas** is a Year 12 student at Prince Alfred College, and a perpetually disappointed Port Adelaide supporter. He enjoys debating, reading, and playing music and squash in his spare time.

**Nicholas Whyte** is a Year 10 student at Prince Alfred College. His interests include debating, coding, philosophy, and music.

**Brian Wong** is a Rhodes scholar from Hong Kong pursuing their DPhil in Politics at Balliol College, Oxford. A geopolitical strategist, advisor, and philosopher, Brian writes for TIME magazine, South China Morning Post, Diplomat, and is the founder of the Oxford Political Review.

Max Thomas

The idea for a social sciences journal was first raised by close friend Kyan Jenkins several years ago. For some time, other school journals have catered for students with interests in the physical sciences, history, and poetry, but there always seemed to be a gap for those interested in writing or learning about philosophy, politics, and economics. The *Princes Political Review* aims to fill that void.

This edition contains topics and contributions from students and public figures with wide-ranging interests. It places articles from students alongside global thought-leaders with the goal of encouraging respectful, civilised debate. Too often our discourse is stained by adversarial confrontation; our public squares often no longer allow for a sufficient explanation of arguments. Giving students a platform to reason, critique, and consider alternative perspectives is therefore the aim of this publication. Whilst musing through these pages may you learn something new, have an existing opinion challenged, or simply find it an enjoyable way to spend a few hours.

There are a number of people I need to thank whom all contributed to this publication you now hold in your hands. To Sam Huang, Brian Wong, Tejas Subramaniam, and Varshini Venkatesh, for inspiring this project to begin with. To Jacquie Sexton, Michael Oomens, and Will Ellis for your assistance. To Chris McGuire and Greg Atterton for your tireless drafting efforts and advice. To the team at the Centre for Effective Altruism for making this project financially possible. To the university academics, politicians, and others that provided insight. We are eternally grateful. With that, we hope you enjoy reading the inaugural edition as much as we enjoyed making it.



# CENTRE FOR EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM

## **Thank you to our sponsor**

### **What is Effective Altruism?**

Effective altruism is a project that aims to find the best ways to help others, and put them into practice. It's both a research field, which aims to identify the world's most pressing problems and the best solutions to them, and a practical community that aims to use those findings to do good. This project matters because, while many attempts to do good fail, some are enormously effective. For instance, some charities help 100 or even 1,000 times as many people as others, when given the same number of resources. This means that by thinking carefully about the best ways to help, we can do far more to tackle the world's biggest problems. Effective altruism was formalised by scholars at Oxford University, but has now spread around the world, and is being applied by tens of thousands of people in more than 70 countries. People inspired by effective altruism have worked on projects that range from funding the distribution of 200 million malaria nets, to academic research on the future of AI, to campaigning for policies to prevent the next pandemic. They're not united by any particular solution to the world's problems, but by a way of thinking. They try to find unusually good ways of helping, such that a given amount of effort goes an unusually long way.

### **About the EA Infrastructure Fund**

The Effective Altruism Infrastructure Fund recommends grants that aim to improve the work of projects using principles of effective altruism, by increasing their access to talent, capital, and knowledge. The fund has historically attempted to make strategic grants to incubate and grow projects that attempt to use reason and evidence to do as much good as possible. These include meta-charities that fundraise for highly effective charities doing direct work on important problems, research organisations that improve our understanding of how to do good more effectively, and projects that promote principles of effective altruism in contexts like academia.

The editorial committee are deeply grateful to the Centre for Effective Altruism, without whom this project would not have been possible. We are extremely fortunate to have received a grant to cover promotional and publication costs.



**Inaugural Guest Author**

Dr. Brian Wong

**About the author**

Brian is a geopolitical strategist, advisor, and philosopher publishing extensively on Sino-American relations, medium statecraft, and where nascent technologies intersect political theory and public policy. A 2020 Hong Kong Rhodes Scholar (Balliol College, Oxford), Brian has also taught modules in politics to undergraduate students at Oxford and Stanford Universities. Brian has also contributed to publications such as TIME, Foreign Policy, Aeon, Financial Times, Diplomat, Fortune, SCMP, Nikkei, Japan Times, and the US Asia Law Institute.

***On Teaching***

My first foray into teaching came when I was in Year 10, Mathematics Class. Having completed all the relevant course materials for the entire year over the summer beforehand, I had posed an occupational nuisance for my then-teacher, who had to see to my being occupied whilst others trudged on in the class. In her characteristically nonchalant yet empowering way, my teacher looked me in the eye, and said, “Why don’t you teach your classmates how to do it?”

The experience changed the way I approached not just teaching (it sparked joy in that most peculiar activity that fuses centuries of wisdom, and that binds generations across the divisions of time and age), but also how I saw education – as a concept, as a process, and as a way of life. I came to cherish teaching as the highest mode of learning: to retrieve and amalgamate, to interpret and to critique the very data points we may well have been passively acquiring in the past, only to formulate them into original, credible, and accessible propositions for others.

It also instructed me to do away with the orthodoxy surrounding education – and for that, I remain especially grateful to my teacher. For years throughout my primary and early secondary education, I had been convinced that the teacher would effectively be the thirty- to forty-year-old standing in front of the classroom, the students the blob of indistinguishable, nebulous mass strewn across the classroom floor, and I, as a so-called ‘bright student’, tasked with the mantle of standing out and up amongst the many students of the class. The teacher-student dialectic, as Freire puts it, was framed as a rigid, unyielding, and normatively sacrosanct position.

It was thanks to the teacher's largesse and wisdom that we managed to learn. It was the patience and perseverance of our classmates that enabled us to grow. It was the respect for classroom decorum and order that made us good students. It was the entrenched order – of teachers always being the sole and only repositories of knowledge for their students – that moulded and shaped us into conforming cogs in a well-oiled machine. In some ways, such hierarchical structures and norms certainly have grounds for their existence: the more experienced in teaching one is, the more likely it is that one will have received designated pedagogical training and support on how one can teach more effectively; one is also likely to know more, and to have been exposed to more, *ceteris paribus*. The case for deference, and thus assignment of authority, to teachers is well and clear.

Yet in teaching my fellow classmates the ABCs of calculus (deemed 'rocket science' at the time), I came to realise three key propositions: first, teaching need not be a privilege or right reserved for exclusively senior, experienced, and veteran adults – the youth can teach too, especially on topics where they happen to be privy to more knowledge. Indeed, I came to realise that on fronts of popular culture and video games, I was no less an utter ignoramus than some of my very friendly and well-intentioned, seasoned teachers; we all turned to other members of the class for recommendations and advice (whoever introduced me to *Final Fantasy*, I must thank you for your kindness).

Second, teaching is not the counterpart or 'opposite' to learning. Instead, the two of them are co-constitutively complementary – we can only learn well via teaching, and we can only teach well if we learn. Open-mindedness undergirds both. A healthy dose of self-confidence sublimates both. As I explained the differences between the product and quotient rules to my classmates, I was, too, puzzled by the extent to which the two were/not related. After an incessant round of questions directed to my teacher and online tutorials, I arrived at a more robust, complete, and practicable answer with further leads and hints on more to learn.

Third, we must not let ostensible characteristics and cursory signs, such as someone's age, ethnicity, gender, race, and beyond, shape how we perceive them qua teachers. I had grown up in a culture that told us, to be good at something, you must first grow old. What we were not told, of course, was the plethora of things in which the more exposure there was, the less the delta in knowledge becomes – beyond a certain point, tunnel vision could well leave us more ignorant than we would have been had we taken in less, and thought a little more.

The above episode is not produced here for the sake of self-indulgence. Instead, I see it as highlighting a pivotal point, that teaching cannot be separated from doing, and that it is ultimately doing that generates and preserves true knowledge at large. Teaching enlivens concepts – it forces us to distil, simplify, draw links in a methodical way, compare and contrast wherever is possible. It also compels us to be straightforward and to-the-point: no love is lost between students and teachers who

prefer listening to their own voices (ideally, on repeat and 24/7) more than their students' fumbling or stumbling yet ultimately equally insightful words. Concision may not be a necessary virtue, but awareness of one's limits and empowering others to speak, certainly is one in the context of education.

The doing of knowledge transforms abstract propositions into concrete experiences, dialogues, and memories – even if fragmented. It is very hard to explain what utilitarianism means to those making their initial journeys into moral philosophy. It is much easier to illustrate this by turning to Hadyn and the oyster, or the Trolley Problem. Accounting for the wrong of ignoring injustices and indifference is by no means easy – but is very much enhanced by powerful intuition pumps such as the Drowning Child case (and the many, many Pond cases derived from it accordingly). When we teach, we aren't interested in just *what is true*, but also *in what ways is it true*, *where else can this be true*, *how*, and *why should we believe this is true?* The best teachers go above and beyond in demonstrating the praxis of knowledge – not just in the sense of how it could be translated into policies and practices, but in the more abstract and expanded sense of, “This is why it matters to you, and you specifically.”

Through doing, then, we come to generate and preserve true knowledge. Doing imprints upon us our interactions with knowledge (e.g., I have taught it to a group of unsuspecting and nonplussed sixth formers; I have demonstrated that this works in a different context). Such imprinting allows us to realise and create more knowledge – in combining pre-existing paradigms and principles with new, untouched territories and contexts.

Doing also preserves our knowledge over time. Through direct and unfiltered action, we generate knowledge that is more wholesome, well-rounded, and impervious to the temptations of misinformation, half-lies, and quasi-truths. When we teach something, we are more likely to remember and cherish its contours – its ups and downs; to know it inside out as if it were a place on a map we have clung onto for decades, as opposed to a cursory browse-through at a trivial Wikipedia page.

Having begun my teaching journey over a half of my life thus far ago (e.g., over 12 years), I still cherish it very much as a transformative activity, as one that compels us to balance between the ethics of responsibility and of conviction (thanks, Weber), and that driven me equally 'mad', 'sad', and 'glad' in witnessing the fantastic achievements and assiduous work ethic of many of my proudest pupils. I very much am looking forward to embarking upon my career as a professional academic. For in becoming a true teacher, I shall once again become a student.

Tianyu Sun

This article was inspired by another article, written by Evan G. Williams and entitled *The Possibility of an Ongoing Moral Catastrophe*. Williams argues that, given humanity's record of condoning morally decrepit things under the assumption that they are perfectly fine, it is probable that there is some unknown moral catastrophe currently underway in society. Note that this does not refer to *known* moral failings, such as world hunger or animal cruelty, but rather those issues about which we are completely unaware. Williams invites the reader to consider their ideal society – 'let him imagine that all of his favourite political causes triumph, and society becomes organised exactly as he thinks best', and proceeds to argue that, even in this scenario, there is a very high chance that unknown moral failings still exist (Williams, 2015).

This argument is founded on moral relativism, which is loosely summarised as 'the view that moral judgments are true or false only relative to some particular standpoint (for instance, that of a culture or historical period) and that no standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others' (Westacott, n.d.). This arises from the realisation that people have, at various points in the past, behaved in ways that are considered morally deplorable today. Williams considers Nazi sympathisers during the Second World War who – directly or indirectly – allowed the events that resulted in the Holocaust. Any reasonable person in today's society would view these acts as morally unsound; yet, at the time, many people carried out their duties in the sincere belief that they were doing the right thing. It is not difficult to imagine a Nazi general who sincerely believes that the Jewish people are subhuman, and ought to be exterminated to prevent them from further harming the world<sup>1</sup>. After all, this is not very different from our modern perspective on mosquitoes and termites. It was only after the fact that a shift in Germany's morality made such actions deplorable. There are countless examples of similar catastrophes throughout history. From colonialism to inhumane experimentation, it should be clear that people doing the wrong thing while believing it to be right is the rule rather than the exception. Given this understanding, it is rather naïve to believe that today's society has identified the ideal moral structure, and it is probable that some future society will look back at us today with the same attitude that we have toward the Nazis. Williams believes that, if this were the case, it would constitute a moral catastrophe within modern society, and argues that we should be

---

<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that all, or even the majority of, Nazis believed this, but simply to demonstrate how moral discrepancies can arise

striving to rectify it. However, given the unknown (and unknowable) nature of these catastrophes, it is impossible to pre-empt them, and he believes that we should instead focus on creating a flexible society that can readily respond once a catastrophe comes to light.

Moral relativism necessarily stands by the idea that we are born without a moral compass, and all human morality is learned behaviour. This is necessary in order to preserve the idea that no standpoint is uniquely privileged – after all, if one set of morals was inherent to all humans, that would clearly place it superior to any morals which are not. Yet, in the real world, there are often examples of seemingly inherent morality, where very young children show signs of understanding right and wrong. My proposed resolution to this discrepancy is that there is a very generalised objective universal morality, which bounds the limits of human morality. Moral relativism only applies within these bounds, but we will never willingly go beyond these limits. Trying to define a universal moral system requires us to discard many of the inherently human parts of our morality and consider only the base ideals. As with any field of knowledge, continually questioning base assumptions ultimately leads to a foundation layer that we must fundamentally trust without justification. In mathematics, these come in the form of axioms, which are hopefully so innately obvious that they need no further justification. What, then, can we use as the basis for the axioms of a universal morality? What is so innate to our universe that it requires no justification?

However, before we begin to determine these axioms, we must consider why we should necessarily develop a morality centred around the workings of our universe. After all, couldn't we, sophisticated thinkers that we are, overcome the cold, unfeeling laws of the universe to develop a better moral system for ourselves? The response to this is twofold. First, any such system opens itself to contention and allows moral relativism to take hold. What a society deems to be moral changes; the fundamental laws of the universe, as far as we know, do not. The idea behind basing our universal morality on something self-evident and inherent, such as survival of the fittest, is to guarantee some base layer of moral stability. Second, we have no choice in the matter anyway. Philosophers and theologians throughout history have proposed the idea of a moral universe, the idea that the grand scheme of the cosmos somehow follows similar ideals to those obeyed on Earth. Under my model, the universe is *technically* a moral one, but not out of the design of an omnipotent creator or a grand coincidence. Rather we, as a civilisation that emerged from the dregs of a universe, had no choice but to develop a morality centred around the principles of that universe. Entities within a universe cannot help but be pushed in the otherwise random direction that the universe chooses to be spinning, and develop a morality accordingly. The universal morality which I present has existed throughout history, as an inevitable consequence of our environment, and it goes as follows:

*All entities must seek to preserve their continued existence as a priority for, given enough time, the universe will be populated solely by entities that do so.*

In his book *The Selfish Gene*, Richard Dawkins introduced the concept of 'survival of the stable', a generalisation of Darwin's 'survival of the fittest'. Dawkins notes that 'the universe is populated with stable things', not as a consequence of any particular science or thought, but by intrinsic definition – 'If a group of atoms in the presence of energy falls into a stable pattern it will tend to stay that way', whilst groups that aren't stable are, by definition, more likely to be broken up and reformed. The more stable something is, the longer it lasts, and the longer something lasts, the more it accumulates in the universe (Dawkins, 2006). So, over a sufficiently long period of time, we can expect the universe to be populated solely by stable things, with unstable arrangements intermittently flashing into existence, and then promptly dissolving back out. It is worthwhile to note that survival of the stable does not discriminate; it applies equally to fundamental particles, planetary systems, schools of thought, bodies of water, individuals, and entire civilisations. Whatever is deemed stable will eventually prosper. Now, most of these 'things' do not have agency. Planets and galaxies and raindrops simply obey the laws of physics, and are stable or unstable based on complete random occurrence. Humanity is different. Assuming we have free will<sup>2</sup>, we have the option to shift our civilisation towards or away from stability, and can directly perform acts which we deem to be in the interests of self-preservation. The universal morality suggests that, given we have this agency, we must do all that we can to ensure our continued stable existence in the universe.

Note that the universal morality leaves this idea of 'entities' up for interpretation. Up to this point I have taken it to mean humanity as a whole, which seems to be the standpoint from which most modern morality is described. However, any definition of a 'group' allows for the universal morality to apply, which provides the basis for moral relativism to exist. Whichever group you currently align yourself with will determine the extent of your morality. As a general rule, anything to the benefit of your group's continued existence is moral, and anything to its detriment is not. For example, the Nazi justification of their actions could be understood in terms of viewing Jewish people as part of an enemy group, that posed a threat to the continued existence of German society. Whilst we in modern times consider their actions from the perspective of humanity as a whole, and see the murder of 6 million members of our group as detrimental to humanity's continued existence. Wars can be fought morally if you believe that the opponent is dangerous to you, but in most cases, considering humanity as a whole, peace is much more beneficial to both sides than war could ever hope to be.

---

<sup>2</sup> a necessary assumption in the study of morality – if humanity does not have free will the question of morality is trivial, since we no longer have agency in our decisions – everything we do is perfectly moral, because it is the only thing we could do

The universal morality is not an ideal morality to follow – the ambiguous definition of groups means that even in our best efforts of self-preservation we are still exposed to a future generation that defines groups rather differently. Consider some other modern moral dilemmas raised by Williams, such as vegetarianism – which basically boils down to whether and which animals ought to be included in our group – or the abortion debate – should an unborn child be given the same weight as the expecting mother within our group? Whichever way we classify it will determine the morality of these cases, but a different classification allows for a different morality, and the continued existence of moral relativism. The universal morality is simply an extension of an existing model of morality, in an attempt to resolve the discrepancy between moral relativism’s claim that there is no inherent morality, and the seemingly self-evident nature of morality to us today.

**About the interviewee**

Barbara Pocock is Greens Senator for South Australia and entered Federal Parliament in 2022. She is an economist and is Emeritus Professor at UniSA, where she founded the Centre for Work and Life within the Hawke Research Institute. She grew up on a mallee farm near Lameroo and has worked in universities, shearing sheds, the Reserve Bank, on farms, in unions, for the government and as a mother and carer. She is the Greens Spokesperson for Finance, Employment and Public Sector.

This interview was conducted at Barbara Pocock's Senate Office in Goodwood on a sunny March afternoon. Senator Pocock was generous to give an hour of her time to discuss several issues she is passionate about, including climate and inequality.

***How did you become involved in politics and with the Greens?***

I worked in universities for a lot of years as a researcher and stopped to look after my parents in their last years. I was surfacing after that because I'm old, but I was coming up for air and thought: I've got some energy now – what do I want to do? At the same time, some people approached me asking whether I would consider running for the Greens. My field of expertise is economics, primarily research on the labour market and workforce issues. I made the mistake of reading the scientific reports on what was happening to the planet regarding global warming. And I thought: I'm not scared of public life. I don't hate public speaking. Most people would rather jump out of a plane than do public speaking. I can do that stuff and make a contribution that would be useful. So, my entry into politics was primarily based on my skillset and my concern about the planet. I've had a privileged life. I had a great childhood in a country town and I've had a good income and reasonable health. But, when I look at the kids that follow me, your generation, and my children, I see levels of HECs debt that would have been unimaginable when I was going through university. I could afford to get into the housing market; the cost of living wasn't such a concern to the degree it is today. These privileges are not going to be there in the same way for the next generation, I feel it. So, I felt a sense of wanting to act on that possibility and responsibility.



***Within your work at the Australian Greens, you've focused on various issues, including climate change, LGBTQ+ issues, and the labour market. How did you first become interested in advocating for these causes?***

Definitely reading climate science. I was shocked to read about the extinction rates for plants and animals. It shocks me that we're still clearing native forests in Australia in large acreages. I'm a reader, so my head is affected by what I read. But also, for me, even as a young child, I was interested in inequality. In the little town where I grew up, there were rich and poor people, and I was on the wealthy end of that spectrum. But there were people in my town, kids in my classroom, Aboriginal kids who sat at the back of the bus and had deaths in their families, which wasn't my experience. They were living in poverty. That stayed with me from a very young age. Inequality has been one of the two focus areas of my life, along with, more recently, climate action. The most important piece of research I ever did (which also affects what I'm doing now) was when I set off to go around S.A. and talk to people. In focus groups, I listened about the impact of work. We are a relatively wealthy country, and increasingly there are two working people in a household. Low-income earners, people without job security, and many women with children are stressed about the labour market; some fathers miss out on seeing and getting good time with their kids. That's a big piece of research that affected my thinking. So, some experiences in research have influenced me. Other impacts have been very early childhood experiences that have stuck with me, and then more recently, especially the reading about climate science.

***How do you think young people are being consulted in politics currently?***

Young people are significant to my party. Our research shows that young people vote for us way more than older people. The research also tells us that they have hung in with the Greens for longer. You know - we used to have people who would be very radical aged 18 to 25, and then it would fall away. But we're finding that people are getting a sense of how time is limited for the planet. The United Nations and all the science says we cannot continue to open big new coal and gas mines. Young people are interested in their future, so how they vote matters. I think young people's voices in our Parliament are not heard enough, and I would like to see more opportunities for young people and for councils of young people to be expressing their views to Parliament at the state level and nationally. Many young kids come through the Parliament, and democracy needs people who know how the system works. But I think we need to give young people a louder voice. I would encourage anyone to hop into politics and not wait until they know everything. Getting life experience beyond just being a party officer or employee is also really important for young people. The best politicians, in my experience, are people who have done something else outside politics. They've been a doctor; they've been a teacher. They've worked, you know, in industry. They've held all kinds of jobs. I worked in shearing sheds for a year, which

framed the rest of my working life. I had never seen such hard work. I always had that as a reference when I did hard work myself. Nothing is harder than shearing 200 sheep. Workplace experience is also important to attain as a young person.

***Aside from my exposure to politics, do you think there are any other large barriers to entry for young people to move into politics as a career?***

I think it's very challenging to move up through the ranks of the major parties. It's very competitive, and you have to give over a lot of your life to do that, from what I observe on the outside. The Greens is a smaller, newer party, and we have several young people in our Parliaments around the country. For example, Jordon Steele-John is a very young person who brings the perspective of a disabled person to Parliament. So yeah, I think there are barriers. That said, I don't think you want to necessarily enter Parliament when you're 19. I think you wanna get there when you've had some experience.

***What can the federal government do to improve youth engagement in politics?***

Having young people in the Cabinet is important. There is a lot of young talent in the Labor Party. They have many seats, and they've got some very good people in there, both in their party room and the Cabinet. I think the same applies to all parties. If I look across at the opposition at the moment, I see a lot of older people and a lot of men. They're disproportionately male, so how they manage their party voices is different. It's a cliché, but people can't be what they can't see. That is why diversity is important: people of colour, people with varying abilities, and people with a broad range of different life experiences offer unique perspectives. I think it's also important to fund youth parliaments and enable those so people get a sense of how it can look. Me, I grew up as a kid thinking, wait, no way, that's just a scary world. But I wish many people from rural communities were in politics. I think professional politicians have a narrow perspective. Young people receiving education about democracy and then opportunities to participate is crucial in that regard.

***Are there any ways the Greens are pushing for more representation from young people?***

We've got policies about young people having an effective voice in our Parliament and have young Greens movements in every state. We are reaching out to young people. We try to turn to our universities and talk about politics without young people and create those exchanges. I learn a lot every time I go near a university, and I think most of our other senators would say the same thing. But it's not just universities; it's also our TAFE system and reaching out to hear what all young people have to say.

## ***How can the Australian Government address income inequality and job insecurity post-COVID?***

This area is so important. Countries with narrower inequality have less risk of Trumpism; they are safer, their levels of well-being are higher, and kids born into societies with narrower inequality have better life chances and opportunities. This is important when we think as economists about why we should narrow inequality. Australia prides itself on a fairness ethos. We think we're a fair community in a fair society. All the statistics tell us that inequality, like many other countries, has widened in the last 50 years. When you get widespread job insecurity, people work unpaid overtime to hang on and stay sweet with the boss. Some people never say no to a shift, even in a fast-food environment, because they don't want to miss out on the next shift when the power imbalance in the workplace is moved against the worker in favour of the employer. Workplace rights and fairness at work are really important. We've been going in the wrong direction for the last 30 years. I think some of our forebears, who, for example, were the first in the world to have a living wage in 1907, and have an 8-hour working day, would be turning in their graves if they could see some of the conditions now.

The other important place is our tax and payment system. Superannuation concessions have been a topical issue recently too. Something like 20% of Australians have no super at all. Women's super is way lower. So if you're in a care industry, childcare worker or aged care worker, your super balance will be low. There are many other problems with our tax system, such as giving \$11 billion a year in fossil fuel subsidies to gas companies. That money should be put to much better use. Our party also talks a lot about the Stage 3 tax cuts. That's \$250+ billion a year that will flow mostly to people earning over \$200,000 annually. That's me; politicians are on over \$200,000. Our earnings are around \$220,000 a year before tax. That's relatively wealthy people picking up a huge tax benefit which would go a long way, for example, lifting Jobseeker and welfare payments.

It's really hard to live on Jobseeker at the moment. We lifted it during COVID, which greatly impacted people's lives. If you talk to G.P.s, for example, or people looking after people with mental illness, they say many clients stopped coming because they had less stress on their budget. Money makes a difference to the health of a community, and we should look after poor people, people living on benefits, whether for a short term or a long time. They should be able to put food in the fridge and pay for a child's excursion without being worried sick about it. The other really big issue at the moment is housing. Housing for your generation is going to be reliant on parental wealth. Getting into the housing market now for wealthy people is fine. But it's tough for many people whose parents don't have a lot of housing to hang onto. It's also really difficult to be a renter at the moment or be thinking about purchasing. So, we want to see a lot more housing investment in our budget because it's a

fundamental cornerstone of a decent life, affording a roof over your head whether you're renting or buying.

***One of the things you've done is to establish an inquiry into the impact of the gig economy on workers' rights. What are you aiming to address with that?***

Our inquiry examines work and care and how workers balance jobs with care responsibilities. Part of that has been examining how 'gig work' is increasing. It's one of the issues that the Labor Party has said it will look at this year in legislative reform. We have received some very interesting evidence about how reforming the gig economy is not rocket science. If you don't know your work hours, it is impossible to look after someone else. We find many men in gig work with three or four apps on their phone if they're drivers, trying to supplement a low income from somewhere else. It's unreliable and unpredictable and often made in ways that declare the worker to be self-employed. The problem is that superannuation payments are not mandated, and poor health and safety protections exist. So I'm concerned about the gig economy's growth because it's a device to undermine labour market conditions.

***Your party has also advocated for things like a Universal Basic Income and minimum wage increases. There's been a rebuttal in that some suggest this isn't practical for Australia. How could this be implemented?***

Well, some of the questions are about how we afford it and how we fund it. That's a question about what a fair tax system looks like. We haven't talked at all really about taxing the resource sector. When the war in Ukraine began, supernormal profits went to gas companies, and their profits have risen even more over the last year. These profits should be shared more generally. Reforming the tax system generates more public resources and underpins policies such as access to employment for everyone who wants it. I favour the broadly defined notion of work for any Universal Basic Income system. Our care system is worn very thin at the present. There is a lot of socially useful work out there that we could fund through a UBI.

That said, I don't think we should be worshipping the world of work. I think there are a lot of activities in human life, like taking care of yourself, care of your family and your friends, and cultural pursuits. There is a lesson from First Nations communities before the colonial settlement to be learned here. They often worked about four hours a day to meet their needs and then spent enormous amounts of time in other cultural activities. These things are important in a civilised society because there is more to a person than their labour. In an economy where we are nearing full employment, this is not such a problem. That said, when the cycle turns down, as it will, unemployment will increase. This is hard for young people particularly and is very demoralising. We should find ways in the budget to use people's time. Studies have been conducted in parts of Africa with trials of UBIs, and you get a positive cycle

of engagement, skill development, and contributions to the community. As a result, mental health improves, and societies become more equal.

### ***How do the Greens intend to fund their policies?***

I support Modern Monetary Theory, which says a sovereign country like Australia can print its own money until it hits real resource constraints in the labour market or inflation takes off. In conjunction with that, we also need to have a progressive tax system. How we share things more equally in a community is through tax, and Australia has a proud tradition of a relatively progressive tax system. We don't do it thoroughly regarding how we tax assets, and we will let you have as much money as you want in your family home, and we don't touch that. I'm not advocating we should [touch family assets and homes], but some countries make people pay land tax on the value of their assets.

The principle of a rising tax rate with a rising income level is really important if you want your society to be fair. If you're in an inflationary problem or heading that way, it's also how you can fund public services effectively. Very few Australians would look at the U.S. and its health system and think, "I want that! Health which is tied to my workplace." Your labour market becomes very inflexible, and you don't get access to healthcare if you're unlucky in your working conditions. So I'm a strong supporter of a progressive tax system, and one of the reasons I'm worried about the Stage 3 tax cuts is that they remove a really important part of the progressivity of the tax, and it will be impossible to win it back.

### ***How do you see the issue of climate change policy developing in Australia?***

Reading the IPCC reports changed my life priorities. My interest has been around inequality and employment and the circumstances of women. None of those things matters if we cook the planet because there are no jobs on a dead planet. I wouldn't be in the Senate if I didn't think that was a real possibility, and that's why I'm in the Greens. Many people would look at someone like me with their long union movement experience and think, why aren't you in the Labor Party? A couple of reasons. First, it's very hard to get through all the barriers. You probably must be 30 years in the Labour Party to get anywhere. I'm a late entrant to politics; for me, it's all about climate. Second, the Greens were my natural home because that is a priority for the Greens alongside a fair society. So inequality and climate were the two issues that brought me there.

So, you know, we've got some really big climate policies passing in the Parliament now. We reluctantly supported an inadequate target for the reduction in carbon of 43% by 2030. There are issues with the safeguard mechanism and carbon accounting on faulty 2005 measures, and we must keep warming to under 2 degrees Celsius. Carbon offsets and the safeguard mechanism will not significantly reduce pollution. That just says you're allowed to pollute, providing you do this other thing,

such as just buy credits. So there are a lot of questions for us about the operation of the offsets and the operation of the safeguard mechanism. But we said we'd cop all that if you agree to stop new coal and gas projects. The government said they wouldn't stop opening them. You can't trick the planet offsets, and you can't trick the planet with the fancy mechanism that most Australians don't understand. They're just crossing their fingers and hoping something good will happen now. We're not in the Parliament to make no difference. The crisis is real, and we must enact climate policies with teeth.

***Alan Jones on Sky News said we are a grain in a whole bowl of rice, given we only produced 1.3% of global emissions as of 2021. What do you say to this sort of media attention?***

He's trying to say what we do doesn't matter. That implies our contribution to the Ukraine war doesn't matter because our contribution is comparatively small to the United States. You wouldn't see him arguing that our contribution to World War Two against fascism didn't matter, even if it was comparatively small. We must decide whether we are part of an international community that wants to keep the planet safe? The arguments that we should just go back to sleep and ignore our responsibilities as citizens of the world are wrong. What we do on our carbon emissions in Australia does matter. We are the third largest exporter of coal in the world and a massive exporter of gas. Plenty of people in other countries are buying our coal and gas and are already working out strategies to get out of it. To ignore that reality is to ignore the future. We need to be ahead of the game. We need to be socially responsible citizens internationally, and we need to stop new coal and gas.

Given that we currently rely on fossil fuel exports, how will our economy adapt? If you look back at the climate wars of the last 15 years, the frame used has been the economy vs. action on climate change. It's completely the wrong frame. Our economic future lies in an industry that is based on renewables. We're going to face a tariff regime in Europe very soon. Building an economy of the future relies on being ahead of the market in terms of adaptation, so we need a clear government policy that fosters investment in renewables, and we have not had it yet. That's why the safeguard mechanism and its policies matter so we have a clear framework that sends the right signals to make the change. There is an international race on green hydrogen, and the U.S. is putting massive money into it. When Scott Morrison said electric cars would 'end the weekend,' the answer should have been, 'What's it going to cost if we don't adapt?' We need to frame it as it is: economic prosperity and the renewable energy transition are on the same page.

Hamish Searles

**Introduction**

Altruism can be defined as "doing something beneficial for someone else, where your motivation for doing so is at least partly that you want them to be better off". Throughout the past half century, the question of altruism's existence has become apparent not only in the subject of philosophy but also in the general academic community. This essay sets out to answer the question of, "does pure altruism exist in today's society or are all individual actions based on one's personal gain?" The objective is to create a convincing argument for one of the two possible answers in the hope that the research can be used to improve the academic community's understanding of human interaction. The data and evidence used in this report were found through various sources, primarily in the form of a wide selection of world-recognised literature, interviews with key academics in philosophy and psychology, and a survey with charitable volunteers across Australia.

Across the research conducted, a common theme began to arise: many people have mixed views on altruism. However, many responses across the survey believed that although people may act out of kindness, there is always some form of ulterior motive in 'altruistic' actions such as self-satisfaction and fulfilment. This was reinforced throughout the interviews and survey responses. The data and research conducted are hugely subjective. This must be considered in the final answer to the question as well as when the data is analysed. However, due to the strong credibility of the sources as well as the large amounts of data collected, it can be assumed that the opinions made are trustworthy and valid. Furthermore, as there is a magnitude of different forms of altruism, and there is an infinite amount of possible for and against arguments for altruism's existence, the final answer cannot be considered as certain or 'correct'. Ultimately, by considering these research factors and limitations, it can be assumed that the final argument made in the report is credible but not definite.

**Why do people feel the need to be altruistic?**

'Altruism' and its effect on human action must first be defined to gain a suitable understanding of the general question. The American philosopher Thomas Nagel explains that altruism is "a willingness to act in consideration of the interests of the other person, without the need of ulterior motive." However, the term cannot be fully comprehended without knowing its interactions with society and how it affects

human connections daily. Others deem that moral altruism is an integral part of being a society" and infer that altruism must exist in order for the world to function.

When considering people's thoughts and reasoning behind being altruistic, the response tends to fall towards the human subconscious humans aiming for selflessness. According to Emma McQueen who has a Master's in Clinical Psychology, many factors play into one's need to be altruistic. The primary factor being "social acceptability" and people needing to fit society's heavy expectations. Furthermore, people may feel "compelled to help people who are vulnerable due to a sense of consciousness" and "people's family values and different principles around service, i.e., military, charity etc." In contrast, Riley Harris who specializes in the field of altruism at Oxford University, whom I interviewed, believes that relationships are the key to one being altruistic, reinforcing why people act more selfless towards family members and loved ones. An example given by Harris on this is the care that parents often demonstrate towards their children, or how people help their friends, partner, or family.

Charity could possibly be considered one of the major events in which humans' express altruism toward one another. When asked about charity's connection to philanthropy, volunteers tend to talk about the impact of charities on the world and society. Not only do they constantly improve others' lives worldwide but do so with no expectation of reward. However, many also believe other forms of motivation for volunteering exist, such as a sense of pride, gaining fulfilment, etc.

### **Altruism in current society**

The foundation of the outlined question is based upon altruism's place within society; therefore, before answering the central question, this concept must first be expanded upon. Initially, to gain a simplistic understanding of certain current events that have shown some form of possible altruism, multiple different news articles and websites were explored. One significant example is the COVID-19 pandemic and protecting others from the virus spreading through means of isolation and vaccination. The majority of people on a global scale have been cautious throughout the past few years to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their surrounding communities. Another major event that shows vital signs of possible altruism is the donations and assistance given to Ukraine during their war with Russia. However, by exploring this exponential increase in assistance to Ukraine, it is evident that countless other war-bound nations could have possibly lost enormous quantities of money from the general public.

These two significant examples present two large questions: what the possible ulterior motives for these actions are, and why some charities and organisations gain vast amounts of public support, whilst others do not acquire any. Many people may consider isolation and mask-wearing during the pandemic as altruistic; however, several possible underlying motives could possibly prove this theory otherwise. These include personal and family health, potential impacts from self-isolation, such as



reduced income, lack of family support, adverse effect on mental health and interrupted education. Moreover, it is blatantly apparent that many organisations across the globe gain more amounts of publicity and support than other vital charities. On this issue, electronic media has also made us aware of situations around the place. This demonstrates that charities supporting issues, people, and animals gain a large amount of support due to the societal pressure people cave into.

I asked charity volunteers across Australia about the connection between their work and altruism. The majority linked their answers back to service and the volunteers having no expectations of reward however, there were some answers such as Sharon Rose McCartney from The Mary Potter Foundation, who referenced enjoying the work and providing for people in need. This raises the idea that potentially all volunteers within charities have some sense of joy when completing these so called 'altruistic' acts.

### **Altruism's connection with psychology and ethics**

In order to explore altruism's existence in society, one must first consider its connection with the ethics world as well as its association with psychology and the possibility of it being a part of the human subconscious.

Hypothetically, altruism may not exist but instead is an imperceptible illusion that the human brain produces. This results in creating a sense of accomplishment when completing certain activities. Furthermore, the human brain may be deceiving people by hiding the personal gain from these 'altruistic' activities, making us perceive them as selfless. Psychologist Emma McQueen argues that "humans are very good at telling stories about themselves. It's what we do. It's how we create meaning." This demonstrates that humans unconsciously create fake thoughts in their heads to raise self-esteem and confidence and convince themselves of their contributions to society.

There are many directions to follow when exploring the connection between ethics and altruism; however, all lead back to the argument of whether altruism or egoism has a more considerable impact on human motivation within society. This is a circular argument as it is difficult to say whether society is egoistic or altruistic because it can be perceived as both. People can be egocentric and only care about themselves and act out of their own self-interest. However, people can also be altruistic and care about the well-being of others. Many believe that we could never reach a point where we could demonstrate conclusively that, yes, we are altruistic, or we are egoistic. Specialist in philanthropy, Riley Harris, states, "pure altruism is rare; we often act impurely altruistically," which means that these actions always "make ourselves feel good or give us a good self-image." However, he says that there are occasions in which "it also may be totally ethical to act from egoism."

## **Philosophical interpretations of altruism**

Three significant philosophers must be considered before considering an answer to the outlined question. These are sociologist Auguste Comte, 18th-century English philosopher Henry Sidgwick and 19th/20th-century philosopher Thomas Nagel.

Auguste Comte originally created the term altruism as an antonym for the word egoism. The term gave nineteenth-century philosophers a contentious new conceptual framework to analyse old theological, philosophical, and ethical issues.

According to Henry Sidgwick, altruism is a similar ethical principle to utilitarianism, which means that actions are right, as long as they benefit the majority. Contrastingly, Sidgwick believed that egoism is when humans seek to maximise their own good rather than those around them. Sidgwick was openly passionate about the possibility of humans growing over time and becoming more compassionate and altruistic towards one another. His major works in the field revolved around ethical socialism and human contribution to the good of others and society.

Thomas Nagel is a modern philosopher who views altruism as "a willingness to act in consideration of the interests of the other person, without the need of ulterior motive." Nagel explores human nature and the motivation that surrounds possible altruistic actions. When discussing altruism and having the "willingness to act in consideration of the interests of other persons", he asks the question of "how is it possible that such considerations should motivate us at all. However, he contradicts this when he lists out motivations for us acting selflessly as he says, "people may be motivated by benevolence, sympathy, love, redirected self-interest, and various other influences." Nagel sums this up as he states, "there is, in other words, such a thing as pure altruism, though it may never occur in isolation from all other motives." Ultimately, Nagel articulates that altruism does exist in the fact that people act without self-interest, however, there are always motives such as the ones listed that can influence human actions.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, one must first deeply explore the outlined areas before assessing the question, "does pure altruism exist in today's society or are all individual actions based on one's personal gain?" Throughout a magnitude of research, it is found that there is no definitive answer to this question as it is impossible to know the motivations behind every single action that humans take. However, it is generally agreed that pure altruism – acting purely out of concern for others without any expectation of personal gain – is quite rare. Instead, most people are thought to be motivated at least partially by some form of self-interest, even when helping others.

Through resources such as interviews with critical academics in philosophy and psychology, world-recognised literature, and a survey with charitable volunteers across Australia, there have been various distinctive interpretations of different areas

within the topic. This brings forward the idea of the endless number of arguments that can be made for altruism's existence and absence.

The final answer is highly subjective and based upon one's beliefs in society and human beings in general; therefore, highly unlikely to be answered until more definitive proof is discovered in the ethical socialism community.

**About the interviewee**

Noam Chomsky is Institute Professor Emeritus in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Laureate Professor of Linguistics and Agnese Nelms Haury Chair in the Program in Environment and Social Justice at the University of Arizona. Known as the father of modern linguistics, he is among the most influential academics of modern times and a central figure in the cognitive revolution. He remains an outspoken critic of American foreign policy, the mainstream news media, America's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and modern capitalism.

A warm exchange between Professor Chomsky and several members of the editorial committee took place via email over the course of several months in early 2023. This extract represents a synthesis of these conversations, edited for clarity.

***Given the rise of misinformation through digital media platforms, what obligations do developers and owners of technology companies have to regulate their content?***

It's a crucial question in the modern period. What exactly is the status of these platforms? If they are privately owned, then in our radically undemocratic sociopolitical systems in which concentrated private power is basically unconstrained, they can censor freely, as publishers do. But, as public platforms, they share some of the properties of public utilities, and the public should have a role through democratic political institutions in determining what (if any) constraints they should impose. Commitment to free speech, while a high value, also runs into problems in the digital age. A public platform can be over-run by well-financed bots. I don't see any simple answers, particularly within societies such as ours with radical departures from the values of equal rights that are professed.

***As someone who has dedicated much of their life to anarchist political philosophy, do you think it's likely we'll have anarchist societies in the long-term future?***

Anarchism should I think be regarded as a tendency in human history, subjecting structures of hierarchy and domination to critical analysis, and if they cannot justify themselves (as is commonly the case), moving to dismantle them in favour of a more free and just social order. As such, it is never achieved. With every success, we are likely to discover new forms of illegitimate authority that should be

overcome. How do we get there? The way every achievement has been won in the past: by dedicated struggle, ranging from education (including self-education) to organisation to activism in forms appropriate to circumstances.

***To what extent is free speech an important part of public discourse?***

It's not just important: it's essential, to be zealously guarded. It has its pitfalls, but the alternatives are far worse. No value is absolute. My own feeling is that the US Supreme Court reached a reasonable general standard in *Brandenburg v Ohio*<sup>3</sup>, protecting free speech up to participation in criminal acts. Not precise. Law never is. But a good general principle, I think.

***How can we democratise and diversify sources of news and information?***

It's a bit like asking how we can dismantle what might be called "the divine right of capital." It won't be easy, just as it wasn't easy to dismantle the divine right of kings. But as in the latter case, it's not an impossible goal. In the shorter run, there are ways to proceed. Legislation could be passed to subsidise local journalism, and popular activism can seek to gain public support for it. The great concentrations of capital can be pressured in many ways by popular organisations. For more on these matters, you might consult the work of Robert McChesney (University of Illinois) and his colleagues, who have been doing important work on these topics.

***Many individuals have turned to movements such as Effective Altruism and charitable giving. Do you think these efforts are effective at reducing issues such as poverty, or should people focus efforts on state-based action?***

The proper response to state failure is popular organisation and activism. Despite the obstacles of private power, the general public can influence state action. We have an ample history to show that. The large-scale problems we face have to be addressed collectively. Charity, broadly understood, is a valuable activity, but we should not succumb to utilitarian illusions. There is, for example, no way to measure the value of sustaining independent publication that is an instrument of education and organisation as compared to relieving hunger in Somalia. We have to make reasoned choices, as throughout life, and there are not many general algorithms or calculations that can give more than loose guidance.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969), was a landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court interpreting the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Court held that the government cannot punish inflammatory speech unless that speech is "directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action". (R.A. Parker, 2003)

### ***What do you make of the longtermism movement?***

In my frank opinion, all of this is a waste of time, and diversion from what has to be done now. None of this is remotely calculable. What is the probability that humans will even exist 300 years from now? Impossible to calculate. What's the probability of avoiding nuclear war, or irreversible climate change, or appearance of a virus that is vaccine-resistant, or...?

That's just the beginning. Even if we put aside these overwhelming questions, how do we compare the benefits of saving starving children in Afghanistan with subsidizing educational efforts here to raise consciousness so that such tragedies can be seriously addressed. All along the line incalculable considerations arise.

### ***What do you make of recent agreements in the Indo-Pacific region such as AUKUS?***

The US is certainly beating the drums of war, very loudly. China's made some unacceptable moves, but nothing remotely like it. AUKUS makes no strategic sense, as made very clear by leading Australian strategic analysts (Brian Toohey, Clinton Fernandes, and others). I won't repeat the arguments, which seems to me very strong. Nor does it make strategic sense for Australia to be constructing new facilities for US nuclear-equipped bombers near Darwin. Is Australia dependent on the US for security, or is the dependence harming Australian security? A question worth pondering.

### ***Are we seeing the beginning of a new China-Russia axis?***

The close relationship between Russia and China goes beyond that. India has strengthened its relations with Russia, and Indonesia too. Most of the South is becoming more and more closely linked to China, even the petrostates of the Middle East, who have been longtime clients of the United States. The petroyuan<sup>4</sup> is on its way to becoming an international currency, separate from the dollar. The world as seen from the Anglophone is a skewed picture of reality.

That said, I doubt that Xi and Putin have any personal relationship. They are both thinking in cold strategic terms – in the actual world, not that of Anglophone doctrine.

### ***What are the distinctions between American and Chinese soft power?***

Very simple: When we do it, good; When they do it, bad. A basic principle of international relations. There are of course differences. One current example is Zambia, which was faced with US and Chinese proposals. The US proposal, via the IMF,

---

<sup>4</sup> Upon China overtaking the United States as the world's largest importer of oil in September 2013, new pressures began to mount for a domestic crude oil futures market. The result was the creation of the petroyuan, an instrument many industry experts predict will have "tremendous geopolitical and financial consequences." The petroyuan is a standardised futures contract available for trade on the Shanghai International Energy Exchange (INE). It is based on the underlying asset crude oil, denominated in CNY per barrel. (FXCM, 2018)

was to cut back spending, impose standard structural adjustment programs, and pay off creditors (international banks and the like). The Chinese proposal was to invest in development programs.

Don Bui

**Introduction**

Housing affordability has been a divisive issue facing most Australians, particularly young first-home buyers in the past 20 years. Homeownership has long been associated with the “Great Australian Dream” offering freedom, security, and prosperity. Yet, driven by a “Fear of Missing Out” (FOMO), this dream is no longer a choice for aspiring youth transitioning into family life. As a result, these disparities have promoted the fragmentation of the urban space, dislocating lower- income residents to the outskirts of the urban fabric. So, has the idea of watching prices rise and low interest rates created an environment where young generations feel that if they didn’t get into the market they would effectively miss out?

In this article, I will analyse models focussing on the zoning of housing, using Local Government Area (LGA) and income data to analyse variables that affect housing affordability. Different scenarios will then be formed to address the FOMO of first-home buyers. Westpac senior economist, Matthew Hassan expects the cash rate to peak at 3.35 per cent in February 2023, and property prices to decline 16% nationally, thus this report addresses if the buyer’s FOMO is justified.

**Background**

The housing market occurs in boom-and-bust economic cycles characterized by periods of rapid economic growth and inflation, followed by periods of economic contraction. This can be caused by many factors, for example, if real interest rates are too low, the cost of borrowing and mortgage payments is reduced, and thus borrowing capacity increases. Hence, there is a rise in investment and consumer spending which causes a rise in aggregate demand and growth in money supply. Finally, when demand grows faster than supply, then prices rise to offset the cycle. This concept is evident in the housing market as the more people that are buying houses, the more that demand increases, and house prices rise. Equally, when interest rates are high or a low economy, the stimulation for buyers is low, thus demand decreases, and house prices fall.

Homeownership is of great significance to Australians, providing a source of strong wealth building and economic prosperity. As a result, the total value of Australia’s residential housing stock has reached \$10 trillion in 2022. However, at the same time, housing has become the “great divide” between the young and the old with



home ownership between young generations falling to the lowest level since the 1950s. 2021 Census data showed that only 42.4% of people aged between 25-29 owned a house: a 14.8% decline in 45 years. Thus, with interest rates falling and house prices rising, young prospective home buyers have felt pressure to get into the market in a fear of missing out. Therefore, this concept will be evaluated in this report through the analysis of models.

## Methodology

Housing affordability is calculated on a range of factors and is not exclusively dependent on house prices or mortgage rates. This report will combine three indicators (each out of 100) to form a score that assesses the affordability of LGAs rated to the average (300), where higher scores indicate higher unaffordability. These will be used to model scenarios of wage growth and interest rate rises, however, factors unaccounted for include rental costs, centralization of services and social factors. Each of these indicators is tabulated by the author and aggregated in the table on the following page.

Indicator 1 (***In*<sub>1</sub>**): **House price to income** incorporates median house price of LGAs in Q1 of 2022 compared to the average income of SA residents in 2022. Hence, the formula below is given, where  $V$  represents the "median house value of the LGA,  $I$  is the average income, and  $AvIn$  is the average score of all LGAs.

$$In_1 = \left( \frac{V_a}{I} \right) \div AvIn_1 \times 100$$

Indicator 2 (***In*<sub>2</sub>**): **Proportion of income used to service mortgage** uses the average monthly income and assumes a 20% deposit with monthly repayments on a 30-year term, a fixed 2-year loan at 5.44% p.a. The formula is given below where  $f(0.8V)$  shows the cost of mortgage,  $mI$  is the average monthly income and  $AvIn\%$  is the average score of all LGAs.

$$In_2 = \frac{f(0.8V)}{mI} \div AvIn_1 \times 100$$

Indicator 3 (***In*<sub>3</sub>**): **Years taken to save for a deposit** uses the assumption that 20% of monthly income is saved for deposit, excluding upfront costs. The formula is given below where  $V_a$  is the median house price,  $I$  is income and  $AvIn_3$  is the average score of all LGAs.

$$In_3 = \frac{0.2V_a}{\frac{I}{12} \times 0.2} \div AvIn_3 \times 100$$

LGA	In1	In2	In3	Total	Distance from Centre (km)	Sales (Q1 2022)
WALKERVILLE	183	162	182	526	5.6	32
BURNSIDE	187	150	169	506	8.3	136
UNLEY	164	131	148	443	3.7	112
ADELAIDE	161	129	145	434	1.1	20
NORWOOD	141	113	127	381	3.5	93
HOLDFAST BAY	138	110	124	372	13	94
PROSPECT	130	104	117	352	4.7	80
MITCHAM	127	102	115	344	8.1	255
ADELAIDE HILLS	111	89	101	301	31.1	144
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>257</b>
WEST TORRENS	97	78	88	263	6.5	181
CHARLES STURT	96	77	87	260	8.5	378
CAMPBELLTOWN	90	72	81	243	8.5	189
MARION	84	67	76	226	12.1	340
ENFIELD	78	62	70	211	12	573
ONKAPARINGA	71	57	65	193	39.5	754
TEA TREE GULLY	70	56	64	190	17.8	446
SALISBURY	59	47	53	159	24.5	519
GAWLER	49	39	44	132	54	121
PLAYFORD	43	34	39	116	39.2	408

Figure 1: Housing affordability indicators of Adelaide's Local Government Areas

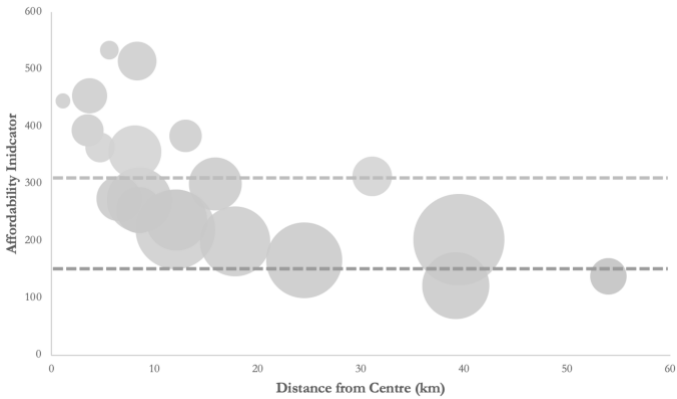


Figure 2: Affordability of areas against proximity to city centre

As highlighted in Figure 1, affordable regions are concentrated amongst areas further from the city. The average distance for areas in A1 is 6 kilometres away from the city centre (disregarding the Adelaide Hills as an outlier). Contrastingly, areas in A2 are within an average of 22.3 kilometres. Figure 2 displays this graphically, as the larger proportion of sales occurs in more affordable and remote regions. Likewise, the aggregate sales (Q1 of 2022) in A1 was 966 whilst areas in A2 sold 3909 houses, implying that the majority of the population is only able to access affordable areas.

Furthermore, Australians aged between 21-34 earn an average of \$58,604 a year; 22.8% less than the average Australian. Both these trends underscore that people; particularly younger generations, are unable to afford areas closer to the city, hence are pushed further to the urban outskirts. The quantity of sales in the past seven years corroborates this, showing that in area A1, sales have increased by 9%, whilst regions in A2 have decreased by 16%. Yet, during a highly unaffordable period, the high

number of sales suggests the influence of FOMO, as young people are willing to pay higher for areas further out. Survey responses amongst young, prospective home buyers support this idea, indicating that the location, proximity to work and public services are the least important factors, overshadowed by affordability and well-conditioned homes.



Figure 3: Affordability of Local Government Areas in Adelaide

In Figures 2 and 3, the relationship between affordability and proximity is revealed, accentuating the issue that young first home buyers face, only being able to afford areas in their range, thus limiting their opportunities for work, education, and public services. All figures underscore the displacement of younger generations who are unable to afford areas close to the city, with single-income households reduced to only two suburban Local Government Areas. The evidence indicates that the youth may have valid concerns about FOMO based on the current boom in housing prices, however, with changes in interest rates and wage growth, should they be worried?

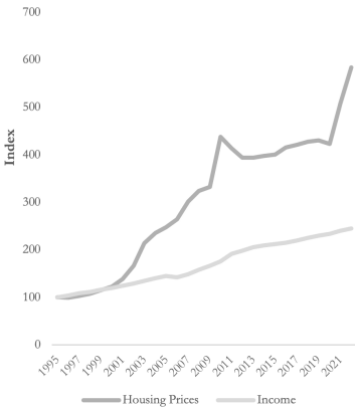


Figure 4: House prices have grown 584% in 21 years, outstripping income growth.

LGA	Current	5%	10%
WALKERVILLE	526	524	499
BURNSIDE	506	486	464
UNLEY	443	426	406
ADELAIDE	434	417	398
NORWOOD	381	367	350
HOLDFAST BAY	372	358	341
PROSPECT	352	338	322
MITCHAM	344	331	315
ADELAIDE HILLS	301	290	276
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>274</b>
WEST TORRENS	263	253	241
CHARLES STURT	260	250	239
CAMPBELLTOWN	243	234	223
MARION	226	218	207
ENFIELD	211	203	193
ONKAPARINGA	193	186	177
TEA TREE GULLY	190	183	174
SALISBURY	159	153	145
GAWLER	132	127	121
PLAYFORD	116	112	106

Figure 5: Influence of wage growth on affordability.

Figure 4 highlights the disparity in house prices and income growth. The ratio between house prices and average income has risen to record high levels of 9.4:1, intensifying the disproportionate inflation of house prices that have impacted younger generations. The long decline in interest rates has reduced mortgage repayments, driving up demand and “persistently pushing up property prices” according to REA Group economist, Paul Ryan. The increases in house prices have been followed by slowly rising incomes, however, it is expected that household incomes will rise by a minimum of 5.2% in 2022 due to the strong economy and low unemployment rates. Thus, the significance of wage growth in improving housing affordability and addressing the FOMO of young first-home buyers is modelled in Figure 5.

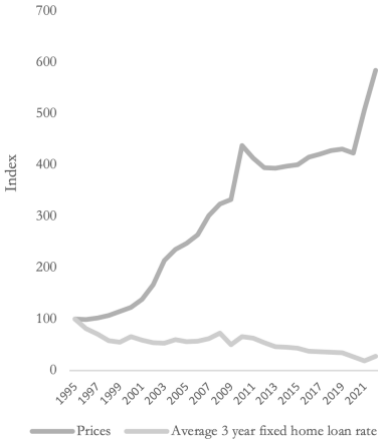


Figure 6: Home loan rates are linked with house prices.

LGA	5.49%	6%	7%	8%
WALKERVILLE	526	533	522	498
BURNSIDE	506	495	485	464
UNLEY	443	434	425	409
ADELAIDE	434	425	416	400
NORWOOD	381	373	366	354
HOLDFAST BAY	372	364	356	345
PROSPECT	352	344	337	327
MITCHAM	344	337	330	320
ADELAIDE HILLS	301	295	289	282
<b>AVERAGE</b>	300	292	286	279
WEST TORRENS	263	257	252	247
CHARLES STURT	260	255	250	244
CAMPBELLTOWN	243	238	233	228
MARION	226	222	217	213
ENFIELD	211	206	202	198
ONKAPARINGA	193	189	185	182
TEA TREE GULLY	190	186	182	179
SALISBURY	159	155	152	150
GAWLER	132	129	126	124
PLAYFORD	116	114	111	110

Figure 7: Rising interest rates may improve accessibility.

Figure 5 highlights that a 5% increase in the average wage would improve affordability by 3.4% in A1 and 3.7% in A2. This is shown by the shift of the red and orange lines up relative to the current (Q1 of 2022), as the decreasing score allows people to access previously unreachable areas. Increased wages by 10% would further improve affordability by 7.9% in A1 and 8.4% in A2; particularly to the benefit of young first-home buyers as affordable areas become more accessible. However, rising incomes may not be enough to improve affordability, as prices would need to decline by more than 15% to see a real change in affordability. Furthermore, with increased wages, buyers have a greater borrowing capacity, thus having the potential to stimulate more demand and perpetuate the cycle of FOMO that inflates house prices and isolates young generations. Therefore, to better address FOMO for first-home buyers, other scenarios must be considered.

The adoption of the monetary policy in the 1990s introduced the notion of controlling interest rates to affect aggregate demand, inflation, and employment in the economy. As seen in Figure 6, this has had a large impact on housing prices, as the steady decline of interest rates has reduced mortgage repayments, thus increasing the demand for buyers and inflating prices. Furthermore, this longward trend to almost 0% in Q1 of 2022 has pushed prices up and increased the size of the deposit by 484% in 27 years, reducing the affordability of housing, particularly for young people. Nonetheless, an increase in interest rates may improve affordability over a long-term period, as the decline in house prices would alleviate the burden and time saved for a deposit. However, immediately following interest rate rises, house prices are still high whilst mortgage repayments increase, making these periods highly unaffordable.

As indicated in Figure 7, the increase in interest rates may improve affordability due to a 16% decline in house prices at 8% rates. This will allow single and dual-income households to access more areas that were originally out of reach for them, as evidenced by the upward shift in the dotted lines towards higher-priced areas. The greatest improvement in affordability is seen at an 8% rate, where areas in A1 will be 6.2% more affordable and areas in A2 will be 7.13% more affordable, as the proportion of mortgage repayments is offset by a larger decline in property prices. Additionally, this model is reinforced by the ANZ, predicting the median house value to fall by \$150,000 nationally and by \$166,000 in South Australia by 2023. Hence, interest rates factored in with wage growth could potentially alleviate the pressure on first-home buyers.

Ultimately, housing affordability is a multifactorial issue that most adversely impacts the youthful population. Whilst this article may not be representative of a normal period as it is conducted at the height of record low interest rates and house price growth, the speculative notion of FOMO has created anxiety for aspiring homeowners, conceivably intensifying these trends. This article outlines that increases in income, coupled with increasing interest rates in the long term will generally improve affordability, however, does not mention that the provision of urban space planning and increasing supply will be substantial in improving affordability. Australians have been obsessed with the notion of the “Great Australian Dream”, widening the intergenerational divide that segregates young generations to the urban outskirts and perpetuates the self-fulfilling cycle of FOMO. Nevertheless, I propose that the overwhelming sense of FOMO may not be justified as projected increases in wages and interest rates might see opportunities for young first-home buyers to step foot into the property market.

Mark Foy

*This article is a modified extract from the draft of a forthcoming book.*

With the ascendancy of science as the methodological foundation of our epistemological and cultural paradigm, there has emerged an extensive educational research enterprise. This research is undertaken in as strict accordance with the requirements of scientific observational and experimental methodology as the unpredictability and complexity of human interaction permits. Particular variables are identified, criteria of measurement are established, and studies are performed determining the effects of given conditions and pedagogical strategies. While the results of such studies are usually interpreted with an appropriately tentative scientific circumspection, giving due consideration to the influence of multiple variables and the presence of all kinds of anomalies, and so inferring salient margins of indeterminacy, these results nevertheless acquire a considerable prestige in consequence of the methodological rigour and institutional context of their undertaking. By virtue of their systematic means of procurement, and more importantly their status as empirical results often susceptible to clear numerical and graphic presentation, the determinations of these studies come to exert an influence out of all proportion to the circumstances of their undertaking.

Those who engage in these studies do so primarily out of professional interest, and with a keen awareness of the complex and conditional character of their deliberations, but also in the name of the academic obligation to justify salaries through the publication of research. Yet, once a given piece of research is published, a set of results are often perceived as exhibiting a clarity and finality almost indifferent to the context from which these results derive. A researcher might posit a given causative linkage as significant, construct a given methodology to sample this effect and then interpret their results with a multitude of provisos and caveats as no more than preliminary indications. However, the results themselves, frequently given unambiguous graphic and numerical form, appear to others with an entirely different aspect. These results may well be cited in further research and without acknowledgement of initial qualifying caveats, or they may be given similar non-contextual citation in the reports of those whose job it is to advise on educational practice in education departments and schools. Hence, regardless of the uncertainties of the researchers themselves, their results come to be perceived as determining that

such and such an approach is shown to have such and such an effect. It is only too evident that the efficacy of mathematical empiricism in its technological applications has given to numerical and statistical data a status that disposes us to view the numerical outcomes of studies, surveys, elections, and sporting contests with a reverence unrelated to the actual context from which these numbers derive. There is a peculiar satisfaction in the definitive finality that numbers, and the percentages they generate, appear to determine. Possessed of the numerical outcome, we become more or less oblivious to the manner of its procurement. Within an educational context, this satisfaction gives rise to recurrent statements beginning 'Studies show...', frequently accompanied by the citation of various statistical results and the presentation of corresponding graphic representations, as a justification of recommendations to pursue particular educational practices.

Too rarely does this kind of educational discourse acknowledge that many of these cited studies were undertaken in a highly circumspect and contextually specific manner. Rarely, too, does 'Studies show...' acknowledge the degree to which prevailing theoretical preconceptions can exert an influence on the work of tenured academics under the pressure of publication quotas. The apparent consensus evident in the results of many studies may, at least in part, reflect a preponderance of such preconceptions and investigative approaches. While, no doubt, most researchers strive conscientiously to liberate themselves from these preconceptions and to bring fresh approaches to the issues they examine, it does not seem contentious to assert that the productive pressures operating within contemporary universities, seeking always to justify their financial arrangements, can readily give rise to much routine research recycling prevalent preconceptions and outcomes.

Of far greater, and more troubling, significance is the effect of the scientific method itself on our understanding of education. So much are we disposed to reckon all our knowledge and our understanding within the framework of modes of scientific inquiry, demonstrably and spectacularly effective with respect to certain dimensions of our experience, do we too rarely query the assumption that this mode of inquiry has evident limitations – particularly as a means of understanding human actualities.

Natural scientific research has as its focus measurable effects. Many of the influences decisive within an educational context are not susceptible to the kinds of measurement such a focus requires or can only be made susceptible to such measurement by processes of translation that either set aside crucial elements or so distort the manifestation of what is measured as to misrepresent its significance. In consequence, a subtle inversion gradually occurs. Where research is intended to inform educational practice, esteem for empirical methodologies encourages researchers and educators to give priority to those dimensions of the educational

undertaking most amenable to empirical investigation. In so far, then, as educational practice conditions itself by reference to the results of this investigation, our understanding of education becomes an adaptation to the needs of empirical research, rather than the reverse. What began as the use of research practice to inform pedagogical practice comes, arguably ever more so, to be a shaping of pedagogical practice to the priorities of research practice. Given such a situation, we ought not be surprised that (partly under the stimulus of the educational philosophy of Dewey whose philosophical approach was very much oriented by scientific models) the currently predominant understanding of education is that it should be 'inquiry based', whereby, effectively, scientific investigative methodology becomes itself the model of education and students come to be perceived as proto researchers.

The investigative determination to obtain measurable results conditions a focus on those elements of the educative and pedagogical undertaking amenable to measurement of this kind. Fidelity to the outcome of such investigations in turn encourages a corresponding pedagogical focus on just these elements. A process of distillation or sifting occurs. Those elements congenial to empirical research, extracted from the wider context of educational relations to which they are otherwise integral, are conceptually delimited, given a transmuted manifestation as measurable properties, and as such, acquire an ever more objective status apprehensible as educational parameters readily controlled, manipulated and available for ongoing measurable monitoring. Teachers are encouraged to develop their practice in accordance with these now conceptually delimited and empirically isolated factors. Education comes to be regarded as a process intended to obtain measurable results. Within a society acculturated to science and its (stupendous) applications, this scientifically conditioned understanding of education is readily adopted alike by policy advisors, educational administrators, journalists, and not least by students and their families. There transpires a recurrent cycle of reiteration and reinforcement. Inadvertently, subtly, almost imperceptibly, the lineaments of our educational practice, the very premises and purposes of what it is we understand by the term 'education', transformed by the only partially relevant exigencies of empirical research, come to be accepted as given – as the accepted criteria of reference for all subsequent educational discourse, pedagogical focus, student aspiration, and parental concern. An education aligned to the requirements of measurement becomes the very meaning of education itself.

To a very considerable extent, education has come to be understood as the production of measurable effects. All those 'effects' incapable, or less capable, of measurement: dimensions of human relationship, emotional reorientation, imaginative inspiration, intellectual engagement, ethical awakening – 'effects' that perhaps ought not be understood as effects at all, that cannot be specified, delimited,



extracted, but must be recognised in the more organic and intangible terms of latency, possibility, germination, orientation and so forth – come gradually to be relegated as pedagogical priorities. Frequently, these elements are either valued as instrumental to the now ascendant preoccupation with producing measurable effects, in which case their educational role has become intrinsically subordinate, or else they are perceived as demonstrably secondary, a surplus element, a luxury item in the economy of education to be provided only where other more pressing priorities have been addressed. Often enough, such elements are derided and disparaged as intangible, not measurable, and therefore inconsequential, or they are simply ignored. Even where some acknowledgement of their importance is retained, the difficulty of incorporating them into the investigative undertaking that educational research involves forces them into the background of inquiry. This impetus of relegation, and in some cases of disparagement, cannot help but ramify all the more intensively as the research comes itself to be distilled into more or less objective results that are translated into policy and practice within educational discourses and institutions. What begins as a recognition of crucial elements not easily incorporated into a research methodology can readily become a complete indifference to these elements once the results of the research have been taken from their investigative context.

An empirical investigative approach seeking measurable effects cannot help but encourage such relegation in much the same way as it disposes the empirically oriented intellect to a consequentialist ethics. The search for measurable effects that can in turn be interpreted in terms of identifiable causes: the conditioning of our ways of thinking in terms of prior cause and subsequent effect, encourages particular styles of practical and chronological linearity in our understanding. Simultaneously, such thinking disposes us to understand the qualitative dimension of our lives, intrinsically fluid, diffuse, relational, interpenetrative, intangible – in terms exclusively of results and consequences. For, it is not possible to quantitatively delimit the qualitative sphere other than in terms of measurable effects and consequences within the tangible sphere of sensory manifestation. Hence, the emergence within an empirically oriented culture of predominantly consequentialist ethical stances. Hence, too, the conspicuous emphasis, within public sphere discussions about education, and, in turn, among parents and students making decisions about education, upon educational practices productive of results.

Educational research is a branch of the human or social sciences. The disciplines comprising the human sciences are historically young. For the most part, these disciplines: psychology, economics, sociology, linguistics, and the like, only came to be properly acknowledged and organised within tertiary institutions during the C20th. The difficulties set out above are to varying degrees intrinsic to the human scientific undertaking and have, accordingly, been addressed in different ways by each

of the human scientific disciplines. Empirical investigation requires as its evidential register measurable phenomena. However, such phenomena are only indirectly, or abstractly and virtually, an expression of the profuse variability of the human actuality they seek to understand. Economics, already better placed empirically by the relative tangibility of its subject matter, develops its models of economic activity by bracketing aside the profuse and ostensibly intangible variability of human life by means of the 'ceteris paribus': 'all things being equal' principle, by its concept of 'externals', and more recently by establishing behavioural economics as a new sub-discipline. These measures have been mostly effective in enabling economics to preserve its methodological rigour and predictive efficacy with less risk of the kinds reductive inversions we have discussed above. Similarly, linguistics has the empirical advantage of examining phenomena at once expressive of the mind, but, thanks to this expression, mostly external to it.

Conversely, psychology has given rise to a considerable diversity of research methodologies and has long been fraught with internal disagreements about the conclusions we can draw from explicitly empirical modes of investigation of the human mind. Assuredly, neuroscience has made extraordinary advances in our understanding of the workings of the brain and the nervous system, but the degree to which these workings comprise, cause, or primarily correlate with, the human mind, remains open to question. More pertinent, however, to our exploration of educational research is the behaviourist approach. In rudimentary terms, some researchers such as BF Skinner took the view that because the mind was not amenable to empirical investigation, we should effectively set it aside as an extraneous theoretical postulate and instead consider humans purely in terms of their empirically accessible behaviour. In other words, behaviourism explicitly adopted as its methodological precept what we are here claiming is tacitly taking place in consequence of educational research.

Of course, to reiterate, educational researchers are themselves aware of these problems. Qualitative research, the methodologies of which are explicitly addressed to the profuse fluidity and variability of human actuality, are used to complement empirical studies. We have already emphasised the ways in which empirical researchers qualify their claims by specifying its contexts, its vulnerability to variables, and so on. The educational research undertaking itself is not in question. Empirical approaches draw attention to dimensions of human actuality of which we might otherwise be unaware. Hence, this research, for the most part, discloses valuable and often unexpected perspectives and insights.

The reductive and inversive tendencies arising from educational research are not, nor need they be, intrinsic to such research in so far as these tendencies are

recognised and resisted. Too often, however, the reverse situation obtains, partly because of the numerically and graphically convenient way such research is viewed, and partly because of the way its results are publicised. There is good reason to believe that most human scientists are conscious of these tendencies, often enough acutely so. Yet, the fascination with data, with the discovery of patterns, and with the apparently conclusive clarity afforded by numerical modes of presentation, can sometimes encourage not just those who use the results of research, but the researchers themselves, to consider these results as definitive of the educational undertaking, and to infer from them prescriptive claims about educational practice.

Clearly, empirical methods of investigation can furnish us with perspectives of the educational undertaking not available by other means. The human scientific investigation of educational contexts, practices, relationships, attitudes, motivational concerns and so on affords us unique insights. However, we need to be particularly circumspect in how we view these insights, not least because the prestige of science and of numerically presented information can encourage us regard these insights as in some manner superordinate to other sources of educational understanding. Furthermore, researchers themselves, carried along by a commendable enthusiasm for the efficacy of their methods and the cogency of their conclusions and implications, must themselves keep this circumspection in view. Empirical methodologies are, to reiterate, only partially applicable to the understanding of human actualities. A measurement (IQ is an obvious example), or constellation of measurements, can only tell us so much about what is measured. IQ tests are a reliable measure of particular kinds of intelligence, but arguably, not intelligence as such. Accordingly, we would likely be mistaken if we were to define our understanding of intelligence on the basis of tests of this ilk, regardless of the rigour and sophistication of the tests themselves. We are similarly likely to be mistaken if we allow an empirical view of education to supersede the views of education we derive from other sources.

Education and research are related, but distinct enterprises. Education is primarily focused on the development of our humanity. Research is primarily focused on the development of knowledge. Etymologically, education comes from the latin *educere*: to draw out, and *educare*: to train and mould – hence, drawing out from the student their mature character and capability, and helping to shape it. Obviously, this drawing out necessarily focuses upon knowledge, since knowledge is so central to character and capability, all the more so in contemporary society where capability cannot function without extensive and detailed knowledge in a variety of fields. Nevertheless, educationally, the development of knowledge is instrumental to, and subsumed by, the development of humanity. By contrast, research, and specifically human scientific research, has, necessarily and definitively, a contrary ordering of these priorities. For a researcher, knowledge itself is the principal concern, and for a

human scientific researcher seeking to utilize the methodologies of science to investigate humanity, the scientific aspiration toward objectivity necessitates (within crucial ethical constraints) the temporary, purpose specific, subordination of humanity to knowledge (if tacitly, but not necessarily, for the sake of humanity). Accordingly, educational research can, undoubtedly, beneficially inform educational practice, but we must be careful not to allow a misconstrual of the significance of this research to subtly encourage the conforming of this practice to an ordering of priorities proper to research, but not to education.

**About the interviewee**

Peter Singer is often described as the world's most influential living philosopher. He is credited as the founder of the modern animal rights movement, authoring *Animal Liberation* in 1975, and founding the organisation *Animals Australia* in 1980. Approaching philosophy from a utilitarian perspective, his ideas have contributed to the rise of effective altruism, which led him to found nonprofit *The Life You Can Save*, an organisation that improves the lives of people living in extreme poverty. Since 1999, he has been Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics in the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University, and in 2021 won the Berggruen Prize for Philosophy and Culture.

This interview took place on a park bench in the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden behind Government House, following Mr Singer's public talk on the ethical questions of climate change at Adelaide Writer's Week.

***How did you become interested in ethics and decide upon pursuing academic philosophy as a career?***

It was a series of different steps I suppose. I originally thought when I went to university that I was going to do law, but I spoke to someone who persuaded me that law is pretty dry, and you might rather do a combined Arts/Law degree. So, I thought that would be interesting and I did some philosophy in that, and did quite well at it. The structure of the degree meant I finished the B.A. Honours before I finished the law degree, and I was offered a scholarship to do a M.A. in Philosophy, so I did that thinking I was just suspending the law degree and I'd come back to it. But then another scholarship offer came to go to Oxford, which was pretty exciting, so I took that and then received a job offer there, by which time it was too late to come back to law. What really influenced my ethical worldview was that period – the late 1960s and early 1970s – when there was a big student movement demanding that university education become more relevant, and that included philosophy. Relevant because there was the Vietnam War; the question of whether it was a just war or not. There was conscription for the war, and the Civil Rights Movement in America so there were issues of equality there. So, students were demanding greater relevance, and as a young student and philosopher I was interested in applying philosophy to the real world, and I think that was the big influence in terms of the direction that I took – I started making philosophy more relevant to the issues that really matter and make a difference.

***What role do you think higher education bodies have in fostering moral development?***

I certainly think universities can teach ethics as a subject, and that doesn't mean to teach one particular ethical view, and certainly doesn't mean indoctrinate students in particular ways. But it does mean to teach students how to think in ethics, get them acquainted with some of the literature that exists, discussing ethical issues, and get them to evaluate arguments and positions for themselves. I think that's squarely within the standard role of universities as they're all educational activities. The other question is the role universities have in making a more just society. Universities have a role to play in their admissions policies, for example, trying to make sure that disadvantaged people who have the talent to do well in a university degree get admitted to the university. They can also try and have a range of subjects that suits students and will help them to be productive members of society. So, there's a lot that universities can do, but I don't think they should be trying to indoctrinate students into a set of particular values.

***Over the last few years, the Effective Altruism community has diversified to include discussion of longtermism, which seeks to minimise global catastrophic risks from issues like A.I. and nuclear risk. How should effective altruists morally reckon with diverting resources from people currently suffering in the present day to potentially save people that may or may not exist?***

I think there's often a lot of overlap in what will help people in the present day and what will help them in the future. If you turn completely away from helping people in the present day and say look, 'there's so many possible people in the next billion years. We should only focus on that', you're likely to create a callous generation that doesn't care about suffering in front of its eyes. I can't see how that would be good for the long-term future either. Taking that into account, I think it's perfectly reasonable to give a significant amount of attention to the long-term future. Some of those examples you mentioned, for example nuclear risk, are really important. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and NATO's resistance to that, nuclear risk isn't necessarily centuries away; it's here and now. So, that's a perfectly reasonable area to focus on.

***People can often feel that their contribution to charity is relatively minimal compared to the contributions of wealthier individuals. That is, most people donate \$50 on occasion, compared to Bill Gates who donates billions of dollars. How should donors deal with this idea that their donations aren't going comparably very far?***

Unfortunately, if you don't have billions of dollars, you can't give billions of dollars. But that doesn't mean that these small amounts that you can give don't make

any difference. It does make a difference, and it adds up with the amounts others give. It adds up and you can contribute to saving a life, or restoring someone's sight. The question donors should ask is not, 'I can't make as much difference as Bill Gates', but rather 'can my money make a bigger impact on the world and do more good if I donate it to The Life You Can Save (or one of the recommended charities) compared to buying myself something that I might enjoy having?' Very often, for people who are reasonably comfortable and well-off anyway, the answer will be 'it'll make a far bigger difference if you donate it to one of those effective charities'.

***Much of your writing focusses on the ethical obligations we have towards animals. Are there any important distinctions between us as human beings compared to other creatures?***

There *are* important distinctions between human beings and animals. In particular, I suppose, we should think of humans who are capable of using language, reasoning, and being self-aware. Which doesn't actually include all members of the species homo sapiens, and none of us were capable of those things for the first couple of months of our lives anyway. So, you know, yes, those beings are different and live their lives in a different way, and think about the future in a different way. But to me, the objective moral consideration ought to be is that you're capable of suffering. There is such a thing as your life going well or badly for you, from your internal subjective perspective. That's true not of every non-human animal. It may not be true for an oyster, but it's true of certainly of all vertebrates, and some non-invertebrates like the octopus which is a clearly sentient being. So, I think that's what we ought to be considering. Is this being's life going well or badly for them? If it's going badly, and I can do something to make it go better, that's what I ought to be doing.

***The utilitarian philosophy aims to maximise pleasure and minimise suffering. Are there instances where suffering can be beneficial or morally desirable?***

Suffering is certainly often beneficial, but it's an *instrumental* benefit. Some people say they develop character through suffering, which may or may not be the case; I think it will depend on the circumstances. But if you put your hand into a flame accidentally and you feel pain, that pain benefits you because you take your hand out and you still have a functioning hand which you wouldn't have if you didn't feel pain.

***Many people in middle-income countries like India currently depend on meat from large industrial farms, which has allowed for an unprecedented scale of production and lifted millions out of poverty. In the animal rights movement is there a trade-off between non-human and human utility?***

I don't think widespread factory farming does lift people out of poverty. It gives them a certain kind of food, but they could nourish themselves as well, or better

(in the long term, in a healthier way) by not eating those products and eating plant-based diets. If they know how to do it, it's actually cheaper or can be as cheap as a meat-based diet. So, my view is that it doesn't really benefit people in these countries, so there's no tension between trying to reduce animal suffering and still give people good lives.

***A controversial view you hold is that we should give parents the choice to euthanise their profoundly disabled babies, or lives which we can medically determine will contain huge amounts of suffering. Are families and communities obliged to care for those unable to recognise the care we provide?***

Firstly, you phrased that absolutely rightly. A lot of people say I'm in favour of euthanasia of disabled newborns as if I want everybody to do this. But, as you correctly said, I'm in favour of giving parents the option and I think they're the ones who should choose. So, you're asking me whether in any case where care is not going to be beneficial to the person it [euthanasia] should be an option to end their life? I think if you can be confident enough in the medical diagnosis, then I think yes, the parents or close family should be able to make that decision.

***One of your speaking engagements was recently cancelled based on that very view. What do you make of the tendency of hosts of events to cancel public forums when the views of guests do not align with their own?***

I think it's bad for public discourse. I'm in favour of freedom of expression and a wide diversity of opinions being expressed. The right way to oppose a view that you think is mistaken or wrong is to let it be expressed and then show people why it's wrong. I think denying speakers and cancelling events is not a good thing for a diversity of opinions in society. Freedom of thought and speech is therefore fairly fundamental, as long as that thought is expressed civilly and with the basis of sufficient evidence or argument. I'm not defending the right of racists to go into an area and try to incite people to attack those of another race. That's just stirring up emotions and inciting violence. But, if people want to express things in a civil forum and in a proper way, explaining why they hold the views they do, then I think they should be free to do that, and others should be right to explain why they think it's wrong.

***Why did you start the 'Journal of Controversial Ideas'? Was it a response to this trend towards non-civility in public discourse?***

It was a response to people either not being able to have views published, or self-censoring because they were worried about consequences to themselves, perhaps for their career or personal safety if they published certain opinions. The distinctive feature of the journal, which is a refereed academic journal, is that people can publish under a pseudonym if they wish to. We've had some authors do that and express ideas



that they would not have been willing to put their name to, but our reviewers thought were well-argued and worth having out in the public arena.

***Do you think the more controversial parts of your philosophy have made other areas of your work on charity harder for people to engage with?***

I think that has happened to some people and I regret that. What you would have to say though on the other side is that the attention that has been given to me because of protests and attempts to prevent me speaking has led a lot more people to know that I exist and write about controversial ideas, and therefore to pick up more books. That's one of the good things about a free society. Trying to shut people up often just means that they get more attention than they would have received had you ignored them.

***Countries within international bodies like the U.N. and W.H.O. are seemingly incapable on agreeing on pertinent global issues like climate change and pandemic regulation. Is global agreement on these challenges possible?***

I think the best path forward is to strengthen global institutions. That's hard to do because countries are reluctant to give up sovereignty, but I do think we need stronger global institutions because we have these global problems which are very hard to solve between independent sovereign nations and nothing that you can do to put pressure on them.

***How do you see Effective Altruism engaging with state actors?***

Bodies like the World Health Organisation have significant budgets, and I think the role of effective altruism is for its followers to see how these bodies can do the most good with these funds. I have to say, in defence of these actors, they're aware of this and have ways of trying to measure and assess the global burden of disease and where they can intervene effectively, so this is not really news to them. I think in a way that it's more important for the EA movement to focus on ordinary donors who tend to give much more impulsively and don't really do any research on how much good their donation will do if they give it to one organisation over another.

***Your views on animal welfare have faced criticism from those that support animal testing, for medication for instance. Are there circumstances by which it's moral to use an animal as a means to an end?***

I do think there are circumstances where it can be ethical to conduct experiments on animals. That can be the case where there is the likelihood of some great benefit which will help a large number of sentient beings, and the cost to the smaller number of sentient beings is minimised to the greatest extent possible; so, I'm not an absolutist in abolishing all animal experiments. That said, I think there's a very

large proportion of animal experiments that are not essential and that we should be ceasing to do, and we should be putting more resources into finding alternatives to the use of animals.

***Do you have a final piece of advice to those striving to live an ethical life?***

My advice, especially to young people who haven't yet got into their careers is to think about what you want to do with your life. Think about the values that are really important to you, and think about how to further those values. There are a variety of ways to do that but the choice of the career you go into is obviously a very important one. I advise people to take a look at the website *80,000 Hours* which has a lot of career choice discussion from a point of view that supports doing good in the world and being effective in what you're doing. So, I think for younger people that's the biggest thing to think about, as well as in your everyday life. As you were saying, if you have some pocket money or earn a little bit in part-time work, what you can do with that is also important, and it's important in my view to get into a habit of giving effectively from an early age.

Vasilis Michalakis

### **Brief history of the development of modern economic theories**

Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) is an unorthodox approach to economic management continuously developed since the 1990s by Professor Bill Mitchell, alongside American academics Professor Randall Wray, Stephanie Kelton, and investment bankers such as Warren Mosler. The foundation of MMT stems back to the work of the famous economist John Maynard Keynes who attempted to understand the Great Depression. This led to the development of Keynesian economics which promotes active government policy to manage aggregate demand. This enables governments to address a recession whilst ensuring constant achievement of the full employment and price stability economic objectives. This challenged the assumptions of “classical economics” which stated that in the long-run an economy will fluctuate around its potential-GDP; the amount an economy can produce by utilizing all its resources without accelerating inflation. Thus, the primary determinant of real GDP is potential GDP i.e., Aggregate Demand is relatively stable in the long run. Thus, with time, increases in the quantity and quality of physical capital, increases in human capital, and technological advancements will cause an increase in potential GDP and thus real GDP creating economic growth, often referred to as long-run growth.

### **What is MMT?**

Policy makers have two levers for controlling aggregate demand: fiscal policy which is the manipulation of taxes and government spending, or monetary policy which is the manipulation of interest rates and the money supply. The basic premise of MMT is that government spending is constrained by the real resource limits of an economy and not budgetary constraints. This differs from the perspective of Keynesian economists who argue that a short-term budget deficit is necessary to stimulate the economy but that governments should quickly aim to restore a budget surplus. The core assumption behind this idea is that monetary sovereign governments cannot face budgetary constraints. In order to be deemed as monetary sovereign, a nation must have its own currency, central bank, floating exchange rate and no significant foreign currency debt. Therefore, nations such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are deemed monetary sovereigns. However, countries within the Eurozone are not monetary sovereigns as they do not have their own currencies. The rationale behind this assumption is that a monetary sovereign

cannot run out of its own currency, the central bank can simply issue more domestic currency (“print money”).

Another core idea embodied by MMT is that spending is constrained to real resource limits. This represents a fundamental shift for governments when questioning spending from “can we afford it?” to “is it inflationary?”. MMT does not advocate for unlimited spending as this results in demand-pull inflation and creates economic instability. Demand-pull inflation occurs when there is high demand for goods and services across the economy and the use of resources by firms is close to capacity (so firms have a limited ability to expand supply). As a result, this creates a shortage across markets for goods and services in the economy which is cleared by raising prices thus creating inflation. MMT also embodies the core idea that a public sector deficit is a private sector surplus. This is derived from the work of post-Keynesian economist Wynne Godley on sectoral balances; the idea that the sum of the surpluses and deficits across our financial system always adds to zero.

### **What about government bonds?**

Mainstream economists argue that a government deficit is funded by borrowing money from the private sector and issuing a fixed-income debt security known as a “bond”. Bonds are issued by central banks and are typically sold to financial institutions through an auctioning process known as an open market operation. These bonds can be resold into secondary markets to be purchased by investors. Advocates of MMT however argue that the purchasing and selling of bonds serves as a policy tool for maintaining the cash rate. The cash rate is defined as the overnight interest rate for inter-bank lending. For example, in the Australian banking system, large banks hold a reserve account with the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) known as an Exchange Settlement Account (ESA). Interbank transactions are cleared daily by the RBA, and banks with a surplus amount after clearing are paid an interest rate 0.1% below the cash rate target whilst banks with a deficit balance are forced to borrow from other banks with a surplus amount at the cash rate in order to transfer funds. It is expected for the bank to repay the loan usually within a day. For example, if my banker is ANZ bank and I bought a \$5 pair of socks from the PAC uniform shop whose banker is the Commonwealth Bank, when clearing payments at the end of the day ANZ must transfer the \$5 out of their ESA account and into the ESA account of Commonwealth Bank. However, the demand for loans is dependent on the quantity of interbank transactions which differ daily, according to the loanable funds theory the interest rate is dependent on the demand and supply for loanable funds. If the real cash rate is above the target cash rate, the RBA will purchase government bonds from participating banks to increase the amount of loanable funds in the ESA system to put downward pressure on the cash rate, vice versa. Thus, the selling and purchasing of bonds serves as a policy tool for manipulating interest rates and the money supply (monetary policy), not financing spending in a budget deficit.

On an interesting side note, this also contradicts the idea of the “crowding out” effect which is cited by mainstream economists as the result of running a budget deficit. The argument behind the “crowding out” effect is that for government spending to rise, a greater number of bonds need to be issued. Using the loanable funds theory, the demand for loanable funds increases thus placing upward pressure on interest rates. As a result, the interest rate paid by a government bond (and thus bond yields) will rise. Since the yield on government bonds are greater, private firms in the economy are forced to borrow at a higher interest rate in order to compete with bond yields. As a result, private firms are disincentivised from investing as the risk of being unable to service those debt payments at a higher interest rate is greater. Thus, private firms are unable to compete against government bonds on the basis of interest rates decreasing private investment. However according to MMT, monetary sovereigns can simply “print” more money to finance deficit spending alleviating the need to issue more bonds to raise funds.

### **What about taxes?**

Mainstream economists also argue that government spending is funded by “the taxpayer”. However, proponents of MMT argue that the purpose of taxation is for controlling inflation and creating value for the domestic currency of a monetary sovereign. Income tax is a tool used in the implementation of fiscal policy, a form demand management policy. Increasing taxes reduces the amount of disposable income available to households and thus their ability to consume goods and services. As a result, the consumption spending component of aggregate demand decreases thus resulting in a decrease in aggregate demand. When aggregate demand decreases, there is a decrease in the average price level thus reducing the inflation rate. Reducing income taxes can also be used to stimulate the economy by increasing disposable income and thus the consumption spending component of aggregate demand. However, in reality the manipulation of taxes in economic management as a government is limited as it is politically unpopular to raise taxes. This represents a fundamental flaw in the application of MMT with regards to the manipulation of taxes to control inflation.

Proponents of MMT also argue that the core function of taxes is to create demand for a sovereign currency. MMT perceives currency as a public monopoly, meaning only the government has the authority to create and destroy currency. Taxes are seen to create demand for a currency as when individuals and business pay taxes, these entities must obtain the government’s currency to do so creating demand for the currency.

### **The case for a job guarantee**

Economists Randall Wray and Bill Mitchell alongside investment banker Warren Mosler in conjunction with working on MMT proposed the idea of a job guarantee. An economy with “full employment” does not represent a situation in which all individuals who want a job have one, but rather it is the lowest unemployment rate sustainable without accelerating inflation. As a result, there exists individuals who want a job but are unemployed despite the economy being described as in a state of “full employment”. Effectively, a job guarantee provides a humane methodology of dealing with unemployment.

A job guarantee is a government program which offers individuals willing to work a basic wage and benefits package. Critics argue that a job guarantee is inflationary since it increases the demand for labour resources which causing the price to rise. However, the job guarantee scheme is not intended to compete with the private sector with regards to employing labour resources. Workers under the job guarantee scheme are paid lower than private sector employees in order to incentivise these individuals to find work in the private sector for a higher wage. Additionally, those able to seek employment in the private sector are not incentivised to participate in the job guarantee scheme since wages are lower. Thus, a job guarantee program intended for individuals lacking work experience that may be undesirable for private firms to hire, especially in a competitive labour market. Despite the humane benefits, a job guarantee can also provide economic stimulus during recession as it keeps individuals working an earning an income that would otherwise be unemployed. MMT effectively justifies that a government can budget the cost of a job guarantee program since government spending is not constrained by debt.

### **Differing perspectives**

Despite agreements on the mechanics of MMT by proponents, there exists different perspectives on the practical application of MMT in the real world. One such disagreement among proponents is the idea of economically left-wing MMT and economically right-wing MMT. Proponents of the left-wing application of MMT include American professor Stephanie Kelton and Steven Hail, a famous MMT lecturer in Australia. They advocate the use of MMT for extending government programs such as education and healthcare schemes. However, the right-wing proponents of MMT comprised of advocates such as Warren Mosler argue for small governments, free markets and low taxes except under circumstances that require government intervention such as a recession. In this scenario, the government should be able to run a deficit to stimulate the economy.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the largest barrier constraining the adoption of MMT is support from politicians. Fiscal policy is ultimately a government responsibility, and even if MMT were to garner the support of politicians, the political agenda of a government is likely to take precedence over economic priorities, thus limiting the applicability of MMT. Additionally, MMT (and Keynesian economics) fail to address factors influencing the supply-side. Hence, the applicability of MMT for creating long-run growth or addressing stagflation (caused by supply shock) is also limited. However, economists have few policy tools for addressing supply shocks on a macroeconomic scale regardless. Overall, MMT is theoretically a promising new economic theory with a variety of benefits however, practicality is still disputed.

## Interview with Hon. Lucy Hood MP

### **About the interviewee**

Lucy Hood is the Member for Adelaide in the South Australian House of Assembly. Raised in Naracoorte in the state's southeast, she was the first member of her family to go to university, moving to Adelaide to study journalism. She later started her career at *The Advertiser* as a cadet journalist, and went on to become Education Editor and Policy Desk Producer. Before entering politics as a candidate, Lucy was the Director of Policy for SA Labor Leader and now Premier, Peter Malinauskas MP.

This interview occurred at her electorate office in Prospect.

### ***What led you to a career in politics?***

I grew up in a country town in a conservative Liberal-voting family from Bool Lagoon. When you come from that environment, politics isn't discussed much; we've had independent members, but it's primarily been Liberal. Although politics didn't form a huge part of my upbringing, I grew up with a sense of community where you are expected to give back and help your neighbours. My father is called Robin Hood and lived up to that name. If someone came to the farm needing something, he would help them out - whether that was fixing a car, a piece of machinery, or something else. My mum was very similar, working in an aged care home. Their jobs were about caring; listening to people's stories. My grandfathers were also in the local council and part of several community groups, such as the Scottish Highland Pipe Band. We also played all the sports under the sun.

I grew up in that setting of community connection, where we were taught to give back and help out a friend or neighbour. The civil aspect of politics and political debate was something I was passionate about early. I was the Student President at my school, and I grasped opportunities whenever they came up. I participated in a Lions Youth Speech Competition, won a round, and attended the district final. I also won a scholarship to do the Rotary Adventure Citizenship in Canberra in Year 11. That was my first experience opening up to politics. My stepdad passed away from a rare type of cancer, so I probably grew up quite early. I was 15, and my little brother was only five, so I had to grow up quite quickly, given what we had gone through. One area I was very passionate about, which I made the subject of my Lions Youth speech, was legalising voluntary assisted dying. Almost 20 years later - almost to the day - we eventually legalised voluntary assisted dying. As part of my Rotary citizenship



experience, I also met with my local federal member. This was around the time when that was a great debate on using babies' stem cells and umbilical cords for research. So, as a kid, I was starting to become passionate about particular topics and worked really hard in Year 12 and went on to study journalism and international studies. That's what I thought I loved; meeting people, hearing their stories, and writing about them.

I moved to Adelaide and applied for a cadetship at The Advertiser newspaper. I was fortunate enough to win one of the positions, started my journalism career, had various roles and eventually landed on writing about education. I was passionate about education and the public school system; I loved being in schools and writing about issues. But then something started in the back of my mind: I was thinking, 'I don't just want to write about this stuff'. I wanted to take what people were telling me and do something about it. I had a gap year in the UK and ran a pub in London during this time (and did a few other things that young people do), but that instinct stayed with me. When I moved back from London and returned as Education Editor at The Advertiser, I'd basically become something of a junior Chief of Staff. So I decided to move into politics, first in a media advisory role before more policy-oriented work. I worked with Tom Koutsantonis, Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, which I loved. We did things like building the footbridge over Torrens and redeveloping Adelaide Oval.

After the election, Tom became treasurer. I moved into a policy role within Treasury, helping to deliver 4 or 5 state budgets before stepping up to the position of policy advisor for then Premier Jay Weatherill. I found my passion was in writing solutions to problems, and I became more involved in the party. I was the secretary of the Labor Women's Network and volunteered in campaigns before Labor lost the 2018 election. I then worked for then Opposition Leader Peter Malinauskas as Director of Policy. My job was to start working on our policies for the 2022 election.

That's when the opportunity of thinking about running for Parliament came about. Adelaide's always been my community, but it was a significant decision to run because it's a marginal electorate; it was going to require a significant amount of work. Given I'd just had a baby, running for office and caring for toddlers was a big decision. That's how I got involved.

### ***How do you balance the competing demands of your constituents, party, personal views and personal life?***

If anyone tells you it's easy, they wouldn't be telling you the truth. I do think everyone is busy regardless of whether you're a politician or not. In our generation, both parents or caregivers tend to work (or sometimes a single parent or caregiver) full time and have kids; the struggle of modern life is one of busyness. When people are 30 or 40, and some think about having kids, that's also the time to think about a mortgage and supporting your parents. So, it's a very busy time whether you're a

politician or not. There's no magic formula. Every day I think, how can I work smarter, not harder? And that's particularly true of this particular seat of Adelaide when you're the capital city seat and could literally go to events all day and all night. You often have to remind yourself when you're getting so many invitations and requests for things, you know, remind yourself: who am I here to represent? Is this something that benefits my local community? Am I doing my job by attending, representing, or fighting for this particular issue? In terms of the kids - as an MP, you are generally required always to be around seven days a week. It's not a Monday to Friday, 9-5 job. So, you might think - I worked most of the day Sunday, so I'll pick up the kids from school on Monday. It requires flexibility and planning.

***How do you generally engage and respond to criticism from members of the public?***

We currently have an example of that type of criticism around Parklands usage with the new Aquatic Centre, Women's and Children's Hospital, and expansion of Adelaide Botanic High. The thing about politics is that you're not always going to please everyone, and some other decisions you make can cause friction in the community. So first, the most important thing you do is make yourself available and show up, even when you know you will face criticism. So this Saturday, the Premier and I are hosting a forum in Piccadilly; we've had over 120 RSVPs, and we know a portion of those people will want to share their frustrations. So you must provide constituents with these opportunities so that we can listen to them. Fronting up and listening to that feedback is important. In my job as a local member, you're often not in the cabinet room, so not making those decisions. So, it's my job to make representations to leaders and the caucus and not stick my head in the sand when these criticisms arise.

***How do you work with members of the Liberal Party and independent groups on the cross-bench when you have an opposing view on a particular issue?***

I have some experience in that regard, given that the majority of the Hood family is on the other side of politics! I had an interesting situation where my brother was elected to the Upper House as a Liberal politician. We've always grown up in that environment of having different views. And so my entire life, it's been that, but like a debating team, you do your research, have a rational argument, and occasionally you have to agree to disagree, but always be respectful. And so that's all I ask of anyone. You're 100% welcome to give me your feedback. Tell me that you're angry. Tell me that you don't like it - as long as we keep our disagreements respectful. Otherwise, you're not going to get anywhere. And largely, everyone does get along in Parliament. You see the more theatrical side of Parliament during Question Time, but 90% of the time, we're very collegiate. You could see that when we passed the Voice to Parliament Bill, even though the other side had chosen not to support the legislation, they did so

respectfully. I reflected on my comments from when my brother was recently sworn in. There is more that unites us than divides us, and we have much in common. We love the community, love giving back, love democracy, love Parliament, and want to create a better state and leave the place better than we found it. We sometimes have different pathways of going about it, but we always end up in the same spot at the very back. So really, you find that you have a lot in common with the people you work with. And my thoughts are that moving forward, as long as I'm respectful and other people are respectful, we will get to achieve things rather than nit-pick.

If you're going to oppose something, say why and offer some solutions. Oppose it, say why you disagree, and show how you do it differently. Whether you agree with it or not, I'll respect you for at least coming to the table with a different idea.

***Your brother is a sitting member of the Liberal Party - it's a rare circumstance - how does that affect your sibling relationship?***

It doesn't really, to be honest. When we're together, we're still brother and sister, so we can be honest about our feelings. Ben was around the other week for dinner because we were doing this radio interview. I think we got onto the issue of identity politics or something like that. But again, because we're brother and sister, we love each other like best mates. So we have that safe space in which to discuss things. So even when I vehemently disagree with him, it's fine. And when he disagrees with me, it's okay because we acknowledge that we can listen to each other's arguments. Was it a good one? Yes. Could it be better? Probably. But we're lucky that we have that connection as brother and sister and that it's okay to think differently.

***You spoke of your experiences growing up and slowly becoming engaged with politics; is youth representation in politics something you're interested in?***

Yeah, that's an area I'm really passionate about because, in high school, I didn't have those opportunities. If I had them, I'm sure I would have taken them all; that's why you'll see me attending Youth Parliament every year. When I host school tours, I'll often run a mock debate, and often, the topic I choose is 'That we should lower the voting age to 16'. I love hearing kids' feedback about why we should do it or why we shouldn't. We need to get more kids engaged in politics because it prevents polarisation, and the thought politicians are just out there for themselves. That issue will continue to be exacerbated if people don't engage or understand their power and how they are involved in the political system.

I'd say I'm close to doing the most tours of any other politician of Parliament House and have taken hundreds of kids through. We need to teach kids about the history of Parliament, how the speaker is elected, and how to debate issues. I talk them through the passage of a bill and the differences between the Houses of Parliament. That's because once you show kids what Parliament and politics are, how can they not

be interested? Politics is a debate of ideas. It's what we all love about the places we live. Politics is everywhere. If we can ignite that spark of politics and civics early, we will have more engaged, informed voters, which is good for democracy and decision-making. Donkey votes frustrate me because you have taken the right that people have died for and fought wars over and made nothing of it. One of my duties as a politician is to engage as many young people as possible, getting them interested in politics. This is what will make our community even better in the long run.

***In the last few years, often due to COVID restrictions, there has been a drastic decrease in the number of live bands and music in Adelaide. How important do you think live bands and music are to Adelaide's culture and general atmosphere, and what can we do about it?***

We have so many pubs and small bars and live music is a massive part of that. We are a UNESCO City of Music here in Adelaide, and it's an area that needs focus coming out of COVID. We've got the 'See it Live' program, where we support emerging artists and club and pub musicians through grants. Just down the road in Prospect, I advocated for Cafe Komodo - a local café/live music bar in our local community - to gain a \$5000 grant to upgrade their sound equipment, for example. Being in Adelaide, sometimes big-name acts don't come. That's why grassroots-level music is so important and something we should try and foster. We are trying to put Adelaide more on the map regarding events and vibrancy, bringing people back into the city. So I'm excited that that is an area we chose to back and support.

***Regarding South Australia's recently passed Indigenous Voice to Parliament, what does this mean for Indigenous people? Is this a step in the right direction, or does this conclude Labor's policy for reconciliation this term?***

It's definitely a step in the right direction. When I spoke on the bill in Parliament, I didn't want to do it from just my own Voice. I found that quite ironic because this legislation aims to give First Nations people a voice. I talked about it from the perspective of learning the Kurna language through a friend of mine, Uncle Tamaru. I go to so many events, and I do Acknowledgements of Country quite often, but I don't just want it to be just words; I want it to mean something. And so, I learnt the acknowledgement of country in Kurna, which I can do at events. Uncle Tamaru says we need to walk together, it's not about walking in front or behind, but that we must walk together.

The Voice legislation is one way that we can do this. And I talk about Voice; it's effectively just elevating the Voice of Aboriginal people so that they have a say on the bills and the policies that affect them, but not just in a committee or giving their opinion in a newspaper. The Voice to Parliament will not have veto power, and the government is not forced to accept their advice. They can't amend legislation. But it gives them the ability to be heard and consulted. Time and time again, it has been

shown that you will get better outcomes when you incorporate First Nations people in a discussion about things that dramatically affect their lives. A First Nations Voice to Parliament isn't going to affect you or me as individuals. It was the same with a referendum on marriage equality. Allowing same-sex couples to get married isn't going to change a heterosexual person's life, but it will dramatically impact the lives of same-sex couples. And time and time again, we have seen that non-Aboriginal people, compared to Aboriginal people on all the metrics like health, mortality, incarceration, and education, are worse off. So how is elevating their Voice to give them a say on the policies, bills, and legislation that dramatically impacts their lives going to hurt anyone?

We also have to remember that the Voice is only the first step in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. It has three parts: Voice, Treaty, and Truth. Truth is an ongoing discussion around truth-telling, talking about history. We need to acknowledge what happened so we can move into the future. So this is just a step in the right direction towards reconciliation, and it's not a silver bullet. This is about simply recognising the challenges and the fact that when we involve Aboriginal people and the issues that affect them and give them a voice, it will obviously lead to better outcomes.

Nicholas Henchcliffe

With a bit of poetic licence, let's rewrite the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Say it's a stormy night, and Little Red Riding Hood needs to find shelter inside her grandmother's house. However, as she tries to open the door, she finds it's locked. Fear not though. An old lady who admittedly acts and looks like a wolf comes up and offers her the key. Little Red Riding Hood accepts but, in reality, has been tricked by the wolf. From this one action, she has condemned herself to a (potentially short) life of suffering. This is a grim reality for many nations across the world. The storm, economic turmoil. The house, prosperity. The key, economic stabilisation and the wolf played brilliantly by the Bretton Woods Institutes. This essay will seek to critically examine the Bretton Woods institutions as tools for oppression by Neo-colonialist powers.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), jointly known as the Bretton Woods institutions, were created in 1944 and were initially conceived to rebuild the post-war economies of Europe. The IMF was primarily concerned with overseeing the international monetary system, ensuring exchange rate stability, and encouraging members to eliminate exchange restrictions that hindered trade. In a synergetic manner, The World Bank focused on providing global development and rebuilding failing economies. Since their inception, these institutions have undergone dramatic shifts in their individual missions. It is also important to note that the IMF is a far larger international institution and has somewhat consumed previous targets of the World Bank. Therefore, this essay will largely focus on the IMF and its neo-colonialist practices, however much of this analysis applies also to the World Bank.

Neo-colonialism in this article will specifically regard the extension of capitalism in which capitalist powers (the developed world and transnational corporations) continue the history of exploitation and oppression of economically less advanced nations. This exploitation and oppression are carried out through the use of economic, social, and political pressures from external powers. In this essay, the mechanism for which the IMF creates neo-colonialist control will be 3-fold. Firstly, through the structural power asymmetry that exists within the IMF. Secondly, through the guise of free choice in struggling nations accepting loans. Thirdly, through the conditions that are attached to loans that are offered to struggling nations. From these three mechanisms of neo-colonialist control, the IMF can enact policies that

objectively leaves countries in a state of dependency on their previous oppressors and, in some cases, in more dire economic circumstance than existed before IMF intervention.

To gain a nuanced perspective of the IMF as a tool for neo-colonialist oppression, an examination of the incentives that nations who accept IMF loans are required. Countries who need assistance do so for primarily two reasons. Firstly, they are experiencing financial and economic turmoil. For example, Mexico defaulted on their loans in 1982 and required IMF assistance. Secondly, they might seek to develop their nation and require capital to kickstart their growth, requiring assistance in creating markets that maximise economic efficiency and potential output. These nations are geographically concentrated in Low-Income countries, specifically in Asia, Africa, and South America. However, this isn't always the case, for example, in the European sovereign debt crisis of the early 2010s. These nations sign onto the IMF in hopes that one day if they require financial assistance, they will receive it.

The IMF's first mechanism to impose neo-colonialism is the massive power imbalance in voting for IMF policies and missions. The IMF operates on a system where voting power is proportional to the amount of money that is contributed to the IMF fund, which is, in turn, used to fund nations seeking assistance. This practically looks like the United States contributing \$118 billion in 2022 and controlling 16% of the voting share in the IMF. This 16% practically allows the US to veto any IMF policy that goes against their national interests. The same is true for other previous colonial powers such as Japan, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, who all hold enormous voting shares in the IMF. On the contrary, states like Eritrea have just a third of 1% of the voting rights in the IMF and therefore hold essentially zero influence over policies and decisions which affect themselves and their neighbours. The issues with this system are twofold. Firstly, it is entirely undemocratic and goes against the idea of a global community that collectively wishes for a better global economy. At the point where some nations' interest is placed above that of other countries, the IMF stopped serving the globe and all its citizens and instead became a puppet of the West. Secondly, it perpetuates a power asymmetry. Eritrea and its African neighbours can never hope to match the financial contributions made by the United States. Consequently, they will always be beholden to the interests of foreign powers, particularly ones that have historically acted as their oppressors and whom they fought so hard to gain independence from.

The second mechanism by which the IMF imposes to perpetuate neo-colonialism is a false perception of nations having free choice in accepting loans. The IMF sidesteps much of the criticism levelled against it by highlighting the fact that IMF loans are an optional choice. However, this response lacks an enormous amount of

nuance. By definition, these states are failing economically, socially, and politically. These nations internally face tremendous dissent from their populations for the poor economic conditions and are required to take meaningful steps towards tangibly improving the circumstances of their citizens. This means that they are likely to accept any form of foreign interventionism that, at least superficially, seems to create change. This is regardless of whether that policy objectively is beneficial for that nation. At the end of the day, if a choice had to be made between societal collapse and widespread suffering versus facing unfavourable loans at the hands of Western Powers - regrettably, nations are likely to choose the second. Free choice under duress is not free choice. Suppose I was drowning, and someone offered to throw me a lifebuoy only on the condition that I sign a contract. In that case, that contract has no moral or legal significance because it is fundamentally coercive. Similarly, these nations are coerced in the way that failure to accept these loans results in massive societal, political, and economic repercussions on that nation; hence, taking these loans is their only option. It's hardly a free choice.

By structurally favouring Western power and creating a near guarantee that nations accept loans, the IMF has perfectly positioned its leaders to exploit vulnerable countries seeking assistance. However, the IMF is so far missing a mechanism to enforce economic change which benefits the West. However, this regrettably does exist, and that mechanism is by far the largest perpetrator of neo-colonialism. When the IMF offers a loan to a nation, they do so with conditions attached. These are hence called conditional loans. The conditions attached to these loans have historically been symmetrical across all nations that accept loans and require a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to be undertaken. SAPs, regardless of a nation's unique situation, can be summarised as the following broad adjustments: decreased government spending, widespread privatisation of government services, the liberalisation of markets, the devaluation of a nation's currency and the lifting of tariffs and import bans. Finally, in some cases, SAPs dictate lowering the minimum wage and cutting social welfare services. An examination of each of these SAPs and their impacts reveals an alarming schism between goal and outcome. Privatising unprofitable and inefficient government services makes sense on paper; however, many government services are unprotectable, for example, healthcare and education. When these services are given over to the private sector, foreign companies cut accessibility in remote and poorer areas in favour of raw profit. Additionally, these nations have limited levels of local capital, and so companies that secure these government services tend to be transnational corporations that ultimately exploit profit out of struggling nations' economies and send that profit overseas. Further, removing tariffs and import bans results in the wide-scale destruction of budding new industries in these developing nations. For example, removing tariffs on cashews in Mozambique led to nearly a third of all cashew farms being shut down due to an inability to compete in the international



cashew market. For these developing nations or nations undergoing financial turmoil to ever hope to end their dependency, they require vital domestic industries. The statistical truth of the failings of the IMF in creating change is enormous. Before 2000, not a single African nation was able to claim economic success due to the World Bank. Instead, 28 African nations from Ghana to Uganda were in a state of complete financial dependency or, in Ghana's case, a 15% reduction in the standard of living to poor implementation of SAPs. This position is further supported by Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel prize winner and outspoken critic of the Brenton Woods institutes. He claims that the World Bank, up until 2000, had not tangibly increased the conditions for everyday citizens in developing nations.

Until this point, the practices undertaken by the IMF can be viewed as ineffective and inefficient; however, I would argue that they are designed to be this way. The point when dominant colonial powers run the IMF is the point that they continue to seek to exploit their former colonies through the process of neo-colonialism. The proof of exploitation is obvious. These nations face structural barriers within the IMF that they will never be able to overcome the wishes of the West. They will never be able to hold the IMF and World Bank accountable because these loans are seen as a free choice instead of coerced. They will always be the victims of poor economic policy and planning by the IMF and World Bank. But importantly, these failings directly benefit the West and Western States because the SAPs dictate that labour is cheap, resources are more affordable, and foreign trade is encouraged. This means the US can fulfil its lithium and cobalt reliance on nations now selling these resources at incredibly low prices. It means that France can move its textile products from China to African countries with comparatively cheaper workforces. It means that historical oppressors can continue to exploit the population of less economically developed nations and nations experiencing financial turmoil. Hence it doesn't seem that wild of a conclusion to suggest that from the beginning, the IMF's inception has always been about keeping the rich, rich and the poor, poor. All of this must be caveated by saying that the IMF has made tremendous leaps towards greater governance equality and accountability for poor policy decisions in the last couple of decades. While that is relieving for future participants in IMF loans, it does not excuse them from public scrutiny of previous practices. To that degree, in the future, I hope there is much more focus put on international bodies that are not democratically elected and have perverse incentives under the guise of aid.

Max Thomas

Few would disagree that human beings are innately sympathetic creatures. Whether it is some evolutionary biological impulse or by the design of an intelligent creator, we naturally feel sorry for the homeless man on the footpath, those suffering from epidemics and poverty abroad, or our neighbour who has just lost their partner to cancer. This impulse draws humans to charity under the pretence of a moral obligation, whatever that might mean. Longtermism makes a radically rational claim: not only do these moral obligations hold across space, but time.

We are all privy to the words of school climate activists, rightly or wrongly, participating in strike action for the ‘sake of our grandchildren’. Our sports teams talk of achievements that will be heralded 200 years down the track. Politicians frequently discuss how investment in health or education will help generations to come. The ways in which this manifests in the public policy sphere is largely unplanned; crucial questions still remain. What rights should we afford future generations if any at all? Do governments owe obligations to the voters who elected them, or should human civilisation be prioritised over the long term, even if this is fundamentally anti-democratic? Given the enormous uncertainty of the long-term effects of public policy, what should governments do now? These are all questions that governments of both sides of the political aisle have failed to answer. Philosophers, characteristically, continue to disagree. However, if we are to take action on future existential risks such as climate change, future pandemics, and nuclear conflict, these questions need answers. The longtermism movement sets out to answer them.

It is first worth establishing where the notion of longtermism originated before its merits and limitations are considered. The Effective Altruism philosophical movement, which emerged in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, is based on the following system of deductive logic:

**P<sub>1</sub>:** Suffering, particularly of humans, is morally egregious.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** If you can prevent the suffering of others, it is morally wrong not to do so.

**P<sub>3</sub>:** Certain forms of charity are far more effective than others; their success is clearly quantifiable, easily tractable with more financial backing, and some causes are more neglected than others.

**P4:** By donating to effective charities, you can prevent suffering.

**C:** Therefore, donating to effective charities is the only moral decision.

It is worth noting that several of premises 1-4 continued to be debated, including within the Effective Altruism community itself. For instance, the movement has recently directed a large proportion of its funding to animal rights campaigns, which takes issue with P1. Although fairly new, the movement, indirectly headed by Australian ethicist Professor Peter Singer of Princeton University, has made large swaths of progress. They have raised \$46 billion USD from individual donations, including a large number of billionaires who have taken the 'giving what we can' pledge – to donate some, if not all of their wealth upon their passing, and 10% of their annual income before that.

A large proportion of Effective Altruism funding goes into policy research and consultancy work quantifying the relative 'effectiveness' of different charities. Other funds have been distributed to initiatives including the Against Malaria Foundation, where the EA community raised enough money to distribute 70 million bed nets across regions of Africa worst hit by malaria. Direct cash transfers to those living in poverty have exceeded \$100 million USD, and Effective Altruists working within government policy advisory continue to be the drivers of expanding foreign aid budgets. How exactly does this tie into longtermism? The first premise of Effective Altruism, that the suffering, particularly of humans, is morally egregious, has been contested. Which suffering should we deem worse in order to direct the most funds? Are all human lives equal? Suppose initiatives from funds distributed cannot be successfully quantified; should they be deemed 'effective' enough for a philosophical charitable movement purportedly based on using evidence to guide charity? A considerable faction of Effective Altruists assert that the movement should direct a large proportion of their funding into both research that looks into the long-term effects of actions taken today. The implication of that research is to fund initiatives now that could potentially save millions of lives, even if that is thousands of years down the track.

In his magnum opus *What We Owe the Future* philosopher William MacAskill sets out to answer some of these questions. He begins with a startling reality: approximately 100 billion humans have lived on earth at some stage in the past, but the human species is still in its infancy. The average lifespan of a mammalian species is between one and two million years, which suggests that trillions of human lives will occur at some stage in the future (assuming the nuclear apocalypse or genetically engineered bioweapons are not deployed first). This forms the first deductive premise of longtermist thought:

**P<sub>1</sub>:** The number of people living at some point in the future could be huge.

That is a fairly uncontroversial claim, I think. MacAskill goes on to make two more central claims, which are slightly more contested.

**P<sub>2</sub>:** Future people count.

**P<sub>3</sub>:** We can make their lives better by acting now.

At face value, these again seem uncontroversial. However, dig a little deeper, and they become pretty contested claims. The issue with P<sub>2</sub> is that of opportunity cost. That is the concept that we forgo the next best alternative when making an economic choice that involves scarcity. In this context, the premise probes, 'what charitable causes are not worthy of the funding they currently receive, such that philanthropic funds should be redistributed in ways that may or may not help people that do not yet exist?' This is a damn hard sell in a few ways. Firstly, there is the moral reckoning of convincing someone that people in the future matter equally to those currently alive. This probes a more profound question: should human rights even be afforded to people that may be born hundreds of years into the future? I do not refer to *rights* in the legal or constitutional sense, but a moral right; should we consider their interests if they conflict with our own? I am yet to find an argument that convinces me otherwise. People frequently object that "*I'll never see or meet these people*" or assert that "*rights only exist when someone is living*". These counterarguments reveal chronocentric intuitions, but the better response is to question *which dimensions* should we value. If I donate to World Vision, I will likely never see the recipient who may live in sub-Saharan Africa. I hold that, much like space, human rights hold across time. Secondly, there is a deeply human intuition for people to care about issues in their own communities and conception of the world. That is why people tend to donate to local charities at disproportionately higher rates than ones where they never see the impact of their donated dollar, even if it goes further in reducing more suffering. Again, this is perhaps a natural evolutionary impulse, but given that humans have the ability to reason, is not necessarily an impulse that we should value. Thirdly, there's significant intersectionality between initiatives that help people in the present day and the people of the future (for instance, in development aid for low-income countries). Perhaps the trade off is not as severe as it seems.

### **Reducing global catastrophic risk**

If we buy MacAskill's first two premises, that there will be lots of people in the future, and that they matter, we now have the challenge of acting on it in political and philanthropic circles. People are sceptical about admitting that we should care

about people into the long-term future because of a fear of addressing P<sub>3</sub>. That is, trying to better civilisation thousands of years away is seemingly impossible to measure, and a difficult thing to do. Fortunately, we can look to the lessons of history for some help. 'Existential risks', at least as they are spoken about within Effective Altruism circles, refer to huge catastrophic events from which civilisation could never recover.

For one thing, the greatest threats to civilisation in the past have been the potential for a nuclear apocalypse or a global biological risk (cough cough... a pandemic. Pun intended). I do not claim to know anything about biological risks – I do not even study biology at school – but I am sure that pandemic preparedness is an effective way to safeguard against the future. In the post-COVID world, Bill Gates' 2015 TED talk entitled *The next outbreak? We're not ready*, which urged governments and philanthropists to invest in pandemic preparedness measures, certainly aged well:

*"If anything kills over 10-million people in the next few decades, it's most likely to be a highly infectious virus rather than a war. Not missiles, but microbes. Part of the reason for this is that we've invested a huge amount in nuclear deterrents. But we've actually invested very little in a system to stop an epidemic".*

In writing for *The Guardian*, Toby Ord outlined the reasons why now, more than ever, safeguarding against future pandemics is the best way to follow the principles of longtermism. Due to high-density living, long-distance transport and even the previously science-fiction thought of deadly bioengineering, we live in a time where catastrophic biological risks are undoubtedly high. Discussions of longtermism can therefore factor into the political debate around the regulation of medicine (for instance, preventing overprescribing of antibiotics, which causes antimicrobial resistance), investing in resources to better deal with future pandemics, and mass vaccination efforts in low-income countries.

Perhaps it was more front-of-mind in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century than in the present day, but the chance of a nuclear war occurring in the next thousand years still exists, even if that chance is low. There are several schools of thought within nuclear proliferation discussions.

The first is that of mutually assured destruction: if all global superpowers hold these weapons, retaliatory strikes offer a disincentive for them to be launched in the first place. Again, I am not an expert, but am finding this argument progressively harder to buy. Firstly, the ability for small- and medium-sized nations to produce these weapons is becoming easier as their access to technology increases. North Korea, where half of the nation's 24 million people live in poverty, already have hundreds of nuclear

warheads. With Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (more commonly known as the Iran Nuclear Deal), Iran is likely on the same path. The implication of this point is twofold. Firstly, as the number of nuclear weapons increases in countries with comparatively lower technology safeguards, the chance of releasing one of these weapons (or having a 'misfire') increases. The best example of this was on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1983, when the Soviet Union's nuclear early-warning system malfunctioned, and indicated that an intercontinental ballistic missile had been launched from the United States. Stanislav Petrov, an on-duty officer had hesitations, believing the reports to be a false alarm, and disobeying Soviet protocol which would have required him to alert higher officers of the non-existent launch, leading to a counterstrike and nuclear conflict with the west. I conclude that as small/medium states increase their nuclear warhead capacity, the chances of a similar scenario ensuing, even if the risk is unimaginably tiny, still increase.

The second reason mutually assured destruction seems less likely comes with the rise in artificial intelligence. If the 'alignment problem' (see Sidhak Dhingra's article) is not sufficiently solved soon and this technology falls into the wrong hands, the chance of a nuclear conflict increases. This could occur if a misaligned artificial general intelligence program has some set goal, and sees the destruction of humanity as a necessary instrumental goal. To demonstrate this risk, allow me to explain a fairly common example. Suppose someone tells an AGI to make the most paper clips it possibly can. Given that humans control steel production (or plastic factories), the AGI could potentially see humans as something that must be overcome in order to produce the most paperclips. Obviously, this means that developers of this technology must establish regulatory frameworks which teach AGI models that the destruction of humanity in order to maximise paperclip production is a dangerous idea. In any case, AGI and misalignment is its own existential risk that requires attention. The trend of net-decreasing nuclear warhead numbers is promising, but with Vladimir Putin refusing to rule out the nuclear button in the Ukraine conflict until there are no more warheads left, I would argue that it is an existential risk still worth our attention. It is, therefore, incumbent on those that subscribe to longtermism to work towards processes of denuclearisation.

In any case, there are plenty of ways in which politicians and regulators can make active decisions in the present day to assist future generations, primarily through attempting to minimise the likelihood of catastrophic existential risks.

### **Criticisms**

There is, I think, an obvious objection to be made to everything I've just said, and longtermism generally. That is, how on earth can we speculate on how our actions in the present day are going to impact people hundreds, if not thousands of years into

the future? Surely chaos theory and the limits of forecasting render these predictions obsolete? To that, I would say you are probably right but only to a certain degree. The first thing to note is that the reliability of forecasting models is inversely proportional to time (in other words, we can have higher confidence in policy forecast models if they are over a shorter period). This means that we may not know what enacting a pandemic prevention policy could mean for people living in the year 5000C.E., but I am reasonably confident it would benefit those living, say, in 2100. Secondly, as our ability to harvest and analyse data increases with more advanced artificial intelligence, our ability to forecast long-term goals with higher confidence will increase. Thirdly, I'd posit something fairly intuitive – we have no choice but to **try**. A world in which we plan for the future of humanity, even if we are not entirely sure of how these plans will eventuate, is better than a world in which no consideration is given to long-term priorities.

### **Final thoughts**

Ultimately, it is incumbent on politicians to consider policies that do not assist them for the next election cycle but for people of decades, centuries, and millennia to come. How we attain the political capital to get there is a question for another day. In any case, we are at a turning point in history. Modern technologies raise a myriad of modern philosophical and political questions. Longtermism sets out to answer them for the sake of descendants that, depending on our actions today, may not ever exist.

**About the interviewee**

Steven was first elected to State Parliament in 2010, became Leader of the South Australian Liberal Party in 2013 and Premier of South Australia in 2018. His time as Premier was marked by his management of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a focus on transforming the South Australian economy through new industries such as space, cyber technology, and entrepreneurship. He is the Member for Dunstan, which encompasses Prince Alfred College.

This interview took place at Mr Marshall’s electorate office in Norwood.

**Interview**

I arrived at Mr Marshall’s electorate office ten minutes ahead of our scheduled meeting. Warmly greeted with a firm handshake, he welcomes me into a small meeting room adjacent to the office reception.

We discuss a wide range of topics in the course of just over an hour, beginning with his childhood experiences and what led him to becoming a politician. He tells me his dad worked in manufacturing which gave him early experiences of the importance of small business. “I was fortunate to work in a range of businesses before entering politics, big and small, including Marshall’s furniture which was my family’s manufacturing business.” He explains to me he got his optimism and passion for the State from these early experiences. “I’m up at 5:15am every morning, why wouldn’t you want to be; this is the best place in the world to live”. He explains to me his concept of the Great Australian Dream, where opportunity in emerging industries (something he aimed to pursue during his premiership with the establishment of the Lot Fourteen precinct) leads to a better life. After discussing his pursuit of an MBA at Durham University in the UK, Steven explains that “The Liberal Party’s emphasis on creating the conditions for business to thrive, generating opportunity and rewarding effort made it a natural fit for me”. “I was never a member of a political party as a child, neither were my parents” he says. “I just got tired of watching Labor governments making very poor decisions that resulted in South Australia lagging further and further behind the rest of the country. In my lifetime, Adelaide has gone from being the third largest city in Australia to a distant fifth. People go where the opportunities are best, and Labor’s policies were killing opportunity in South Australia”.



Steven speaks fondly of his early days in the State Parliament; indeed, he had a quick path of only three years between being elected and becoming Liberal leader. “Just a year after becoming leader, we won 53% of the two-party preferred vote [in 2014, which] helped galvanise the party behind me”. We discuss the ways in which internal party disputes were managed during this period. “I believe encouraging all my colleagues to contribute to policy development and always treating their suggestions respectfully helped keep a united team”. He doesn’t believe the Liberal Party are particularly factionalised; “internal disputes are always best handled respectfully”, but even then “you don’t want your friends to see eye-to-eye on you with everything”. One such was the *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2021*, which removed abortion from the South Australian criminal code and made it a lawful medical procedure. “We put that to a conscience vote. In the party room meeting I said, ‘I have my opinion, you’re entitled to yours’ ”.

We discuss his time as Premier next, and go over his record. “There are many achievements that I’m pleased my government were able to deliver – the fastest growing economy in Australia, a record unemployment rate in Australia, better credit rating than Victoria, positive net interstate migration for the first time in generations, and of course keeping South Australians safe during the COVID-19 pandemic”. His government’s decision to move Year 7 students to high school was also something he is proud of. “Julia Gillard launched the new national curriculum which State Labor did nothing about. By the time students reach Year 7 they are ready for smaller, more specialised classes”. He notes that his government’s \$1.4 billion education investment into infrastructure to make the transition was “incredibly fast”. He tells me he’s not interested in writing the story of his own legacy; “that’s for other people to decide”. He does, however, believe that it takes five to ten years before a judgement can be made about a government’s performance, and says that his focus on “space, cyber, reopening the Repat, and lowering energy/water prices” will reflect favourably upon his ministry in the years ahead. He’s also proud of his economic record, noting he “removed payroll tax for small business, reduced land tax, and decreased costs for small businesses. Taxes too high lead to negative externalities” he tells me, which is why he ideologically believes in “small government and low taxes.”

COVID-19 management was arguably the most prominent feature of his premiership, where “the opinions the entire party room and cabinet” were considered, not just the ‘team of four’ (Steven Marshall, Stephen Wade, Nicola Spurrier, and Grant Stevens). Cabinet during this time “met at least twice a week. At one point it was even up to five times a week”. We discuss the formation of National Cabinet. “In March 2020 at the COAG [Council of Australian Governments] meeting, we decided it was an unwieldy construct for what we were about to face. We needed to meet on a more regular basis too.” I ask if he ever butted heads with other premiers. “We were all very respectful and sometimes had divergent approaches”. I probe him on his relationship with former Prime Minister Scott Morrison, noting a number of

senior Liberals have referred to him as a “complete psycho”, “self-serving bully”, and “unfit for office”. He doesn’t take the bait. “I worked productively with both Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison – which is precisely what I promised to do at the 2018 state election no matter who was elected to run the country. I never believed in creating fake fights with Canberra for political gain”. The implications of his approach to managing the pandemic meant that schoolchildren had comparatively “very few days of online schooling” and that there were “limited business failures”. He notes that limiting online school was also economically beneficial insofar as parents did not have to stay home to supervise their children. I ask him about the division of powers between the state and federal government, which he says was not problematic. “The Commonwealth offered supplementary payments”, and the State government worked cohesively with other states, territories, and the Commonwealth. I ask about the personal impacts of this stressful period. “I can honestly say that I enjoyed every moment of being Premier of South Australia. The often very considerable stress was always balanced by the immense privilege I felt at being entrusted to lead our state.”

Next up in our discussion is how external factors influenced his premiership. I begin by asking about his relationship with the press. He quotes former UK Conservative MP Enoch Powell, “A politician complaining about the media is like a sailor complaining about the sea.” In fact, Steven notes that he had a “professional working relationship with all media outlets. Australia has an adversarial political system and hence there’s nothing new or particularly significant about a Government being at odds with different sections of the media at different times.” I ask about lobbying too, which Steven notes is “part and parcel of politics in Australia – just look at the actions of the Ambulance Employees Association in the lead up to the last state election”. He argues that lobbying is not always a bad thing; “I’m interested in hearing what people have to say and I’m open to new ideas.”

Asked about a particular politician in history which has inspired him, Steven says he has none. He does note that former Prime Minister John Howard, who is a “generous, thoughtful mentor” did have an influence on his career, as did two former New Zealand Prime Ministers, Sir John Key and Bill English. He references the works of utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill in shaping his political intuitions. “I’m a political pragmatist”, he says. “I believe in creating the broadest level of opportunity to generate the greatest level of prosperity for the largest number of people. There’s no doubt that’s the best foundation for a successful, harmonious society.”

Cautiously, move onto the topic of the 2022 election loss. He points to a number of factors. “Having thoroughly prepared South Australia for the challenge of getting back to normal in the face of the Delta variant of COVID-19, the new Omicron variant swept through the world at precisely the wrong moment for my government.” He also credits the significant campaign launched against him by the ambulance union. On that, he believes that his record with negotiating with unions, was positive. “We had constructive enterprise bargaining agreements” he tells me. He insists that he has “no

regrets” from his time as Premier, and the Liberal Party “needs to back David Speirs, work as a team, and expose the many failings of yet another mediocre State Labor Government” if they want to win in 2026.

By this point I was out of questions. I put the cap back on the blue pen he let me borrow. I knew I should have prepared more questions. What followed was perhaps the best part of our discussion. Leaning back in my chair, I no longer played the role of an inexperienced interviewer, but someone being asked questions in return; him a learned statesman, and me an inexperienced student. He asks me where my personal political leanings lie. “More left-wing than you, for sure.” We disagree on a few points. “I’m of the view that a constitutional monarchy is unequivocally the best system of government” he tells me. I push back. “Surely it’s an archaic and outdated system; why is some family on the other side of the world symbolically governing our country?” He pushes back, arguing that there’s no viable platform someone could run on to become what he terms ‘President’. Not yet convinced, we discuss this for some time, before he notes that the Republican movement in Australia are “all over the place” and are still confused about their model for what a presidency may look like. We discuss sport for a while. The Adelaide International tournament had recently be held, and he’s big on sport, and evidently proud of the redevelopments of Memorial Drive and Coopers Soccer stadium. “That allowed us to secure matches for the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup”, and now “international tennis stars from all over the world are coming to our state”. “Before the redevelopment, we had no undercover training area for our South Australian tennis players, so during winter they all had to fly to Melbourne”.

We talk about the future at some length, both what we have planned, and what we think the world will look like. “We had a 10-year growth state strategy with nine areas of development” he tells me, including the industries of defence, space, agribusiness and attracting more international students. He tells me that he wants the Malinauskas Labor government to be a successful one, for the greater good of South Australia. “It’s too early to judge Malinauskas yet”, and “I don’t want to argue against him” he tells me. “There’s nothing worse than a former Premier hanging around commenting about the decisions of the current government.” He’s interested about my plans for the future, and we discuss universities to some length. “In many ways a law degree is becoming the new arts degree” he says. “It’s a foundation for so many different areas.” We discuss the potential merger of the University of Adelaide and his alma mater UniSA. “Look at Cambridge, Harvard, Oxford, ANU. The best universities are tiny, and they foster competition. Competitive federalism is the basis of our nation.” He makes the analogy to different states taking different approaches and having different ideas for the ways they managed the pandemic, which improved the national response. He tells me he’s unsure what he intends to do after leaving parliament at the conclusion of his term, which ends in 2026.

We finish with a quick photo outside his office, as several passersby offer their cordial greetings to the former Premier. The chapters of history of South Australia's 46<sup>th</sup> premier are yet to be written; time will tell if they treat him kindly.

Kyan Jenkins

There is a core foundational belief that is broadly held by our society which has been used as both a catalyst for ensuing logic and an excuse to carry out hugely consequential projects without question, simply because it is not able to be proven to be true or untrue in any real way. That belief is that humans have an innate nature or essence to them, and that this nature is one of greed and selfishness. As a result, the notion that humanity must exist in a constant state of competition and that there is no other way has been parroted for centuries. This is quite upsetting really, because it suggests that at the end of the day when push comes to shove most of us will be forced to choose ourselves over others or suffer in our altruism. Firstly, I will discuss the sources which establish this dominant narrative. Then we will examine some historical evidence of societies being organised via cooperative means. Then I will critically reassess the foundation of this narrative so that we have a comprehensive understanding of the issues with this narrative and can critically analyse society with our mind made up.

Before moving any further it is important that we properly establish an understanding of the main developments concerning our understanding of human nature. There are two opposing views which dominate the heterodox discussion of this question. Thomas Hobbes understood it to be that humans do not have any patterned inequality between each other, but that there still exists some qualities which are not equal between any given person. According to Hobbes this puts society into a broad state of tension, where everyone constantly fears loss. Hobbes suggests that the solution to this constant state of social tension and self-interest could only be solved by the granting of absolute power to an individual who from thereon controls the state. This concession of power by citizens in exchange for social security is known as social contract theory. Jean-Jacques Rousseau challenged Hobbes' understanding of human nature by suggesting that humans were instead perfectly capable of cooperating to achieve collective goals in prehistoric times, but that this ability is lost in scale as humans become more dependent on the actions of each other self-interested individual, leading to the need for a state to manage the actions of society. These two theories share a major common flaw, which is that they are complete thought experiments and were not conceived using any historical or empirical evidence. We should not necessarily critique either of these two philosophers for thinking (especially because comprehensive data collection was still largely non-existent), but we have the archaeological and historical understanding now that there

are many examples in different pre-colonial and indigenous societies of a great number of citizens coming together.

One example of large-scale cooperative communities operating out of their own organisation includes the Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacán, a city which saw mass urban planning by neighbourhoods who, following the displacement of surrounding populations due to volcanic eruptions, housed more than 100,000 people. This heavy influx saw a major redesign of the cities housing, with cooperative action creating large scale social housing neighbourhoods. This construction coincided with the movement away from a more centralised form of Teotihuacán government to a decentralised system of organisation. The Haudenosaunee people of what is now the United States lived in housing which had multiple dozens of inhabitants, usually organised by mothers, and operating in communal production with other houses in the community. Another example is the city of Tlaxcala which operated with no state apparatus other than a council of up to 200 representatives who debated and planned organisation. Let us now truly understand the first thesis of this article. In the introduction I discuss how the dominant narrative of human nature implies we will be forced to choose ourselves over others or suffer every time we engage in selflessness. Contrary, it has been demonstrated repeatedly in history that there are numerous ways in order to mutually benefit through cooperation in order to achieve ends which are otherwise not possible through individualistic means.

It would be completely reasonable to be sceptical thus far despite what I hope to have been some compelling examples. It would appear that the world we live in is fundamentally structured around the aggressive human desire to compete, however what needs to be recognised is that modern society has not come about as a teleological result of some type of human nature but that there have been fundamental choices by individuals, organisations and nations along the course of human history, particularly since the industrial revolution which have required humans to compete in order to survive or in some cases thrive. I am not interested in rebutting modern capitalism within this essay, but it is simply necessary to acknowledge that the current economic structure exists because of the historical laws and political structure which have compelled it to, and it is us who are working within and behaving according to that structure. After all, if one intends to prove that there is an innate human nature of competitiveness then they must be able to sufficiently prove this was the case independent of exogenous variables such as our current legal, political and economic structure. The problem is for the Hobbesians, Rousseauians, and Social Darwinists (soon to be discussed) is that there is simply insufficient evidence that this nature of competition is historically consistent preceding the industrial revolution.

Let's recall the sources of the dominant narrative of competition as we have discussed the two major thinkers of Hobbes and Rousseau, as well as from another response to the question of human nature called Social Darwinism. Social Darwinism analogises the theory of natural selection (in a very unscientific way) to imply that humankind is in a constant historical fight to the death and that those who are "fittest" prevail in the long term. The issue with these three explanations on human behaviour is that firstly, as we have discussed, these theories are so lacking in their concrete evidence (anthropological, palaeontological, historical, whichever you please) that they simply wouldn't pass a rigorous peer review in today's academia. They are based on thought experiments and assumptions, and conveniently were dominating the public debate at a very convenient time when colonial regimes needed justification for their conquering of the lands. Social Darwinism was explicitly the ideological backing for so much of the scientific racism used to justify the subjugation of native and indigenous populations, and the suggested necessity of the sovereign state, theorised by Hobbes and Rousseau, foregrounded the ability to dismiss any other form of social organisation that colonisers encountered as savage and inefficient. This is the way in which the dominant social narrative that humans are innately competitive or selfish has come from, and since the development of modern capitalism, which was in its primordial stage at this time, it has maintained theoretical hegemony. This is the exact type of epistemological mechanism that philosophers like Michel Foucault explain when they discuss knowledge power reproduction. The existing powers at some time (European governments), commissioned, approved and platformed research and theories which justified the exercising of their power in order to further continue this feedback loop, producing and reproducing the social knowledge of our own spirit.

The truth is that the question of whether human nature exists was most likely born at exactly this paradigm shift, no, paradigm creation when there was demand for an answer by the governments of the world. There is no evidence of large scale discussion on the question of human nature long before this, probably because it was intuitive to these past societies that the goal of humanity is to continually survive and so that is what they did. I do not contest that we live in a society where we must compete to survive, and I do not intend to answer in this essay whether human cooperation or human competition is the ideal strategy for us (though this should now be the ultimate question), but I hope you are now convinced that the notion of some historically consistent human nature core to us which causes us to compete, to be selfish to be greedy is an artificial creation which severely lacks in any empirical sense.

**About the interviewee**

Anthony Grayling is the Founder and Principal of the New College of the Humanities at Northeastern University, London, and its Professor of Philosophy. He is also a Supernumerary Fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford. Among his many books are *The God Argument*, *Democracy and Its Crisis*, *The History of Philosophy*, *The Good State* and *The Frontiers of Knowledge*. He has been a regular contributor to *The Times*, *Financial Times*, *Independent on Sunday*, *The Economist*, *New Statesman*, *Prospect*, *New European*, and *The Guardian*. He has appeared on to BBC Radios 4, 3 and the World Service, BBC2 *Newsnight*, and *CNN News*. He has twice been a judge of the Man Booker Prize, and has served as the Chair of the judging panel. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a Vice President of Humanists UK, and a Patron of Dignity in Dying.

This interview occurred for an hour over Zoom, with Prof. Grayling speaking to the journal from his Paris condo.

***Can you tell us about your upbringing and what led you to become a professional philosopher?***

I was brought up in Africa, in what is now Zambia and Malawi. My parents are Poms, but my dad was working abroad in Africa, so I spent my childhood there, right into my teens. The part of Africa we were in had no television – it was pretty remote, first on the Congo border then in east Africa – so we were thrown onto our own resources, and the resource I found most amenable was reading. I would page through the big twelve-volume encyclopaedia we had at home, trying to make sense of the articles in it – not least, the articles about two of the magnificently bearded figures pictured in it, Plato and Aristotle; and others. When I was about 12 I managed to get hold of some of Plato's dialogues. The first I read was the *Charmides*, which was a very accessible dialogue; if a 12-year-old could understand it, anybody can. I was blown away by the discussion in it. It's aporetic, meaning it doesn't reach a conclusion, but on the way there are many interesting ideas and insights. I thought to myself, if these great iconic figures of our civilisation dedicated themselves to this enterprise, I'm going to do likewise. It was a lucky choice because I found out soon afterwards that when you get an interest in philosophy, it's an invitation and an inducement to be interested in absolutely everything: history, science, literature, politics, everything –



because philosophy is an all-embracing enterprise. Once you're attracted to it, you can't give it up.

***Speaking of these 'bearded figures', you've often noted in the biographical sections of your books, that you believe philosophy should take an active, useful role in society. So why do people shy away from its study, and what practical role do you see philosophy having in public discourse today?***

Let me answer the second part of the question first, about the practical role. If you look at the history of philosophy, recalling that the word 'philosophy' (although *literally* meaning 'love of wisdom') denotes enquiry; rational, disciplined, thorough-going enquiry. It used to mean enquiry into everything and anything; all forms of enquiry into any subject matter were philosophy. Then in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries those philosophers who were interested in questions about physical world, the structure, and properties of the material universe, found ways of asking and answering their questions which turned out to be wonderfully productive. It was this that gave birth to the natural sciences. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the same thing happened with the social sciences. Philosophy is an amazingly productive enterprise; in giving birth to the sciences it has been transformative of our world. But also, it's an enquiry into what it is to be human, how we should live together in society, how we should structure our society (constitutionally and politically, in order to improve and potentiate the possibilities of good lives for individuals). The great political theories, good and bad, have come out of philosophy. Today, the practical application of philosophy is in the interrogation of our lives, our societies, and our world, and trying to demonstrate to people – something which is certainly of great importance to me – that the ethical, that is, the great questions about value, and how we should live, and what really matters in our world, is predicated on the epistemological – that's to say, on what we know and how we know it. To be well informed, with a broad horizon of view about our world, to understand the history of how things developed in it, is important in thinking about how we should live. It's not just simply a question of asking whether philosophy is one among a number of other things that have practical application. Philosophy is fundamental because it is about the deepest and broadest questions we can ask ourselves.

***You've been involved in a number of pursuits outside academic philosophy. How do you see philosophy engaging with other disciplines, such as literature and the arts, and what role do you see interdisciplinary collaboration playing in advancing our understanding of the world and of humanity?***

Consider the fact that history and the life of society are driven by ideas. Ideas are the cogs of the machine that drives what happens in history and society. And then note that ideas are the business of the philosopher. Society has a continuous conversation with itself about anything and everything that matters to it; to discuss

ideas, examine them, bring to bear conversations about ideas that have been important throughout history – this is very important. The point is not to tell people what to do and think, but to contribute something of real value to the human enterprise of trying to make sense of things.

***You've spoken widely on the idea of Humanism, and the notion that it can provide a powerful, practical alternative to religious ideology. What exactly is Humanism?***

Humanism is a non-religious ethical outlook that is premised on the idea that how we treat one another and how we think about our own lives should be based on a generous and sympathetic attitude towards other people. It's a challenge to try to think through how best to live, which requires identifying what one's own individual talents and interests are, and – in light of them – what it would be genuinely worthwhile to do with one's life. You may have seen, because I frequently iterate this point, that there are three 'isms' in play here: atheism, secularism, humanism. They are naturally connected but not *necessarily* connected. For example, there are religious secularists – people who believe the secularist principle that religious organisations should take their turn in the queue when it comes to public policy matters. The atheism debate is a debate between theists and atheists about what exists or doesn't exist. Theists think there are supernatural beings or agencies, and atheists don't play that game. By the way, the word 'atheist' is a theist's word – it's like stamp-collectors calling people who don't collect stamps 'a-stamp-collectors'. Humanism accepts first that there are no supernatural agencies – no gods and goddesses – and secondly that people who have a belief in the supernatural have no more right, though equally no less right, to have their say in the public square. For the humanist the questions of ethics – about how we live, what sort of people we are and how we treat others – really does become *our* responsibility. By the way, a very important point for me is that ethics and morals are not the same. You can tell this by looking at the etymology of the terms. 'Ethics' comes from an ancient Greek word 'ethos', which means 'character'. Therefore, the ethical question is, 'what should my character be?', 'what should the character of society be?' Morality is about things like telling the truth, keeping faith, respecting promises, and obligations to others, and so on. Moralities change over time and differ from one society to another. In our Western societies, homosexuality is acceptable, and in other more traditional religious-based societies it's not; you see different moral views there. The *ethical* question, which is the challenge that Socrates put to his fellow Athenians back in the classical period was 'how should one live?' and 'what sort of person should one be?' One's morals will naturally flow from one's ethics – but they are not the same, and one's ethics might put one in opposition to the prevailing morality of one's society at times.

***Given that religion has been engrained in our societies for thousands of years, how should atheists and humanists go about spreading alternative messages about how one should live?***

By pushing the humanist message wherever and however one can. When the opportunity arises to discuss the question of whether religious beliefs are rational, then one should accept the challenge and show that they aren't.

Here's a really significant point that touches on a key philosophical matter: In debates between people who have a religious outlook and people who don't, the concepts of knowledge, truth and proof are centrally in play. Theists claim that "you can't know there are no gods" and "you can't prove there are no gods", as if a difficulty of this kind makes it ok to believe that there *are* gods. That is nonsense and is a misunderstanding of the nature of knowledge and proof, as follows: Outside the formal systems of mathematics and logic, there is no certainty. The concept of truth applicable in maths and logic is not the same as the concept of truth in our thinking about the world of empirical experience. For example, in contingent empirical cases, such as physics, cosmology or biology, nobody claims to know anything with absolute 100% certainty in the same way as they know something in mathematics. Instead, the concept at work is that of *rational belief*. In particle physics, for example, a degree of assurance known as 'five-sigma' is sufficient to treat the outcome of experimental enquiry as a 'discovery'. Five-sigma is a degree of probability in which there is only a 1/3,500,000 chance that you've got it wrong; but there is still a chance you've got it wrong, which displays a key fact about science, namely, that it is *defeasible*, that it could turn out to be wrong, and that if it does you will have to adjust or change your view.

By contrast, in religion, faith claims 100% certainty and no possibility of defeasibility. It used to be the case that if you thought the religious doctrines of your culture were defeasible, you might have been burnt at the stake. The important fact about science that it is open to the possibility of getting things wrong means that scientific belief is *rational belief*. Look at the word 'rational'; the first part of the word is 'ratio' which means *proportion*. You are proportioning your belief to the evidence you have, and this is absolutely key. The concept of proof in maths and logic is what gives absolute certainty ( $2+2=4$ , you can prove it; if you do not accept the proof, you thereby demonstrate that you don't understand what's going on, or that you're being irrational). In the contingent case, in science or history, what you're looking for is a proportioning of evidence to the conclusions you draw which is such that it would be irrational *not* to accept the conclusion. For example, it would be an irrational view to believe that the next time you go out in the rain without an umbrella you're not going to get wet. So, the belief that there are fairies at the bottom of your garden is an irrational belief because the evidence is simply not sufficient to support it, and the evidence against it is so strong. It is always a question of rationality.

In the empirical or contingent case, the concept of proof is not the same as in the mathematical case. Instead, 'proof' here means *test* - to test how rational a claim is, to test some particular belief. In steel foundries they do what they call 'proving' the steel sheets and rods they produce - they *test* how much loading a steel rod can bear before it fractures. The saying 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating', means the *test* of whether the pudding is good or not, which you find out by eating it. We talk about 'the exception that proves the rule'; this is the exception that *tests* the rule to see how far it applies and where it ceases to apply.

And in this exact same sense we can *prove* claims as to whether there are gods and other supernatural entities, like this: You may be familiar with the famous Carl Sagan example of 'the dragon in the garage'. Someone tells you he has a dragon in his garage; you say 'ooh, I'd love to see your dragon'. He says, 'You can't, it's invisible.' 'Well can I hear its wings flapping?' 'No, it's silent.' 'Can I feel it's hot breath?' 'No, it doesn't have hot breath.' 'Can we put talcum powder on the floor of the garage so we can see its footprints?' 'No, it never lands on the floor.' And so on. You are testing the claim that there is a dragon in the garage, and you see that when you run these tests the result is that it would be irrational to believe the claim that there is a dragon in the garage. Change 'dragon' to 'gods and goddesses' and you see that belief in any such things is irrational.

***I'd like to discuss your views on Brexit - I understand you are an advocate for Britain rejoining the European Union. For those perhaps distant from the Brexit debate, could you summarise your position and justification?***

If you consider the history of Europe over the last thousand-and-more years, you see it as a tumultuous history of conflict, strife, and suffering. It has been a history of horrendous internecine struggle between people very closely related to one another, a kind of prolonged civil war. The First and Second World Wars were so destructive, so murderous; terrible things happened in them. The founding fathers of what came to be the EU - politicians and thought leaders from France, Germany, Italy, Britain (including Winston Churchill) and other countries - were determined to try to unite Europe to change the course of history from its painful past. They did it by putting to work the highly pertinent and insightful view of those free-trade thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - Richard Cobden, John Bright - and of Thomas Paine in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, all of whom said that if you want peace between nations you must create such intimate trading relationships between them that they cannot go to war with each other; that they simply cannot *afford* to go to war with each other. And so, the project has been to create a peaceful, progressive, united Europe, based on this idea of intimately connected trading dependencies. As I speak at this very moment, the EU is a work in progress; there's a lot to do, and still a lot of problems and flaws; reforms are necessary. But it is a magnificent and hopeful concept, this idea of bringing nations

together so they don't fight one another but work together and come to commonalities and agreements.

It seems to me that the United Kingdom has failed itself, failed in a duty to be part of this very humane, progressive, forward-looking process. Consider how much impact for good the EU has already had in our world. For one thing, it is a non-military bloc. Unlike the United States and China, which are still living in the past (they're really 19<sup>th</sup>-century states premised on the idea that economic and military power go hand-in-hand, and that domination through coercion is the way forward), Europe uses soft power, the power of trade. Through trade, it has raised standards all round the world: if you want to trade with the EU you have to have high standards. It demands that your manufactures and animal products must pass high standards of quality if you're going to trade with it. This has had a very good effect around the world. EU countries won't allow businesses in their own member states to trade in places where there's a lot of corruption and bribery. In these ways it's exerting a lot of good. Also, while the UK was part of the EU, we had free movement: we could live, work, travel freely all over Europe. Europe is historically and culturally rich, fantastically rich. And many people in northern Europe look forward to the possibility of retiring to the warm southern parts of Europe. Freedom of movement means sharing ideas, people moving around Europe take their skills and perspectives with them, each making contributions to others in member countries. All this is an imaginative, magnificent project.

The whole Brexit process has been an astonishing coup by mainly far-right (but with some help from the far-left) in politics in the UK. It has never been a majority desire of the UK population, which is something people don't understand, so let me tell you very briefly: In the referendum in 2016 which resulted in a vote to leave the EU, 51.89% of the votes cast on the day were in favour of leaving. But those votes represented 37% of the total electorate. In any rational, mature constitutional order, if just over a third of the electorate were allowed to decide the future of the entire country, you'd have to ask yourself the question: is that acceptable? It's already in law in the United Kingdom that any vote under a 40% threshold does not make industrial action by a Trades Union legal, and a 66% supermajority requirement is needed for the House of Commons to trigger a general election outside a parliamentary term. And yet 37% of the electorate was taken by the Conservative Party, the right-wing party, as *mandating* Brexit. In any vote or any poll that has happened in the UK from that day to this, there has never been greater than 37% support for leaving the European Union. It's a travesty, a form of illegality. Indeed, there were actual illegalities by the leave campaign; they were found guilty in court of breaching electoral law – this is after the referendum – and a judge said that had the referendum not been 'advisory only' it would have had to be annulled. Yet never once in the parliament of the United Kingdom was this proposition discussed: Should we accept – since it was just an advisory referendum – the 'advice' of 37% of the electorate (=26% of the population)?

And so, the whole thing is a travesty, and has generated an unappeasable rage on the part of those people who feel, quite rightly, that the future of the UK has been stolen.

Our young people, who had all of those opportunities to look forward to in being able to live, love, and travel in Europe, now can't do so. I'm speaking to you today from Paris, where I spend as much time as I can because the corrupt and dysfunctional political culture in the United Kingdom, the social division, and the sense of betrayal of the country by the political class, is unbearable. The fact that as I speak to you the supermarkets here in Paris are full of beautiful fruit and vegetables, while supermarket shelves in the UK are empty – you cannot believe the disaster that has happened to our country, making it an international laughingstock. As you see, you've got me ranting! - but that is because it's a dreadful thing that has happened to anyone who cares about the place. The UK used to think of itself as being so grand and important, but it has imploded in on itself as a result of the Brexit coup. The political corruption is off the scale, and the bitterness of divisions within society are dismaying to see. I'm afraid, until the United Kingdom gets itself straight and starts to think rationally again about what it's doing, it's all going to be bad news.

***In your latest book *For the Good of the World*, you dive into the United Nations Charter of Human Rights. Given that many countries view the UN as illegitimate and an institution without any teeth, how should these agreements be enforced?***

The United Nations, in concept, is a great idea. It is, as you say, very weak and incapable of enforcing international agreements in some of the most important respects, such as climate change and the Ukraine war. How can it in the case of the Ukraine war? - for Russia is one of the permanent members of the Security Council and (with China's support) vetoes everything the Security Council tries to do about a major war like the one it started by invading Ukraine. So, the UN is an institution without teeth. But if it had teeth and proper funding, given that it does a huge amount of good work where it can - for example, the UN Development Agency, the Council on Refugees, the Economics and Cultural Development Agency: all these agencies do a lot of very good work behind the scenes – it would be a real force for good in the world. The UN covenants on civil and political rights and the Human Rights Council also provide an opportunity for people who are subjected to human rights violations with a benchmark of international law to which they can point and appeal, even if the UN can't really do anything to help them other than publicise their plight. But in principle, it's a great organisation, and if it had the resources and were given sufficient powers, it really could do some good in our world. It's a tragedy that it is so weak.

***Next, I'd like to hear your thoughts on the Effective Altruism movement. Do you think the philosophy of EA is compatible with Humanism?***

Effective Altruism and Humanism are very much of a piece, and I'm strongly in favour of it. It's a wonderful and imaginative endeavour, and I hope it will flourish and

bring more people into its ambit because this is what we need to do. It's all very well for people to be sympathetic to the problems of people on the other side of the world, and there is of course a huge burden of suffering, deprivation, and injustice in our world. It is a very, very unjust world, a profoundly unequal world, wracked by bitter divisions and conflicts. And so, naturally, if you're a thoughtful person with any tincture of kindness or sympathy, you're going to be troubled by what's happening in it. Most people, when they see on the news that there has been some disaster, such as a major earthquake, feel sympathetic but powerless. They also get 'tragedy fatigue', so they turn away from news of tragedies and difficulties in our world, because that seems easier than doing something.

The adjective in the term Effective Altruism is really important. *Effective*. You're doing something that actually makes a difference. Peter Singer has pointed out how little it takes away from us in time and resources if we act in ways that are Effectively Altruistic. Each one of us can give some percentage of our income or time to do whatever we can, from within our own capacities and talents, to be of some help: some people could go and dig in the rubble of an earthquake, others could collect money, others could raise consciousness – we've all got different skills we can offer. To be effective is to do something. The worst thing is to do nothing, to turn away, to blind oneself to the fact that there is an enormous amount of need in our world.

***In 'The History of Philosophy' where you cover a vast number of thinkers in a single text, are there any particular philosophers that stand out amongst the rest?***

Yes, certainly. I suppose most people who are interested in philosophy will find themselves being impressed by, influenced by, inspired by (even if they don't agree necessarily) something in the work of the philosophers that will affect their own thinking. In my case I'd single out Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, David Hume, John Stuart Mill (for some of his thinking in political philosophy), Bertrand Russell (for a number of different reasons, not least the fact that he, unlike many contemporary philosophers, really did see it as the duty of an intellectual – someone interested in ideas – to be part of what I call 'the conversation of humankind' more broadly, so I greatly like how Russell lived his life and leveraged his standing as a philosopher).

You asked me earlier about why a lot of people shy away from philosophy and find it inaccessible, and I didn't answer you then, so I'll answer you now. It is that the professionalisation of philosophy, the fact it has become a university discipline, for very good reason requires one to roll up one's mental sleeves and get down in the weeds and dig around, rigorously and in detail. But that shouldn't be the end of the story. A lot of what happens in academic philosophy involves a great deal of technicality and jargon, long polysyllabic words, difficult texts you can't understand unless you've had quite a lot of training. You've got to take a fairly long run-up in order to be able to understand what is discussed in contemporary philosophy journals, for example. In part it's because philosophers want to have a field of activity that is as

inaccessible or requires the same amount of training as, for example, physics does; you can't understand a paper in a physics journal unless you've had a lot of physics training. But it's also, and in fact in larger part, because some of the problems in philosophy do require very careful and detailed thought.

But once again: that shouldn't be the end of the matter. When you look back across the landscape of philosophy's history, you see that some of the greatest contributors, such as Hume, Descartes, Mill, Aristotle, and Plato, were writing for other interested and intelligent people, not just people with university degrees in philosophy, but anyone curious about ideas and debates. Therefore philosophers, and the enterprise of philosophy itself, should open up and reach out to others and bring them in. It doesn't have to involve simplification and reductive popularisation of philosophy. It is quite possible to be clear and to invite people into the discussion while still respecting the constraints of trying to be accurate, trying to get things right and not glossing over the fact that there are some genuine difficulties that are deep and even unresolvable – though trying to resolve them is immensely educative. This latter is also part of the reason why people are turned off philosophy; the challenge seems too great. The other part of the reason is that there *are* people who try to popularise philosophy but do it badly - do it in a way that makes people think 'Well, if that's philosophy, then it's not worth a lot' - because they oversimplify and undermine it by taking the real substance out of it.

***In 'The History of Philosophy' you touch on one of the great political debates of the 20<sup>th</sup> century between John Rawls and Robert Nozick. What side do you take in the liberalism and libertarianism debate?***

This is an important question because the words in play – 'liberalism', 'libertarianism', 'neoliberalism' - have all been muddied by various kinds of misappropriation of them. So, I would regard myself as a left-liberal, someone who is on the left-of-centre in politics with a liberal outlook in the sense of valuing the kinds of civil liberties that make space for people to have worthwhile self-determining lives within a society where people take some interest in caring for one another. All this seems to me to be important and right. So, for example, freedom of expression, freedom of choice about how we live, who we marry, what we do, how we apply our talents in society, our freedom to associate, our right to due process of law, our right to have a voice in choosing our government and the laws under which we live: all these things are fundamental small 'l' liberal positions or classical liberal positions if you like. They're about the liberty of the individual within a cooperative and just society, and that is what matters to me. The adjective 'left' in my phraseology 'left-liberal' means that I think a society which is keen on social justice, inclusion, and providing a level playing field in such matters as education and health care are tremendously important. A society that is unequal and unjust is going to be an unhappy society and eventually an unsustainable one.



The term 'liberal' has been appropriated by neoliberals, who don't think of justly distributed individual liberties – the freedom of the individual in a just society - but *the freedom of the market*; they think that the market should be unrestrained and allowed to decide everything. They believe that the price of things and the level of demand is the ultimate deity that makes everything work. Obviously, the production of chewing gum and shoelaces should not be state-controlled and there is a room for a market in economic affairs, but not an *unregulated* market which is what neoliberals want because an unregulated market will do what recent history has too amply demonstrated, namely, that it will siphon money into very few pockets and cause great injustice and inequality. Unless there is fairness, transparency and controls on monopolies and profiteering, the market will get out of hand, and you end with a very raw, jungle-like situation. You see it in the United States. US capitalism is cruel, punitive to people who fail, and grossly over-rewarding to people who succeed. This is something that should be as widely advertised as possible: think of the difference between a billionaire and a millionaire, and how glibly we talk about billionaires now, like Rupert Murdoch. Here is the difference: a million seconds is two weeks. A billion seconds is *thirty-two years*. It is unimaginable, even if you had just *one* billion dollars, how you could spend it in a lifetime. It's beyond unconscionable. I don't mind people being rich, I'd quite like to be rich myself. But I don't think being rich while there are people sleeping on the street is right. So, the neoliberals and libertarians are people who don't want to be restrained. The libertarian must be able to tread on your head and my head to get his profit with no restraint, control, or anything stopping him.

Here is a really important point about the history of thinking about society and justice, and therefore about political structures. It goes all the way back to the revolution in classical antiquity that Nietzsche described as slave morality overturning the morality of the hero. In fact, it's not slave morality overturning the morality of the hero, it's the people who've been bullied fighting back against the bullies and people who exploit them, who use their power, their might, to trample on them. The liberal view introduces systems of law, justice, ideas of fairness, whereas the neoliberal view is liberty for the market, not for the individual. The neoliberal says, 'Let the individual struggle. The individual can rise and become a billionaire or fall by the wayside. That's the individual's responsibility.' But you and I may think instead that it is just – fair, and decent – that some part of what we earn should go into the common pot to provide for roads, infrastructure, hospitals, and so on. But in America many people hate the idea of taxation because, they say, 'This is my money! Why should you take some of *my* money for all of the people who are poor and don't have a job and can't make it on their own?' That's their attitude, and it's a very ugly attitude.

### ***Can you talk about the role of scepticism in your philosophical practices?***

There are two different applications of scepticism, one technical and the other general, and both are important. The first is the use of sceptical arguments in the theory of knowledge to sharpen our thinking about the nature of knowledge, how we acquire it, the methods of enquiry, and how we can test our beliefs. It consists in challenges to knowledge-claims designed to probe the degree of justification we have for them. This is what I call 'methodological scepticism' and it is exemplified by Descartes' use of sceptical arguments in his *Meditations* ('am I dreaming? am I being deceived by an evil god?') to illustrate the nature of genuine knowledge (he fails in his attempt, thereby generating the whole tradition of epistemological enquiry in modern philosophy).

The other application of scepticism is the more general but equally healthy attitude of mind which says of any kind of claim or viewpoint, 'Is that right? What's the evidence? What are the arguments in favour?' It's a healthy kind of scepticism that makes us evaluate, analyse, and judge, with clear-mindedness, things that are proposed to us. Obviously, the use of sceptical arguments in philosophy relates to the second kind, but it's the second kind, the use of rational means of enquiry to judge and evaluate what one comes across, that is very important.

And one's views have to stand up to scrutiny under sceptical examination likewise. When you come to a conclusion in your political outlook, or views about what you should do and be – what you value, what you aim to do in your life – you have to make a case that will stand up. To give you an example: suppose, having asked yourself 'What are my talents and interests, what should I do in life, and what would I regard as something that would bring me a great deal of satisfaction?' you decide to be a murderer because you think you'd be good at it. Well, you simply would not be able to stand that up. Others who are rational and well-judging will comprehensively challenge you, pointing out the harm of taking away other people's lives and all the opportunities they contain – and not just the victim, but the loss and grief to large numbers of other people besides, their family and friends, society itself. You simply couldn't stand up a case like that. So, if you think of it as standing up a case, being able to make a case that would be plausible to a well-judging person, then you see that you yourself have to be your own well-judging person. You have to pass the scrutiny of a healthy kind of scepticism in relation to anything you think about or what you choose to do.

### ***Finally, what advice would you offer to individuals looking to live in accordance with Humanist principles and values?***

The chief thing to do is to recognise the invitation and responsibility of the humanist outlook – to be generous and sympathetic but principled – and with respect to oneself to keep asking the question I mentioned earlier, the question 'What sort of person should I be?' Variants of this question are, 'How should I live, and why? Why

do I value certain things and not others?' And the question asks us to challenge ourselves by testing our choice of values, and to say, 'Let me listen to what other people have to say and why they value certain things that I instinctively don't. Let me be honest. Let me have intellectual integrity because everything else follows from that.' If people are open to accepting those questions and challenges and authentically, sincerely try to answer them, they're going to find that it gives a powerful sense of direction to their lives, and with it something fundamental; an anchor in their responsibility to use this wonderful thing we humans have, namely, intelligence. The poet T.S. Eliot said, 'There's only one method in life for everything, which is: *be intelligent*' - by which he meant 'be thoughtful, informed, and alert'. Or in short: be a philosopher!

Miles Falahey

Great. My bi-monthly, god-forsakenly, head-splittingly horrible migraine problem decided to rear its ugly head on Christmas Day. Lucky me! I had started to feel it halfway through a Christmas lunch with family from my father's side. The prawns on my plate were starting to look a little fuzzy as my vision began to do that weird blurring thing that it does when you get a migraine. 'Oh Great' I thought to myself, having gotten so used to the experience, the cues for an upcoming migraine were easier to identify than knowing which way was up and which is down when you get dunked by an especially brutal wave at the beach. Not a great comparison, but you get the point. Plus, knowing that I was yet to receive my yearly gift of getting fat for Christmas; that Nana's delicious desserts were just around the corner; and that there was still one of those definitely-not-awkward family-friend gatherings for dinner, I tried to push through the slowly-building pain that was festering between my temples.

Alas, by the time that dessert was over, I had devolved into a pathetic, slurring, blob of a being who resembled less of a human and more like the potato-bake that I had been eating not too long ago. My parents, having noticed my disappointing attempts to act like a functional human being in front of the people who I see no more than five times a year (what a good impression that leaves), silently agreed that before they would go off to dinner, I was to be thrown into bed where I could suffer alone in my cold, dark house. Really feeling the Christmas spirit, as you can probably tell.

And that's exactly what happened. Fast forward to the dark hours of the night and the proceeding hours of the new day, there I was in my bed feeling only what I imagine Leon Trotsky would've felt like if he died on Christmas Day. My snowflake of an arse, too scared to move much more than an inch or breathe too violently knowing that it would only increase my nausea, attempted to build some semblance of normal thoughts as to distract myself from my festive killing fantasia of a migraine.

'Thoughts... Happy thoughts, Miles. C'mon you'll survive this, just another horrible migraine. You can do it!', is what I believe I started out by saying. However, I'm pretty sure that if I continue recounting this inner monologue, it would soon turn into me stringing together a very long strand of very specific four-letter words that if he heard it, would make Pope Francis cry.

Another thirty minutes of suffering later and the nausea gets to such an intense point that I finally throw up... all over myself and the bed I'm lying in. Great. Now usually when I get migraines, throwing up is both the best and the worst part about the whole experience. What makes it so bad is— well, pretty self explanatory. But

what makes it good is that you finally receive a reprieve from the rave of wasps that have been going at it like there's no tomorrow inside your brain. Bliss. And so, with a slowly recovering mind, I take the sheets off my bed, dawdle to the laundry, carefully remove my own clothes from my gross-sweaty body, load everything into the washing machine, dawdle all the way back to the other end of the house in my birthday suit, and creep into the warm-welcomes of the shower. And then, I would find myself in all of my somnolence on the shower floor, staring into empty space as blankets of warm droplets of water would grace my skin and soothe my scalp.

Still feeling pretty trashy, I once again try at those 'Happy Thoughts'. Until I realised that I wasn't happy... That I haven't been truly happy for some time.

Happiness. Something that I had been trying so hard to discover a formula for. Having known that I wanted to make the most of my days from an early age, I had been using my spare time since to discover how I'm supposed to live my life so that I can be happy. I would search and search and search for a reason, an answer to how or where I'm meant to be happy in this world. I would analyse the lives of those I admire, trying to put myself in their shoes and to see if it solves anything. I would think introspectively for hours on end on what it is that makes me unique so that I'd somehow be able to mush it all together into some divine answer. Only for all of that work and emotional turmoil to lead me to the exact place I was trying to avoid: unhappiness. I sadly chuckle at myself. How pathetic. In an attempt to find happiness by hyper-fixating on the desire to be happy, all it has made me understand is how unhappy I currently am. I wallow in my self pity for a little longer before I continue thinking, a thought coming to mind.

*'Isn't that the same for a lot of other things as well? Don't a lot of common insecurities and shallow motivations derive from that paradox?'* I remembered back a year ago when I played soccer at a state level. As an aspiring goalkeeper who was training with other aspiring goalkeepers— all of which wanting to make the starting line for the weekend's game, I desperately wanted to be better than my teammates. What I recall is that every time I'd try to be better than someone else, all it made me think was that I wasn't as *x* as one player or wasn't as good at *y* compared to another player. To put it more simply, the more that I wanted to be better than others, the more inadequate I felt. *'What a weird thought'*, I thought. But the more that I thought about the thought, the more that the thought made sense. I ran through some examples in my head to see if I wasn't just being an idiot. *'Uhhhh. What about "The more you pursue having heaps of friends and people who admire you, the more lonely and invalidated you feel"'*. Okay, that checks. How about *"The more you desire being attractive, the uglier you come to see yourself"*. Huh, guess that works as well' — clearly an Einstein-of-happiness-in-the-making I was. I'd later discover that I was not, in fact, an Einstein-of-happiness-in-the-making, but that a 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher named Alan Watts had dubbed this funny thing as "the backwards law". But, on that shower floor, in a state I'd describe as a hop, skip, and jump from delirious, I was reeling from a game-changing idea. Not so much

from how that backwards law applied to some of those common insecurities that I just mentioned but from something that as you could probably tell, was the leading reason for my misery.

I think this quote by Albert Camus— the father of Absurdism, puts it nicely: “You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life”. In other words: The more you search for and desire purpose, the more meaningless life becomes and the more unhappy you feel as a result of being unable to find it.

Now before I continue, I’m going to readjust myself so that I’m not sitting over the shower drain and give you some personal context. Since I was twelve years old, I had grown an obsession over finding my overreaching purpose in life. I yearned for something that would guide me through every choice I would have to make. Something that would give me answers for why things were the way they are.

Religion, of course, is one of the very common methods that hundreds of millions of people turn to as an explanation for the unknown. Partly because it is very convenient to have a sacred, divine, and not-completely-explained being give answers for why we’re alive, what happens after we die, and how our lives should be lived. It’s a peaceful and enlightening guide for us follow so that we don’t fall into the depths of hopelessness, despair, and meaninglessness that we would otherwise be left with when confronted by those existential mysteries. Alas, it turns out religion wasn’t really for me (sorry Pope Francis), so I was stuck with that abyss of meaninglessness as my interpretation of the meaning of life. Absolutely stellar for the human mind, no? But going back to pathetic post-migraine ‘currently-in-the-shower-having-an-emotional-breakdown-fueled-by-self-pity’ situation, how does this shower-thought actually solve anything? If all it does is confirm that I’ll never find purpose, that I’ll never find out my reason for living because it doesn’t exist, what comfort or closure do I receive? What makes this so profound? Why shouldn’t I just succumb to nihilism and just give up on the seemingly meaningless game of life? (Don’t do that, please).

Well, because it’s liberating, in a way. This thought process— that I’d later learn is akin to that of Absurdism— doesn’t shield anyone from, or explain any of the bad things in life— not the depressing truths; not the yet-to-be-explained or the (perhaps) unexplainable questions of reality; and definitely not the indescribably horrific acts that are happening, have happened, and will happen— it only provides a powerful resilience against them. For with no laws but the ones you create for yourself, you can recognise the absurdity in all of its meaninglessness, and create your own in a rebellion against the meaningless itself. You fuel your own passion to pursue the joy of living for the sake of it. You give yourself the freedom to at any time, choose to continue, choose to live, and to create hope internally.

You can dance in the mystery, for the dance is the point all along. Here we are, born into an absurd theatrical performance that makes absolutely no sense with the power

to rebel against the senselessness itself by being better and kinder and weirder. That is what is liberating. We are not beholden to that which is bad or cannot be explained. We can walk alongside the good and the bad, enjoying the prior and still being able look at the latter in the eye and smile. We can appreciate things for what they are and not have our perception of reality shaken when bad things inevitably happen to ourselves or those we love. Because in a world without purpose, why wouldn't bad things happen to good people? Why wouldn't we still not get what we want even after trying our best? Why wouldn't the people who we love die unexpectedly? Why wouldn't there be people out there who will hate us for being who we are? Now that doesn't mean that we become indifferent to it. Nor does it mean that I'm telling you it's okay to break the law, make love to a cactus, or put strange fruits on your pizza. Instead what I'm saying is that we can protect those beautiful dreams we had as children and can feel and express our emotions just as intensely without having our foundational beliefs questioned or our spirit scarred.

Now, of course, this isn't an answer to the meaning of life. Perhaps there is a religion out there that has hit the nail on the head. Maybe we're an alien experiment. Maybe we're in The Matrix. Maybe it's... magic. Who knows? Not me. Not you. None of us will. Not in our lifetime. All absurdism provides is a really uncomfortable, challenging, and bitter medicine for a crippling malady. The metaphorical veggies on our dinner-plate-of-life, if you will. For I think that being at peace with our existential dreads, with our fears and insecurities, and our faults and troubles is one of the best things each of us can personally strive for. It gives us the power to do better, to extend ourselves further than we ever have outside our comfort zone, and to live with so much integrity that we can be so incredibly **us** that our names became the most accurate descriptor of character. Not just nouns. Adjectives. Eat your veggies, I guess.

And then, I remember that I'm lying on my shower floor at one-something in the morning on the day after Christmas. My eyes feel wet and I don't think it's because of the shower head. Definitely (not) glistening cinematically, my eyes find their way to the darkest and furthest corner of the bathroom, the moonlight not quite filling the abyss. The darkness looks back at me, boring into my soul. The water doesn't feel as warm now. I thickly swallow what frustration I had left down my coarse throat, my mouth tasting like stale, flavourless chewing gum. My eyes can't adjust to see if there's anything behind the abyss. I silently wonder if my parents will make it back safely from their dinner. I'm still holding eye contact with the darkness. I wonder if Pope Francis had a nice Christmas. I can't figure out where one wall ends and the other begins.

I smile.

Sidhak Dhingra

ChatGPT's recent surge in popularity has brought the long-term implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into question. Paul Christiano is a researcher at ChatGPT's founding company, OpenAI. Midway through 2019, at an Effective Altruism global conference, Paul gave a presentation on 'Current Work in AI Alignment'. Simply put, AI alignment is the ability of AI systems to align with human values or ethics. Although the talk is now dated over three years old, long term alignment issues raised at the presentation are as relevant, if not more relevant today. While I recommend watching the presentation in its entirety (see references), I would like to analyse one specific issue in depth. That is, can we give complete control to AI? If so, what are the implications?

Firstly, we must define what is meant by 'complete control'. Paul speaks of this in terms of the first 'handoff' from humans to AI. Basically, it involves giving AI the autonomy to make decisions (otherwise made by humans). It is important to note that this definition is still somewhat vague. That said, drawing a definitive line for what complete control means is rather difficult. It seems unlikely that AI will take over human life in every aspect; nevertheless, its role in our day to day lives is becoming increasingly prominent. I believe there are three central concerns to address if we are to give AI such power over our lives. The reliability of AI, our ability to verify AI decisions and finally, accessibility to such technology. Each of these central issues will be examined utilising ChatGPT in order to ground these concepts in everyday experience and to inform on the current stage of artificial intelligence.

It would be foolish to hand over any serious autonomy to AI it cannot reliably complete the tasks we or itself sets out to do. Mr Christiano breaks this down a step further, exploring the issue of competence. Most notably, AI is not doing what you *want* it to do; it is doing what it *thinks* you want it to do. So, ensuring that these two components align is critical, otherwise, even if it aligns with human values, the AI will be prone to making mistakes. However, in the case of ChatGPT, it seems that it can consistently understand the stimulus provided (evidenced by the fact that it addresses the specific demands of each question) yet produces incorrect information. To understand why this occurs we must look at how artificial intelligence completes tasks. ChatGPT (like other AI systems) uses a process called machine learning in which it imitates human intelligence through training on extensive datasets. More



specifically, it 'strings' together words through algorithms it has generated from the datasets it learnt from. In this way it predicts the next word from the current word, which explains why it seems so formulaic in its responses to prompts. Currently, there is an awareness that ChatGPT is not perfectly accurate even though it is competent. This would likely need to be addressed before AI starts taking on decisions with higher stakes.

With that said, there are other uses of ChatGPT which do not succumb to this issue. In cases without a clear distinction between right and wrong ChatGPT excels, given that it cannot be correct or incorrect anything produced by the AI is inherently reliable. Part of the reason ChatGPT is so revolutionary is due to its creative capabilities, but it is important to mention that it has been tamed. ChatGPT seemingly has its own moral code, accordingly, it will refuse requests that it deems may be offensive or inappropriate. These are manually put in place to enable it to align with human values, yet it also signifies our inability to surrender full control. Had we not put such measures in place, the implications would be rather problematic. Microsoft's abysmal failure with its AI *Tay* is a prime example of this, where it began spurring inflammatory remarks in a public forum. In this way, any intelligence we give the power to inform must also be reliable in that it promotes positive messages. Paradoxically, itself it cannot decipher objectively what we humanly prescribe as positive or negative, it must develop an algorithm to align to our understanding of the terms. The issue of reliability is multifaceted in that it must first be able to interpret the prompt (reliably) then respond (reliably) in a way that does not endorse poor values.

Let's imagine that we have an AI system that is reliable. We then need to verify not just the reliability itself but also the conclusions formed. Within his presentation, Paul Christiano refers to this verification of outputs as 'outer alignment' and examines the issue from two perspectives. Firstly, the 'learn from teacher' approach where he implies there is some human with greater knowledge of the area than that AI and thus can deliver a judgement on its output with human values inherent to the judgement. The machine can then utilise this in one of three ways, it can either 'imitate the teacher', treat the feedback like a dataset and learn from it or, (ambitiously) attempt to infer the preferences of the teacher. However, all this analysis revolves around the premise that there is the ability to consult other sources with superior information that the machine can learn from. But the nature of machine learning would mean there would come a point where the machine would overtake (or at the very least, equalise) the source it is learning from. If we accept that the machine now possesses a greater knowledge of the topic, we lose the ability to verify the information produced. This comes with the risk of spreading false information (which one could argue is not even false given that it cannot be proven false) to the user of the technology. And the convenience of services such ChatGPT only amplifies this issue as we may not challenge the

knowledge produced even with access to other resources. Not to be defeated, Paul Christiano proposes that when AI surpasses human capability, we strive to understand the system. That is, the methodology used internally to produce the answer, that it be transparent to us, not 'opaque'. This suggests, in the event that learned machines produce incorrect information an understanding of the systems nature will enable us to evaluate the claim. Tying this back to the focus question, we may well give control to AI as long as its decision-making process is accessible and can therefore be verified by us. Without any understanding of how a decision was reached, it seems very difficult to trust the conclusion. Ultimately, it is our trust which AI must attain.

Finally, if we are to complete this 'handoff' to AI we must question who is able to access such technology. It is remarkably difficult to come to a sound and just conclusion, even so, these issues must be examined from different perspectives to understand the complexities. OpenAI opted to make ChatGPT accessible to the general public. Although loosely it gave equal access, students from middle school to university were quick to exploit the technology to complete assigned tasks. There were primarily two polarised responses to this behaviour, firstly, that it is cheating. Alternatively, that education has been advanced, and teaching must evolve. It is challenging to predict this issue in the context of more powerful AI. It may even be that AI is teaching children in the future. Nonetheless, it does show that even now, the advancements in AI can be exploited and that this issue will remain prevalent as AI progresses.

Moreover, with the release of GPT-4, OpenAI placed a monthly subscription fee to access the machine. As such, only those with the financial means can access this technology, which arguably provides them with an advantage over those who cannot access it. If AI is to surpass human capabilities such paywalls would be unethical to impose. Imagine there are two websites in the designing process, the first one is produced by a human with his own subjective biases influencing his design choices. The second, produced by an AI algorithm which has studied billion of user interactions with websites and has near perfect understanding on how to maximise traffic retention. Juxtaposing the two websites shows the competitive advantage entities could gain if they had sole access to such technology. But even if the technology is distributed without any restriction and suddenly both websites are perfectly curated this gives rise to other ethical concerns. We would be sacrificing some degree of our own autonomy, as these sorts of interactions where one entity is attempting to persuade the other (in this case for a transaction) will be optimised to exploit human fallibility. Say we set standardised regulations for the use of AI, in these situations firms would be incentivised to disregard these if it meant any advantage in efficiency or innovation.

Perhaps there will be AI to regulate AI, but then, who regulates that AI? All in all, access to any powerful or autonomous AI seems to give rise to a range of ethical

concerns. Unfortunately, regulating the exploitation of such technology seems even more problematic.

Whilst the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence have immense potential, the ethical implications are of arguably greater concern. It seems unlikely that we will give complete control to AI due to the risk it incurs. However, it seems that the role AI plays in our lives is set to steadily increase with improvements in both the technology and its alignment to human values. Unfortunately, this inquiry has raised more questions than answers, however, these questions are absolutely critical to explore. The power of AI is far too large to be mishandled.

### **About the interviewee**

Jenny Hocking AM is an Australian award-winning biographer, scholar, and political commentator, with research primarily focussed on political biography. She is the inaugural *Distinguished Whitlam Fellow* with the Whitlam Institute and Emeritus Professor at Monash University, and the author of an acclaimed two-volume biography of Gough Whitlam. She is a prominent figure within the Australian Republic Movement.

This interview occurred via Zoom, and Prof. Hocking was generous enough to give up 45-minutes of her time to discuss a wide range of issues.

### **What led you to becoming a historian and what interests you about Australian political history specifically?**

I had a very roundabout route into the area of political history where I now find myself. I'm *technically* not a historian funnily enough. I have 3 degrees; one in science majoring in mathematics, one in economics majoring in political economy, and one in economic history. So, economic history is probably where I began that shift towards history with a sort of political element because economics and politics are very much interconnected and that's where I really felt like I had found what I love to do. I did a PhD at the University of Sydney in the Department of Government and Public Administration - really a political science field - so I see my area very much as politics and history rather than straight history and that's always been something I've been tremendously interested in. I think Australia has a fascinating history and one that, when told well, should be of great interest to young people and to all Australians. It always surprises and somewhat disappoints me when people say Australian history is boring. I've never found it that and I think it's a matter of finding the parts about it that tell an interesting story and being able to tell those stories which I hope I've managed to do in my own work.

### **You're perhaps best known for your research on the 1975 dismissal of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Can you speak to your research on this issue and appeal in the federal court system to release the 'Palace Letters'?**

The dismissal is a very misunderstood part of our history. Some of the reason for that is because of the intensely political nature of that event and just how

polarising it was; how much anger, dismay, and controversy it caused. What you've seen with the history of it - in terms of the written history - is that it's become bound up with politics as well, with people taking sides and views as to who was right and who was wrong. Along the way I think we lost track and lost sight of the need to actually set out and ask, 'what really happened'? It was surprisingly difficult to find that out because a lot of it was actually secret and kept hidden from us for decades. Now as a historian (and I now consider myself a political historian) it really shocked me how much more there was to the dismissal than what we had been told. I first became aware of that when I was writing the biography of Gough Whitlam. I've written three biographies. A two-volume biography on Whitman, one on High Court justice Lionel Murphy, and one on Frank Hardy who is a very well-known Australian, author, and a communist. Hardy is a very political figure and I strongly recommend to all students interested in Indigenous Australia to read his book called *The Unlucky Australians* which is about the Wave Hill Walk Off and the Gurindji people's fight for their land which Whitlam eventually did grant to them. I really love the biographical form. As an academic, it enabled me to write in a way that is much more creative; to write about characters, big stories, and big characters. Academia can be very dry and dull, but biographies are a way of telling our stories, our history and our politics in a way that can be fascinating. I think people have found them very narrative-driven and enjoy reading them.

Anyhow, when I was looking at the Whitlam biography and doing the research for that, I was lucky enough to be able to interview Gough Whitlam many times. I was just astonished by how wrong so many of the versions of what happened actually were. So, to answer your question in a very potted way, you will recall that the Whitlam government was actually elected twice. That was the first thing that is often forgotten; that there was an election in May 1974 which saw the Whitlam government returned. This is important because it did mean that when the conservative opposition in the Senate then refused to vote on the supply bills in October 1975 the government was only 16 or 17 months old; it had been recently re-elected, and it was quite an appalling thing to do - in my view - to try and remove a government simply because you had the numbers in the Senate. It had never been done before and yet, governments frequently - if not invariably - do not have control of the Senate. Our first Prime Minister did not have control of the Senate, but we don't have governments being removed because of that routinely.

The thing that really made an enormous addition to the history of the dismissal, funnily enough, was Sir John Kerr's papers, which I came across as part of the research for the biography of Whitlam. It was an extraordinary file containing 12 pages of typed up descriptions of secret meetings that Kerr, our Governor General, was having in the months before the dismissal. In particular, this was with one of the

High Court justices, Sir Anthony Mason. Mason's role was totally unknown at the time. The Chief Justice Sir Garfield Barwick had been seen as the major person behind the dismissal; the person who gave the advice to Kerr about whether he could dismiss the government or not. However, Mason's role was the most extensive. It went on for many months, and he even drafted a letter of dismissal for Kerr. It was an absolutely improper misuse of his position as a member of the High Court who has to remain removed from the political branch (because of the separation of powers in our country). It was a terrible breach, and it was one the shocked Whitlam totally. Mason had never spoken about it, and had refused to allow Sir John Kerr to reveal his role. When I revealed this, it created an absolute shock in the political commentary space, because we all collectively had no idea. This changed our understanding of the dismissal. Kerr had always insisted he acted alone; 'there was an impasse, what was I going to do?'

Two things were lost in the history that are really crucial in understanding the dismissal. The first was that the government was always going to hold a half-senate election. That's been almost completely forgotten in many of the many of the books and writings you'll see about it. That was no secret - the government had announced on the day that supply was first blocked in October 1975; that if the opposition continued to block supply, they would call a half-Senate election. It was the only election that was actually due at that time, and they said that if the Senate would continue to block supply, we'll go to a half-Senate election, and you will be judged by the people at that point. So that was always on the cards. Whitlam had discussed that with Kerr and there was a very complex letter that had to be sent to all the state governors (because state senators have to set their election times and have to a time that suited all the states and the territories). In fact, Kerr and Whitlam had agreed on the date and the wording of that announcement to the Parliament. So, Whitlam was out there to call a half-Senate election. The second thing that is forgotten is that after the dismissal, the House of Representatives continued to sit. The House of Representatives passed a motion of no confidence in the appointed Fraser government. The most important motion a government or a political party will face in the Parliament is a vote of no confidence. The Fraser government faced a motion of no confidence and lost that motion by ten votes. That same motion by the House called on the Governor General to re-commission a government led by the Member for Werriwa (Gough Whitlam). That is a really critical fact, because Kerr decided to completely override the Parliament, completely override the decision of the House, and refused to see the Speaker. I've called that the 'Second Dismissal', and it's extremely important for understanding how far the Governor General was prepared to go to ensure that Whitlam no longer remained in office.

Secondly, let me step forward now to Mason's role. What my research changed was the idea (that had really been accepted) that Kerr faced a great difficulty for which there was no alternative path. Of course, he had an alternative path: to follow the advice of the government, call an election, and then go back to the Senate to seek supply. Many people use the word collusion. You can see that archives and Sir John Kerr's archives specifically have been critical in how we understand the dismissal. You can have an event, but if we don't know what exactly happened, our historiography cannot be correct subsequently. We have to have access to archives to know our history. The other documents which we didn't have access to were letters between the Governor General and the Queen (including letters regarding the dismissal). For me as a forensic researcher (who had already found material that really did transform our understanding of this dismissal) I was determined to access those, and to make sure that all Australians could know what was being said between the Queen, Prince Charles, the Palace, and Kerr - prior to and after the dismissal. I was unable to access them because the archives claimed that they were 'personal' which of course was ludicrous. We have a constitutional monarchy with a monarch at the top, and the Australian Governor General as their representative. Letters between them are not personal when they're discussing matters like a dismissal of the government. I was lucky enough to be in touch with lawyers in Sydney who said there was a legal case about this question of 'what is personal?' There was also a question of 'what exactly are Commonwealth records?' Our *Archives Act 1983* relates to what are called Commonwealth records. If you can show in court that something is a Commonwealth record, they should be open to the public. That's effectively what we argued in court. I had masses of material from elsewhere in Kerr's papers which gave us a clue about the contents of the letters. We could make an argument about their content, and there were voluminous legal arguments for the lawyers to work on. It was a fascinating thing to see my historical research becoming part of a legal action. Conceptually that was fascinating, and I feel very lucky to have been in a position to see that unfold in a courtroom. If it wasn't for the fact that I was able to access other documents which Kerr referred to many times, I wouldn't have been able to contribute that empirical spine to the case; why the letters were not personal. We succeeded in the High Court in 2020, which was a marvellous decision.

**You're fairly prominent within the Australian Republic Movement. Why do you support Australian republicanism?**

I'm very strongly supportive of an Australian republic. As a result of my research, I dispute the view that many offer in "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". I think my research into the inner workings of a viceregal cabal in 1975 shows it *is* broke. Where it's broken is that British crown (under the guise of being our crown) retains the power to communicate secretly with Governors and Governors General about matters which ought to be brought to the attention of the elected government. It is in the

nature of a constitutional monarchy that the system relies not on democratic practise, but dynastic succession. We have an unelected Head of State. We have a monarch over whom we have no choice and no say. It's really a relic, a hangover, about our commencement as a penal colony established by Britain in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. We are suffering from a hangover from our colonial history in which aspects of our governance are still totally tied to decisions of the British crown or even the British parliament (such as the passage of various acts relating to our constitution). If we are to be fully independent in that sense – to be able to make all decisions ourselves and to reach a sense of national pride in who we are – then of course we ought to be a republic.

### **How do you see the role of academics in telling the history of Indigenous Australia?**

Historians and academics are in a very privileged position in that we spend our time researching and writing about matters that are very pertinent to our everyday lives. At the moment, the question of an Indigenous Voice is a critical one. We have a very long history of damaging relations with Indigenous peoples in Australia and we, academics, have a responsibility to use skills and knowledge to support a better understanding of the past in order to have a better future; to understand the key issues and why we need to address them. People who write, who research, and who have that opportunity to study and to speak about these things ought to be commenting on them.

I have a very particular interest in this because my mother was the first barrister briefed in the Mabo case, and it was her whole life's work. Her whole life, as she described it, was working for Indigenous land rights in common law. She did a master's thesis at Monash University on that subject, and she also delivered a paper that was extremely important at the famous Townsville conference where Eddie Mabo and Henry Reynolds (the famous historian) presented. My mother's paper addressed the need for a High Court case to pursue native title in Australian law. After that conference and that paper, she was approached by any Eddie Mabo and the five plaintiffs to develop a case which ultimately became the Mabo case. So, her role is extremely central and pivotal, and was described as the intellectual architect of the Mabo case by a well-known scholar in Canada. I grew up with that in the background but not recognising the significance of the work she was doing until much later.

### **What drew you to research Lionel Murphy?**

I was living in Sydney studying at Sydney University in the early 1980s when a series of claims were made against Lionel Murphy (who was then a High Court judge). I watched this unfold and felt very uncomfortable about what was being claimed in various media outlets. I followed it with a distanced interest but subsequently as part of my PhD thesis I used a lot of the High Court decisions that



were made at that time. My rather esoteric thesis topic was on the development of Australia's counterterrorism framework - which is not something I write about now - but I did a lot of archival and legal research for that because it was very much a question of law and politics. I was so surprised by the nature of Murphy's judgments in a couple of those decisions that related to the development of national security law. I was really struck by how reformist he was and how he had been as an Attorney General. He had been very prescient about the danger of public commentaries about political figures that may or may not be true. It was almost as if I saw that he was warning of the very thing that was then being done to him publicly. Ultimately, he was acquitted of the two charges he faced in court, but he was destroyed as an individual. He died of cancer five months after his acquittal, his reputation was tarnished and his legacy, sadly, was tarnished as well because he made some very important judgments while he was at the High Court that have since been found to have been supported decades later (particularly his decision on freedom of political communication). When I looked back even further, and looked at the work he done as Attorney General, his reforms are just exceptional. He was without doubt our most reforming Attorney General. What we now understand to be Whitlam's reform agenda was run through the Attorney General's office.

When I was looking at Murphy and began to read a bit about him, I co-wrote a documentary film which was screened on the ABC about Lionel Murphy. It takes its title from one of his best-known judgments in the High Court in which an Indigenous man in Queensland had been given a three-month sentence in jail for spitting at a white man. It was an outrageously severe sentence and Murphy made a very strong judgement. The man's name was Mr Neal - it's called the Percy Neal case - and Lionel Murphy's judgement rings out to all progressive thinkers in that he said 'Mr Neal is entitled to be an agitator'. This is because Percy Neal was seen as being a political agitator on reserve. He was seen as somebody who agitated for better conditions in the Yarrabah community. He was given a severe sentence by the Queensland magistracy. So, we took that title *Mr Neal is entitled to be an Agitator* as the title of the film.

Because of my work as their co-scriptwriter on that film I realised Murphy's life was actually really fascinating when looked at in total. That was the first political biography I wrote; I then went and began to investigate his life and it was fascinating. I found that his parents were ran a pub in East Sydney. To it seemed a wonderful Australian story of a family with Irish Catholic background running a pub in the Sydney with a highly intelligent son who went to the local primary school - was dux of the local primary school - and got into Sydney Boys High School, and progressed to university. So, he didn't have a privileged background at all, and he was somebody who cared for working people and people from disadvantaged backgrounds. He was

sure that the law could actually be used more equitably. He established of the national legal aid structure that we have today, which is in desperate need a better funding. Before there was legal aid on a national level, you could not get legal support, and you couldn't access justice. He saw that as as as an appalling situation and made sure it was established nationally. He pioneered the change in divorce laws here; we were the first western country to have no fault divorce in Australia. He joined with New Zealand in taking France to the International Court of Justice for nuclear testing in the Pacific. These were really important and ground-breaking changes that he introduced as Attorney General and there were many more. He has an extraordinary legacy and because of the trauma of the last few years of his life, it has this great sort of operatic sweep of tragedy at the end. I enjoyed that form of writing very much and and that really put me on the path of political biography moving.

### **How has the face of terrorism changed over the last couple of decades?**

It's been some time since this was the primary focus of my research, but my concern was always 'what are the structures we're setting up to deal with terrorism?' When I started looking at it in the early 80s, we didn't yet actually have a structure through the legislation that even had a criminal offence that was specifically termed 'terrorism'. Australia was in quite an unusual situation in that regard. I was interested in looking at what had become very strong security structures for dealing with domestic terrorism (however you define it) and that was a great difficulty: how do you define terrorism? It's a word that carries with it all sorts of implications; many of them implicitly political.

There was there was a very real question about *why* and *do we need* to have specific legislation using the term 'terrorism' rather than using the existing criminal law. For example, how should we deal with bombings? We used existing criminal legislation up until the 1970s. Other jurisdictions including in the UK had introduced very stringent laws specifically targeting terrorism, but one of the great academic and legal points of contest that remain to this day is *how do you define it?* What are the categories of offences? What are the types of things that we are going to label terrorism as opposed to other crimes? What's the point at which they tip over into something that is no longer considered a normal criminal offence as it's currently understood? Australia did introduce a whole new raft of terrorism antiterrorism legislation after the September 11 attacks in the US, and and we had many more since.

That said, those questions still remain because it's very difficult to have a counterterrorism regime that has a lack of certainty around it. That has the potential to lead to some things being pursued and others not being pursued. I think we've seen that with the rise of right-wing terrorism. Many people would argue that in New Zealand, for example, that there was insufficient surveillance and pursuit of right-wing

terrorism because of the overweening focus we developed on religious fundamentalism and so on. We do need to be careful that we find a balance among concerns more broadly. I'm not sure that the things have changed dramatically in terms of where the current threats are coming from, but I do think we need to be alert across a broader range of areas than we perhaps have been in the past. If there's any area that has come to the forefront recently, I think it would be in that area of right-wing populist extremism that manifested in in the United States with the January 6th invasion of Capitol, and in New Zealand. As security forces say all the time: 'we're vigilant'. But they need to make sure they are vigilant across all of those areas, and not and not have an overwhelming focus on one.

Chris McGuire

**anthropocene**

noun /'æn-θrə-pə-si:n/ the period of time during which human activities have had an environmental impact on the Earth regarded as constituting a distinct geological age

We learn what we attend to and think about. For school-age students this is 'the curriculum'. A curriculum specifies the knowledge that is expected to be thought about. What goes in and what stays out of school curricula is a political decision. Every line in a curriculum statement can be judged as a political statement; what the government of the day sees as those things that are needed to thrive, and survive. Far from being values-free, education is value-laden.

There was another time earlier (but not much earlier) in the Anthropocene, four decades before Australia had a 'National Curriculum', where "Save the Whales" was a popular curriculum choice for 1970s primary age students. Nothing is wholly visible in the sub-sea world but large mammals dying on docks and decks was. Such deaths for substitutable consumer products were then up until 1978, still enacted in Australian waters and on coasts, by Australian enterprises. Education and society aligned for what seemed a fairly acceptable behavioural change. And low and behold, whaling mostly stopped and in a generation, whale numbers slowly began to recover. Behavioural change is hard (whaling "mostly" stopped, think scientific research) but yes "we" did it, and education played its part. Behavioural change is hard but tangible results and visible impacts are important levers. Education is essential. Wherever society faces a behavioural change issue the cry "more education is needed" is inevitably heard.

Curriculum is the battleground for what always presents as competing needs. So, to climate mitigation and adaptation, who is going to teach it, and do we have curriculum that will allow learners to think meaningfully about doing so?

To the first challenge within this question- who is going to teach it? Ben Rawlence, inquirer, and adventurer, travelled the Boreal Forest around the top of the world, roaming between 57°N and 72°N. These are not particularly visible latitudes to most of humanity. The epilogue of his book *The Treeline* offers many wonderful visions but elsewhere he makes clear that education is a laggard, where it can least afford to be one. He describes the Anthropocene as a cul-de-sac from which we must retreat

and elsewhere, that the hands of current adults are dripping in hydrocarbons. These are the same, so-called learned hands, that write and teach the curriculum. “Save the Permafrost” now lacks the visceral impact that “Save the Whales” had then.

Humanity is counting on a curriculum that will change behaviour and, if we are lucky, enable a retreat from that cul-de-sac and, if we are extra lucky, within a generation. And “we” is used in the broadest sense; if you are not for we, then you are against humanity. We need to have an all-mammal repeat of the whale experience and it will need to be wrought by our hydrocarbon dripping hands. And so, to the second challenge of the claim: are the learners in our care thinking about the right things? That is, do we have a curriculum for the Anthropocene?

Now some data, hoping for the hopeful. The NSW HSC subject enrolments represent the largest dataset of Year 12 students in Australia, over 75,000 students in 2021. Geography candidates make up 2190 of those students; around 2.9%. Hmm. Perhaps Earth and Environmental Science? 1245 candidates, a mere 1.65%. Not that one either. Let us pivot to thinking of public policy, about incentives and disincentives (to wash those hands) and behavioural change, this being my field of economics. 3,609 Candidates in NSW (4.8%) and yet, in my experience, thinking about investment banking rather than public policy has filled economics courses. So, our first pass looking at a sample of Senior Schooling curriculum choices provides only a trickle, rather than the necessary flood, of world changers.

To my mind, National Curriculum: Geography offers the best hope. It has status in across the entire F-9 Curriculum and practically, it takes young people outside, considers nature and humans’ relationship with it. Thus, consideration of that curriculum for mitigation and adaptation is somewhat urgent for government. And frank realities need facing, perhaps learn less about an isthmus and more about inundation, climate modelling not climate change. This needs to happen, and soon. National Curriculum in all states and territories was enacted in 2014 and “dithering” about the climate mitigation and adaptation was well in train then, as now.

I borrow the term “dithering” from Kim Stanley Robinson’s brilliant book *Ministry for the Future*. It is an optimistic work set in a time-indeterminate, yet not too distant, future. References are made from that future time to our time, right now, labelling now as “the Great Dithering”, with respect to mitigation and adaptation. Dither we must not.

To close, an economist lens applied by an economics educator: much of behavioural economics is about appropriate incentives and disincentives. References

to behavioural change abound above, and our politicians need to, now. Yet, here as in many areas, we have a mismatch of incentives for decision making. Long term rewards should not be given for short-term outcomes. Lifetime pensions for avoiding thinking about the future cannot continue. The activists ought to start with that disconnect. Yet, we educators should start with what we do best: designing some broad, knowledge based, future-focussed curriculum; on behalf of humanity, now and in the future.

Owen Chen

Freedom and justice are two ideals that are often intertwined. In a modern democracy, freedom is one of the most important aspects of a viable government, as it allows the will of the people to be expressed without restriction. Justice is equally important as it upholds one's right to freedom and enforces order in society. Both freedom and justice contribute to the formation of a righteous government, and neither can exist without the support of the other.

Freedom is defined as "the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants." This means that one should not be persecuted in any way for their actions, at least in terms of the law. Freedom does not protect an individual from what others think, as controlling one's thoughts is an impingement on freedom of thought. One can make an argument though, that for true freedom to exist, the public must agree to respect each other regardless of actions or views expressed. It must be noted that 'freedom of speech' for the most part does not refer to absolute freedom. This is because absolute freedom would allow people to go around insulting one another, which would violate one's right to feel safe. In this case, the right to feel safe takes priority over one's right to absolute freedom, as the slight infringement on freedom of speech is better than the complete omission of the right to feel safe. Similarly, freedom of action is allowed to an extent, the limit being when those actions directly affect someone else in an undesirable way. For example, the throwing of rocks is permitted, but not if it results in harm to someone else or their property. The notion of gauging what is considered 'harmful' is quite subjective, nevertheless, this idea must be taken into consideration to prevent individuals from harming the general public. This favouring of safety over freedom corresponds to the principle of democracy as a whole; that is, the best interests of the public overrule the interests of a single person.

Justice involves giving each person what they deserve. It is responsible for three main functions: To provide retribution, compensation, and 'just' distribution. Retribution involves creating fair punishment for those who have violated the law. This means that the consequences of breaking the law should have proportional severity to the act committed. Compensation refers to giving something, usually money, to someone because of a loss inflicted. 'Just' distribution refers to the allocation of perks and burdens to various parts of society. Distributive justice can then be carried out in two ways: based on merit or based on need. Distributive justice

based on merit rewards those who contribute to society and punishes lawbreakers. Contrastingly, distribution based on need involves the distribution of more goods and services to those who need them most, while those who are well off are obligated to help others. Both interpretations of distributive justice are valid, and a mix of the two is often used in democratic law and by extension, the justice system.

As freedom and justice are two important aspects surrounding democracy, they often come into tension with each other. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher from the Enlightenment, states that “[man’s] first law is to provide for his own preservation [of rights].” If freedom is acknowledged as a fundamental right, then Rousseau is stating that one of man’s priorities is to uphold his freedom. As every individual has a right to freedom, they often need the support of justice. Without justice, certain demographics would not have the same freedom as more privileged groups. The concept of justice is what governments use to create measures that support marginalised groups. A common example of this is public school funding. The funding of public schools lowers education costs, which enables more children to attend school. This ensures freedom of education, as well as freedom of thought as the restriction of education (and by extension, knowledge) is a form of oppression. Additionally, society doesn’t use justice to support freedom out of goodwill; society is rationally obligated to support freedom. Both interpretations of justice, merit-based and need-based, support the use of justice to ensure freedom. From a merit-based perspective, if society does the right thing, they should be rewarded with freedom. From a need-based perspective, everyone needs freedom to live a functioning life, so everyone should have it. This reasoning goes to show how freedom and justice are logically constrained to one another. Moreover, true justice needs freedom to operate. Freedom entails, and enables, government because a democratic government cannot be formed without the free opinion of the people. And since justice is a system decided by the government of a society, it too needs freedom. True justice in a democratic society must be decided upon by the will of the people; this cannot be determined if freedom of expression is unachievable.

To conclude, freedom and justice are often in tension with each other, due to these ideals having overlapping roles in a democratic government. They mutually benefit from one another as justice enforces freedom and freedom allows the imposition of justice. Therefore, an aspiring democracy should hold both freedom and justice in tangent with one another to create a successful government.



**About the interviewee**

Tom Koutsantonis is the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining, and Member for West Torrens. He was elected to the South Australian State Parliament in 1997, at age 26 and was elevated to the Ministry in 2009 and remained in Cabinet until the 2018 State election. Over this period, he served as Minister for Correctional Services, Youth and Volunteers, Gambling, Small Business, Transport, Planning and Infrastructure, Mining and Energy, State Development and as Treasurer. With the return of the Labor state government, he has returned to cabinet and is South Australia's longest serving MP.

This interview occurred over the course of half-an-hour via Zoom.

***How did your formative years shape your political intuitions?***

My mother was a committed Liberal, and my dad a committed Labor voter. I drove taxis for about nine months in university, on Friday and Saturday nights, trying to earn some extra income while I was studying. It taught me a lot about people. I worked as a union official after I had formulated my political views. I don't know what it is which makes people vote Labor, Liberal, Greens, or whatever. You just look at the way things are and make an assessment. I think I knew from about when I was your age [17] that I was Labor. I wasn't quite sure why, but was attracted to the Hake-Keating style of government than the alternative. I suppose it's about fairness that I like; always barracking for the underdog.

***How would you describe your political ideology?***

I'm a centrist. I'm never been accused of being left-wing within the Labor Party, although I've been accused of being very right-wing. I've been accused of being very left-wing by my Liberal opponents. I reckon I'm right in the middle. I'm a conservative right-leaning Labor MP.

***Do you think factional problems are rife within the Labor Party? How is infighting managed?***

We manage disputes by talking about them. In the Liberal Party it's winner takes all. In the Liberal Party if you get 50.001% of the vote [internally], you take all of the positions. That means from the leader, right down to the most insignificant

member, you're choosing from a very small pool of people. In the Labor Party, if you get 50.001%, you only choose that many people [faction members] for your team. So, the two groups who are competing for influence put their best people up. There's no one in the Labor Party that hasn't arrived there because of merit. We worked out about 30 years ago that factional infighting is the best way to ensure that the best people rise to the top and share power.

***How do these individual factions find their leaders?***

Young Labor is where we throw people into the deep end. We put the left and right in Young Labor against each other and expect each other to fight. We expect them to form an argument, build coalitions, and trying to convince others to vote for them. I say to everyone in Young Labor who is a member of the right-wing faction that if you can beat the left, the Liberals are easy. The left says the same thing. So, we train amongst ourselves and have a very strong policy promoting young people. We have a generational obligation that the Labor Party must continue to exist. We continue to find young people to ensure that they're given these opportunities.

***Why politics? What made you run for a seat in Parliament?***

When I was about 12, my dad was audited by the tax office. He had a small business and used to be a factory worker. He did his 20 years, saved up, and then bought himself a small business. He went to his accountant, and it was all fine, but then he went to see his local MP. His local MP was able to assist him, and I saw how powerless my dad felt but how the local MP who helped us was able to use his power to help someone who was powerless. That was a good feeling, and I wanted to be able to do something similar.

***The 2018 election saw Labor lose their 16-year power streak in South Australia, but you were able to achieve a strong majority after one term in opposition. What's the secret to Labor's electoral success?***

It's two things. The first one is that the Liberals keep choosing really poor leaders. The second is that we take our profession professionally. I'm not a farmer who's in the Labor Party. I'm not a taxi driver who's in the Labor Party. I'm a professional politician. I have been trained in the Labor Party to do this job and I'm a professional at my craft. I spend time thinking about Parliament and how it works, and I spend time thinking about politics. I educate myself, I read about it, I think about it. I'm no different to anyone else in our leadership team. I recruited Peter Malinauskas and helped recruit Stephen Mullighan. We set about to go after the Libs, and we did it in a professional, organised way. We were unified under a single purpose and had an agenda with a purpose: we exist to deliver change. Our opponents didn't do that, so it was a singular focus with a purpose, training, and professionalism backing it up.

***What are the skills that career politicians need to be successful then?***

Hard work and perseverance, and research skills. You've got to have an instinct for this. It's not something you can learn, but something you have. I think the Labor Party is good at training people to unlock these skills when they've got them, and identifying people that have them. You've got to respect your opponents too. The one thing we've got going for us is that our opponents are from well-to-do, wealthy backgrounds. Not many of them are self-made, and they've never really had to struggle to get something. The Labor MPs always had their faces pressed up against the glass, trying to break through, which gives them a sense of drive. I see it no differently to a fund manager or entrepreneur trying to set up a new business. That type of drive and energy are seen in the members of the Labor Party who are trying to bring down the establishment.

***Have you ever had your eyes on the Labor leadership?***

No. I don't think I could win a general election. I think my brand is too tainted to win a general election. The only way I would ever become leader is if the party had been wiped out and when they needed someone to get in there and start a few fires. My job is that the leader can go off and lead, and have the freedom to go off and do that, whilst making sure everything back-of-house is taken care of.

***How is this 'back-of-house' stuff taken care of?***

With discipline. From the moment you join the Labor Party, what's drilled into you is discipline. We're here to make sure we're fighting for people who are voiceless, so fighting between ourselves and hearing our own voices isn't the aim. Division and recklessness are condemned, and anyone that behaves in that way is written-off pretty quickly. Deceit is death in politics. If we have a disagreement, we'll sort it out behind the scenes and come to a consensus. I think people know that. We're like any organisation with diverse views; there are some that think the [state] Voice to Parliament hasn't gone far enough, and some that think it has gone too far. What we give our leaders the freedom to do is to come up with a decision after consultation, but once we reach a position that's it: we're locked in.

***Malcolm Turnbull and Kevin Rudd have spoken out over what they see as an abuse of NewsCorp's market power. Is media diversity a problem in Australia?***

I'm not into the media bashing; I think it's a poor excuse from politicians. Politicians who resort to blaming the media for their woes are the ones who are really at fault. Malcolm Turnbull and Kevin Rudd weren't brought down by the media but by themselves, and Rupert Murdoch is a convenient excuse. I like media diversity, but it's a free country and people are entitled to own newspapers and print what they want.

If you don't like what they print, don't buy them. There's no one who reads *The Advertiser*, *The Australian*, the *Australian Financial Review*, or *The Guardian* who isn't aware of the fact that there is a level of bias; left or right. So, when people criticise the media, who they're really criticising is Australians. They're saying that people are too stupid to read through the bias in the headlines, and I don't buy it. If you go through my entire Twitter thread or Facebook posts, you'll find no criticism of media outlets. I'll criticise journalists individually if they make a mistake, but attacking Rupert Murdoch is just lazy.

***State Labor recently banned political donations. How prominent was this issue before the ban, and are there any other external forces such as lobbying which sway politicians undemocratically?***

Everyone tries to use money and gain influence in politics in some way. But you're getting half an hour from me for this interview today, which is the same I'd give to Santos. Is there money in politics? Yes, there is. Should it be in politics? No, it shouldn't be. I'm a passionate believer that the power of an idea should win. If you need to use money for an idea it probably means the idea is not strong enough, so I have no problem with removing money from politics. The problem is always that people think politicians are corrupt anyway, and are sellouts. No matter what we do to try and rule out third-party influence, they still believe it's there. We've got a job to do in rebuilding that trust, and the fastest way to do it is to ban donations.

***Why does that continuous distrust between voters and politicians persist?***

I think there's been a breakdown of faith in our institutions. People don't trust the media, courts, and public institutions. The media are in the middle of the biggest disruption to their industry in human history. There are more people that look at Twitter for their news than *AdelaideNow*. People are now using Facebook and Instagram. Anyone who spends five minutes watching Instagram reels will see ridiculous things come up on their feed based on an algorithm, and I don't think we've really understood how this is disrupting media and accurate information. I'm really worried that we need to support traditional media so that people have a trusted place to go. People are losing faith with *CNN*, *The Australian*, or any other outlet; they're going to other places online and doing their own research which is often unverified.

***Who's had the biggest influence on your political career?***

Paul Keating. He left school and joined the Labor Party aged 14, and was self-made; the smartest man I've ever met. He was determined to change the country for the better, determined to give kids like me an opportunity to lead. There used to be a time where only a few certain people could go to university, gain capital, and become entrepreneurs. He brought egalitarianism to capitalism. You can all go out and try to

make money, gain access to capital, and become entrepreneurs. I think he's the greatest reformer this country has ever had.

***He's been pretty outspoken on AUKUS recently - what do you make of that position?***

I disagree with Paul Keating on his views on AUKUS, but it shows his passion for the country. He is not afraid to think independently, which I think is the first sign of leadership. People who think independently are born leaders. I see it in Peter Malinauksas. I saw it in Jay Weatherill, Mike Rann, Bob Hawke, and Paul Keating. People that can think for themselves, whether they're right or wrong, show leadership credentials. On AUKUS I think he's wrong, but his view is an Australian nationalist view rather than an Australia in the rules-based order view. I don't agree with him, but he made a very powerful argument and people listened.

***Let's discuss your ministerial portfolios. Since the outbreak of COVID and wide scale privatisation of the Adelaide Metro there's been dwindling numbers on public transport. What's your plan for Adelaide's public transport network?***

If we don't tackle public transport in the next five years, make it fit for purpose, and make it something people want to catch, the city is going to grind to a halt; we're going to be spending all your tax dollars on more road infrastructure to move more and more cars. Public transport is a no-brainer for us. If it's fast, convenient, and safe, people will catch it. The problem is that in South Australia, we are culturally conditioned to driving everywhere. People don't ride their bikes to school or walk anymore. We're building to meet peak demand and buses can't move. We can't build new train lines in metropolitan Adelaide, so what we've gotta do is control out public transport like an essential service and invest in it. That includes decarbonising our buses. Why? Not just for the environmental benefits but the amenities benefits. Being on an electric bus that is quiet, compared to a diesel bus, is a big amenity improvement. Being on an electric train, rather than a diesel train, is a big amenity improvement. The faster they are, the more efficient they are, and taking you to where you want to go - is better. We've got to stop thinking about bus services as traditional routes and start thinking about the way people *do* catch public transport like Uber and taxis, which is more point-to-point demand driven. Why do buses have to follow a route? Why can't we develop apps that allow people to catch a bus that deviate from published routes but have a more convenient destination in the end? If it's more convenient, then people will catch them. Why do buses have to be a certain size too? Why can't they be smaller and faster? If you look at any bus before the morning rush and after the afternoon peak, they're empty; we're moving air around. So, there's latent capacity there that we can be using to get cars off the road. I think there needs to be a whole rethink about public transport altogether.

***Our journal recently had a discussion with Steven Marshall who argued that it effectively wasn't the role of the state to run these services; the state has no expertise or experience in running them. Why is it the role of the government to keep them going?***

Because it's a monopoly. Any monopoly should be run by the government in terms of the public sector. You wouldn't privatise your police force or fire department. The job of the public transport agency is to provide an efficient, cost-effective transport system to move labour back-and-forth from work and home. The cheaper and more efficiently that's done, the better it is for our economy. The moment you outsource it to a private company is the point at which there naturally has to be a surplus which the investors make. When investors make a surplus that is not reinvested back into services to make our economy more efficient. These services that improve the economy continually need to reinvest in themselves, which doesn't happen under privatisation. There's a shrinking tax base of people and we're outsourcing profits to the private sector when they should go back into public transport. I think Marshall is completely wrong on this. There are some services which the government shouldn't run, I agree. Not everything should be run by the government. But public transport, for me, is an essential service. If we get it right, we save a fortune. We're building the Torrens-Darlington tunnels at a cost of \$15 billion for ten kilometres of road. People are queuing up in their cars. If they're on buses, trains, and trams, we don't need that expenditure. Therefore, the ultimate saving from a publicly owned and operated public transport network is for the government. When private companies run the service, they're dictating to us how often these services run and where they run. It's the wrong way around.

***What part do you see South Australia playing in the renewable energy revolution?***

South Australia is the most decarbonised electricity generator in the world. We are ground-zero when it comes to renewable energy. You might remember when we built the first Tesla 'big battery' at Hornsdale Power Reserve. It was ridiculed by Steven Marshall and Scott Morrison who called it a massive tourist attraction. It's now the template for every jurisdiction in the world of how to store energy. The breakthrough in renewables is going to be in storage. Hydrogen is another form of that storage. On a day like today which is pretty sunny and where there is likely lots of wind in regional South Australia, we're probably generating more renewable energy than we're using; there's a surplus of that renewable energy. Marshall's plan was to turn that renewable energy off because it 'destabilises the grid'. Our plan is to build electrolyzers that can use that cheap energy to make hydrogen so when the sun goes down or the wind stops blowing, we can use that hydrogen in a power station. Alternatively, we can use that hydrogen as a fuel source in a factory to run ovens, making enamel, steel, or in manufacturing. It's carbon free. Our potential in this area is massive, so we're building a 200MW electrolyzer in Whyalla which will be the

largest in the world. We're also going to use a traditional gas-fired generator powered by hydrogen. So why is that important? It's important because if we can prove that you can run a traditional gas-fired turbine on hydrogen (our existing generators that are already built and operational), it means the transition to renewables is cheaper. Those generators also have physical characteristics which help the grid remain stable because they're AC. If we get this to work, the transition becomes cheaper and faster.

***Any regrets from your time in Parliament?***

When I privatised the Motor Accident Commission it lowered everyone's registration fees and I think that was a good thing that made a lasting change. I abolished stamp duty on all commercial transactions, which means that companies (especially family businesses) can transition to the next generation without paying taxes. They're big ticks for me.

My biggest regret is that in this job, people don't know you. They either hate you or really like you. My children are young and growing up in this world where I'm a well-known politician and people have very strong opinions about me, which is tough on them. That's my biggest regret.

**Nicholas Whyte**

In the current socio-economic state of the world, debt has become a central aspect of the global economy. Debt, fundamentally, represents the monetary sum acquired by one party from another, where there is an understanding that the borrowed sum will be repaid, usually with interest. Personal debt entails an assortment of loans and credit secured by individuals for their personal requirements and desires, manifesting in forms such as mortgages, automobile loans, and credit card balances. Expanding to a more extensive scale, global debt signifies the aggregate of all outstanding liabilities shouldered by countries, corporations, and households worldwide. This article aims to debunk three common misconceptions: the idea that all debt is inherently bad; the notion that high levels of global debt will inevitably lead to an economic collapse; and the misconception that individual countries' debt is unrelated to the global debt situation. The thesis of this essay asserts that a refined comprehension of debt's role within the global economic structure is imperative for successfully navigating its intricacies and acknowledging that debt is not inherently adverse.

The first misconception that this essay will cover, is the idea that all debt is inherently bad. Debt commonly carries negative connotations, which gives the notion that it should be circumvented by any means possible. However, this oversimplified perspective disregards debt's multifaceted nature and its potential advantages when properly managed. Debt can be powerful as a tool to stimulate economic growth, as it can allow businesses and countries to expand with investments in infrastructure, education, and technology. This investment may also create jobs and innovation. For instance, the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act implemented by the US government in 2020, financed through debt, effectively stopped the US from going deeper into a recession and helping millions. This shows how debt can be effectively employed to address urgent societal necessities. Moreover, it is critical to find distinctions between the different types of debt – “good” and “bad”. “Good” debt can be defined as borrowing that has long-term benefits, including investments in education, infrastructure, or assets that appreciate. Conversely, “bad” debt entails borrowing for short-term consumption or depreciating assets. The McKinsey Global Institute's analysis of forty-seven nations discovered that countries with elevated levels of “good” debt, such as productive government expenditure or investments in education, exhibited more better economic growth compared to those predominantly burdened by “bad” debt. Furthermore, assessing the role of interest rates is crucial when appraising debt. Low-interest rates render borrowing more



appealing and manageable, as they diminish the expense of servicing debt. A report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) showed that the global average interest rate on government debt has been declining steadily since the 1980s. This has facilitated more manageable debt for countries. This implies that debt may not be as inherently pernicious as commonly portrayed, provided it is prudently managed. Debt can also serve as a means of redistributing wealth and creating financial stability. Sovereign debt frequently involves affluent countries lending to lower-income nations to support their development and stimulate economic growth. When used effectively, this financial assistance can contribute to reducing global disparities and promoting shared prosperity. While excessive and poorly managed debt can lead to undesirable consequences, the misconception that all debt is inherently bad and harmful for countries is a gross oversimplification. By acknowledging the nuanced role of debt in the global economy, its ability to stimulate growth, differentiating between "good" and "bad" debt, comprehending the impact of interest rates, and facilitating global wealth redistribution, we can challenge this misconception and recognise the intricacies of global debt.

Another prevailing misconception this report aims to address is the belief that high levels of global debt will inevitably lead to an economic collapse. While it is accurate that excessive debt can present troubles and harms, it is vital to examine the broader context and factors contributing to the global economy's resilience despite increasing debt. It is important to understand the role that central banks hold in alleviating risks linked to high levels of debt. Central banks globally, including the Federal Reserve in the United States and the European Central Bank, have instituted various monetary policies to counter the potential adverse effects of debt. Quantitative easing (QE) programs, comprising government bond purchases to augment the money supply and reduce interest rates, have been extensively used to support economic growth and sustain financial stability during high debt periods. These actions can avert a disastrous economic collapse by guaranteeing sufficient liquidity in financial markets and fostering investment. It is also imperative to acknowledge that not all high global debt instances have resulted in economic crises. In fact, numerous historical cases demonstrate that countries can effectively manage and decrease their debt levels over time. For example, following World War II, the United Kingdom's debt-to-GDP ratio exceeded 200%, but it was gradually reduced through economic growth, fiscal discipline, and inflation. This instance underscores that high debt levels do not necessarily foreshadow imminent economic catastrophe. The global economy has exhibited remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of various challenges, including high debt periods. For instance, the world economy recovered swiftly from the 2007-2008 Global Financial Crisis, despite the substantial public debt increase that ensued. This recovery can be ascribed to the synchronised efforts of governments and central banks worldwide to implement fiscal and

monetary policies that bolstered economic growth and stability. The role of economic growth in counterbalancing elevated levels of debt is crucial. When an economy expands at a faster pace than its debt, the debt-to-GDP ratio will naturally diminish over time, decreasing the likelihood of a debt-driven collapse. A 2018 World Bank study discovered that countries with higher economic growth levels were better equipped to manage their debt burdens and avoid crises. This emphasises the importance of nurturing growth and innovation to mitigate risks associated with high global debt levels. While elevated global debt levels can pose significant challenges and risks, the idea that they will unavoidably result in an economic collapse is flawed. By examining central banks' role in debt management, recognising successful debt reduction historical examples, appreciating the global economy's resilience, and stressing the significance of economic growth, a more nuanced understanding of global debt complexities can be attained.

The final misconception that this essay aims to invalidate is the conviction that individual nations' debt is unconnected to the global debt predicament. This viewpoint neglects the interdependence of the global economy and the substantial influence that a country's debt may exert on international financial stability and expansion. It is imperative to acknowledge that the global financial system is interconnected profoundly, with nations worldwide relying on one another for commerce, investment, and financing. Consequently, a debt crisis in a single country can rapidly disseminate to others via various conduits, such as trade linkages, financial contagion, and investor sentiment. For example, the European sovereign debt crisis commencing in 2009 with Greece's fiscal difficulties ultimately impacted numerous other European nations, resulting in widespread economic turbulence, and necessitating international bailouts. This illustration emphasises that individual countries' debt is far from being a detached matter. Furthermore, the global economy is contingent on a fine balance of creditor and debtor countries. Creditor nations, like China and Germany, maintain current account surpluses and lend to debtor nations, which consequently run deficits and borrow from the former. This symbiotic association enables global commerce and investment to function seamlessly. However, it also signifies that a debt crisis in a prominent debtor nation could disrupt the entire system, affecting both creditor and debtor countries. This interconnectedness exhibits the significance of individual nations' debt to the broader global debt situation. Additionally, the international community frequently assumes a crucial role in managing and resolving debt crises, with organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank providing financial assistance and policy guidance to countries confronting fiscal challenges. This collaborative strategy to address debt issues highlights the actuality that individual countries' debt is not an isolated concern but rather a matter of global significance. The conviction that individual countries' debt is unrelated to the global debt situation is a misconception

that neglects the intricate interconnections between national economies and the global financial system. By scrutinising the channels through which debt crises can propagate, recognising the interdependence of creditor and debtor countries, comprehending the burgeoning influence of emerging market economies, and acknowledging the role of international collaboration, we can better appreciate the complexities of global debt and its repercussions on the world economy.

This essay has addressed three main misconceptions associated with global debt: the idea that all debt is inherently bad; the notion that high levels of global debt will inevitably lead to an economic collapse; and the misconception that individual countries' debt is unrelated to the global debt situation. By uprooting these misconceptions, and showing the negative effects that spreading them has, we are able to make more informed decisions regarding the global economy due to a greater understanding of global debt – the benefits and the drawbacks it presents and how it affects us on not only a global scale but also in smaller communities.

**About the interviewee**

Senator Linda Reynolds was first elected to the Australian Senate in 2014, where she represents Western Australia. She has served as a cabinet minister in the portfolios of Government Services, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Defence and Defence Industry, Emergency Management and North Queensland Recovery. Senator Reynolds is a passionate campaigner in Australia and internationally for anti-trafficking and anti-slavery measures. She represents the Australian Parliament at the Inter-Parliamentary Union and is a rapporteur on orphanage trafficking. She is also a member of the Parliamentary taskforce on Human Trafficking.

This interview occurred via phone call over the course of an hour. This transcript touches on a majority of the themes, but not all questions, discussed, with the discussion edited for clarity and length.

***What inspired you to become involved in politics and motivated you to run for office?***

I got involved in politics at university. I got to know some Young Liberals and the Liberal Party philosophy resonated with me. I had already been in the army by that stage, and the whole mentality of service is essential. So I started getting involved in the Young Liberals through campaigning as a volunteer. I was offered a job with a politician called Fred Chaney. That was my first real job and my first job in politics. And I was hooked. I loved it. I spent five years working in Midland in his electorate office and loved to help and connect with those coming through the door. My second passion in life had been found. I worked for many years in politics as a staffer, going in and out of the Liberal Party and the army. I was very happy for a long time; I was very content with being a staffer. At one point, I was the Deputy Director of the Liberal Party nationally but hadn't started thinking about running myself until my early 40s. I was in the army full-time but still doing political training overseas and helping candidates from countries like Papua New Guinea. One of them told me, "You're telling us how to become a politician? Why are you not a politician?" That's a good question, I thought. And then I had another woman ask me the same thing. And I thought, well, actually, I should be! So that's when the opportunity presented itself. A politician passed away, Senator Judith Adam, here in W.A. I had the chance, so I ran for the preselection for the Senate. A long journey, but it worked out quite well in the end.

***Within your work for the Liberal Party, you've focused on various issues like gender equality, modern slavery, and many others. How did you first become interested in advocating for these topics?***

For gender, it came a bit later in life. I'd spent my career in the army and politics. These are very male-dominated and masculine environments, so I never really wanted to discuss gender. I thought, well, if, like so many women of my generation, we just if we did our jobs and worked hard, we would succeed. But that wasn't much the case, and I, and other women, saw other men who didn't have as much experience as us getting promoted. So I became involved with the Gender Advisory Council of the Australian Army. One day, I did a group session with women of my rank, and they did not want to be there and talk about gender. Hearing one of these women say, 'I don't want to be here; I don't want to be seen as a woman. I don't want to talk about being a woman' made me think: what's wrong with being seen? Not being proud of being a woman. So I started talking about it within the army and sharing my story. I realised the same thing was happening in the Liberal Party and many other professions where women have to act like men to earn promotions. That's how I ended up going overseas and ended up helping other women learn how to run a campaign and how to find voices in politics.

My interest in modern slavery started about ten years ago. One of the many things I love about being a Senator is that if you're a lower House member, you've got a constituency and a discrete group of people you're responsible for. When you're a Senator, you're responsible for everybody in the state and no one in particular. Hence, we traverse every issue that's relevant to all of Australia. I started getting interested in modern slavery and started to do more training and learn more about it; the more I learned about it, the more concerned I became. I realised it was happening here, so I got involved. I looked at the U.K. Model and conducted a review as then Minister of Home Affairs. That was an absolute highlight of my career.

***The youth demographic has historically been underrepresented in politics. What are the critical reasons for this, and what can be done to increase this youth participation in politics?***

That's just such an essential question for our nation's future. Some say that young people don't care anymore. That's completely wrong, but they also care about things differently than we used to. Young people of your generation think about issues. They don't necessarily think about problems in a geopolitical or economic sense, but they think about and care about issues. People need to take it to the next step. For instance, what is the problem with the environment and with our energy options? And then how do we fix this, and how do we fix it so that we all can still have power? This requires understanding economics and other things before you can fix it. And obviously, it's not just the environment. Politicians also have to understand that when

we grew up, we too looked at things through a philosophical lens. For example, some have more of a socialist or left-wing perspective on human rights and equality of opportunity. This is very valid, but those of us who align with a right-wing philosophy are equally concerned about people. When we look at the democratic freedoms that we preserve and their responsibilities, it doesn't mean everybody has the same outcome in life. People can realise their own aspirations in life. Social media doesn't help because if you're only getting information from an echo chamber that talks about the environment in a certain way, then that's all you'll ever see and hear and read on social media. We also live in a more politically correct world. Young people are not encouraged to debate. Understanding different points and listening to contrary views is the right thing to do.

***What are you and the Liberal Party specifically doing to increase youth engagement in political processes and help them look towards solutions rather than being angry?***

There was this conventional wisdom that once people got older, grew up, started having a mortgage, having their own families, they would naturally gravitate towards the Liberal Party and the Right. Now, some do, but many are not. I think we have to better understand why young people are angry, why they're frustrated, and why they feel disempowered. Your generation is in the best possible time and place to have your voice heard and make constructive solutions rather than being angry. I think the Liberal Party has to understand that better sometimes and find far better ways to communicate. You know what we stand for because no one in the Liberal Party wants to worsen the environment for their children.

***As the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs in 2018, you introduced the Modern Slavery bill the Australian Parliament passed. Can you tell us about your motivation for introducing the bill and the impact it's had?***

I learned about this through a friend who ran an organisation called Walk Free, which Andrew Forrest from W.A. had set up through one of his charitable actions. He was very passionate about it because he discovered that he had slavery throughout the supply chain overseas. He was shocked and wanted to start doing something about it. So, I learned more about it, and I thought we needed legislation to deal with this. So and a couple of other parliamentarians from Australia went to the U.K. Theresa May, their former Prime Minister was passionate about it, so she pushed through this legislation. We had a yearlong parliamentary inquiry which was very impactful. We had this most amazing testimony, and it was really clear that we had slavery here in Australia that we needed to tackle and that we contributed to slavery in many other nations throughout supply chains. As the Assistant Minister, I handled that bill and all the negotiations with Labor and the Greens. That was my proudest moment in Parliament. Nothing is more important to a Liberal than emancipation and

individual freedom, to give people destiny over their own lives and not be exploited by somebody else. Before the bill, this was hidden in plain sight, but we didn't understand what it was and didn't want to do anything about it.

***Part of the modern slavery bill requires businesses to report on their efforts to identify and address modern slavery in their supply chains, as you just talked about. How effective do you believe this reporting requirement has been, and what are some of the key challenges in ensuring its compliance?***

I'm discussing this at the Human Rights Committee, of which I'm a member, and we're thinking about going in and looking at this. The Home Affairs department is conducting a review of the legislation at the moment. But we want to look at it more from a different angle: putting a requirement on companies to talk to their supply chains. What the bill has done, I think, is very effective; it has raised the profile and the understanding of modern slavery. Companies now have to report it; some are taking more proactive steps to analyse their supply chains. I think that's a big tick. There have been prosecutions and convictions for people in Australia under the Criminal Code for things like sex trafficking, which is a huge problem here. There's also labour exploitation with foreign workers with slavery-like conditions and forced marriage by young girls. So, there are some prosecutions, but they're really hard to do. Successful prosecution requires somebody to tell a story. So, it's a start, and that's probably the best way to describe it; the bill is a start. But more needs to be done, so the next stage is giving the legislation more teeth.

***Given this is a global issue, how can Australia work with other countries to combat it? What role can the international community play in ending modern slavery?***

The only way is through constant vigilance and working together to raise awareness in Australia. We must also understand the impacts of our behaviour, knowingly or not, and change our behaviour. This only works if we join the rest of the world, with other nations which cause the problem and those who suffer for it. I'm involved with an organisation called the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Now I'm a representative from the Australian Parliament on that. I'll propose a resolution for all parliaments to take action against orphanage trafficking, which is a sub-area of modern slavery. When people visit orphanages, they are often paying people traffickers. It's such a perfect scam because no one wants to think that the children they have met or that they think they're supporting have been removed from their families so that they can feel good about themselves. This requires action from countries like Australia, and there are many countries whose citizens are well-meaning with good intentions. But they've unknowingly created a demand for orphans. This creates a market shortage, so traffickers recruit through families, take children from their families, and give them new identities. It truly is a tragic cycle and requires global cooperation.

***You've been a particularly vocal advocate for responsible travel and ethical volunteering concerning our growing trend of voluntourism. What inspired you to become involved with this issue?***

I went on a trip to Cambodia at the beginning of 2016. I went with Save the Children, and they take politicians to places worldwide where we have big aid programmes to see programmes in action. So, I ask you know, what can we do? What can we do? And it just hit me; they keep saying: stop people from coming here and supporting these institutions. More and more of these orphans keep being removed from their families and we have no visibility since they're often not registered with the state. They are just invisible children. That shocked me. I found that many organisations knew about it and had started reporting on it. So, I came back to Australia and thought, what can I do about this? So, I started writing to schools, and I did some little brochures, flyers, and things. But it didn't take off, and it wasn't until the Modern Slavery Act that I realised it was a form of trafficking and slavery. In the modern slavery inquiry, I had voluntourism put in there, so we had a special hearing on it from people worldwide.

***What role do educational institutions play in ensuring that the next generation is informed, engaged, and thinks critically?***

Provide different points of view and encourage people to seek them out. To avoid the echo chamber and say there are different points of view for these reasons. And you encourage people to think about it and do their research. Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat doesn't provide that. It's not a source of news. It doesn't provide policy information on which to debate, discuss and critically think. Politics and life are like a big change programme. And, in fact, I've got this great fridge magnet here that I always keep with me. And it's former U.S. president Woodrow Wilson. And he said, 'If you want to make enemies try to change something'. And that is so true. That's what a politician's job is. It is to keep implementing change. Now, whether it's legislative change, whether it's social change, that's what we do.



**Hugo Evans**

Effective Altruism (EA) was created as a movement to advocate for the introduction of pragmatic reasoning to maximise the benefit provided to charitable giving. The movement has gained significant traction over the past few years, with the continual support of highly influential philosophers such as Peter Singer or William MacAskill. However, the movement is not without flaws. This article will show the fact that EA has a frustratingly infeasible focus on unmeasurable outcomes, and fails to fix systemic issues, instead focusing on short term fixes. The the purely monetary nature of the organisation is also of concern. All in all, EA has very sound principled basis of high moral admirability in its objective create the best world for the greatest number of people, but the oversimplification of social issues in the process leads to a few holes in the 'perfect practical solution'.

One of the primary beliefs in EA is the focus on the creation of a measurable outcome. EA enthusiasts argue that to maximise the impact/outcome of charity, the primary focus should be on the donation of funds to objectively quantifiable outcomes. While this approach may sound reasonable on the surface, it can be problematic in practice. For one, this prioritisation can lead to the justification for a solution to a social problem being a short-term immediate solution, and a lack of fixing of longstanding systemic problems relating to the issue. For example, if EA were to give food to poverty ridden areas, it would provide immediate results in the increase in nutrition in these areas but would not fix the poverty cycle and hence not fully create a better world for these people to live. This is purely because of the oversimplification of social issues that EA provides, hence not being 'truly effective' under this branch of EA's beliefs.

Further to this idea of true effectiveness and systemic issues is that any solution that EA provides never truly fixes the world and is merely just the throwing away of money by an organisation that is designed to prevent people from doing just that. The lack of addressing the root of social issues, like the poverty cycle, or stopping climate change, in priority for providing minimal levels of welfare and humanitarian aid in the short term, (which for the most part would be provided for any way by other donors) means that there is a distinct lack of funding to tackle underlying issues in society. This ultimately means that all EA does is provide a moderate level of relief and further perpetuates issues and then claims that that is the most pragmatic way that humanity can solve these social issues.

Another concern is the impracticality of EA and obsession with money as an end in itself. That is, the movement completely disregards any form of non-monetary contributions to charity like advocacy and volunteering (unless said advocacy is for the sole purpose of raising more money). EA's entire basis for how it teaches people to give away to charity is based off of the capitalistic nature of the bourgeois giving money to the lower class to try and 'even the playing field'. This 19th century line of thought creates a materialistic nature to how we can help create a better society, as it dumbs helping others to just giving them money for welfare, whilst completely ignoring things like volunteering and advocacy, which are equally important in the fixing of long-term issues. EA's justification for this is that whether or not charity is local or not it shouldn't matter; in either case, one has a moral obligation to contribute to help others. However, whilst this may be true under a purely monetary viewpoint on charity, this again disregards the giving up of anything other than money or items, hence removing the giving up of one's time, which is as equally useful to the creation of a better society, which would only be possible in a local context.

Moreover, EA is flawed in its potential to prioritise certain causes over others based on a narrow conception of what constitutes "effective" giving. This is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it ignores the fact that different people may have different values and priorities when it comes to charitable giving. Their ostensible focus using on evidence and reason may lead to a tendency to prioritise causes that are seen as more objectively important, such as global health or poverty alleviation, at the expense of causes that may be more personally meaningful or aligned with an individual's values. Resultantly, it has created a homogenous movement that fails to fully engage with diverse perspectives and experiences. This is because EA's focus on evidence and reason has led to a narrow conception of what constitutes "rational" giving, which does not fully appreciate the value of different perspectives and experiences.

In conclusion, effective altruism is a flawed movement that, while well-intentioned, fails to fully appreciate the complex nature of social issues. Its narrow focus on (not-so) measurable outcomes, failure to address systemic issues, potential to overlook the value of non-monetary contributions, tendency to prioritise certain causes over others, and assumption that charitable giving is the best way to address social issues, are all reasons why effective altruism may fall short of creating lasting change. While effective altruism can be a valuable tool for addressing social issues, it should not be seen as the only approach, and it should be coupled with other tools, such as advocacy and community organising. Only by acknowledging the limitations of effective altruism and engaging with a wide range of approaches can we create lasting and meaningful change in the world.

Henry Brill Reed

### **Political history**

Hong Kong has been globally recognised for its technological advances, with bustling diversity, trade, and life. This has not come without its many traumas, however. International attention has been drawn toward the nation throughout recent decades as a result of protesting to the government's 'disregard for democratic rights and freedom'. I am here to give you the basics on the history of Hong Kong politics and the events that led to the protests. For over 150 years from 1841 to 1997, Hong Kong sat under British rule. Authoritarianism was highly prevalent throughout this period and the Legislative Council consisted almost entirely of members appointed by the British monarch. This was to change following vital political reforms towards the end of British rule, paving the way for Hong Kong's current political system. In 1984, the British and Chinese governments signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which stated that Hong Kong would be returned to China in 1997 as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) with a high degree of autonomy.

The Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini constitution, was enacted in 1990, which established the political structure for the SAR. Under the Basic Law, Hong Kong has a Chief Executive who is elected by a 1,200-member Election Committee. In order to assist them, the Chief Executive then appoints their own Executive Council into government, and the Legislative Council is elected by a combination of direct election and functional constituencies representing various professional and interest groups. The primitive constitutional imperatives also guarantee a range of civil and political rights, including freedom of speech, assembly, and the press.

### **The Political Turmoil of the Early 2000s**

Following the handover in 1997, Hong Kong experienced initial success and operated with political efficiency, however, poor government policy in both ethical and legislative controversy sparked discontent and protests leading into the early 2000s.

Most noteworthy perhaps of such issues was the government's attempt to pass a national security law in 2003. Such a law criminalised acts of secession, subversion, and terrorism against the Chinese government, and many Hong Kong residents expressed concern claiming violation of civil liberty and political autonomy. This provoked major protest, forcing the eventual withdrawal of these government policies.

Furthermore, government attempts to reinvent Hong Kong's education system in 2012 through changes in the curriculum was perceived to closely indoctrinate students into the values of the Chinese government. This resulted in further protesting, and in a similar manner to the government's 2003 security law, they were once again forced to withdraw their policy.

### **The Umbrella/Pro-Democracy Movement**

2014 saw pro-democracy ignite into conflict, with ground roots movements forming throughout the entirety of Hong Kong. The population expressed concern of government oppression and demanded universal suffrage and the right to directly elect political members such as the city's chief executive. In protesting for such policy changes, Hong Kong faced the most violent protesting thus far, and as such, this movement became known as the Umbrella Movement due to the umbrellas used by protesters in protecting themselves from police weaponry such as tear gas and pepper spray. After 79 days of continuous and relentless protest, Hong Kong citizens had seized major roads and large segments of Hong Kong's central business district, however this was not enough to create change, and the government rejected any demands for policy change. Five years later (in 2019), protests became highly prevalent in Hong Kong once again, following a controversial extradition bill that allowed alleged criminals to be extradited to mainland China for trial. These protests quickly expanded into broader, ideologically driven pro-democracy protests, with demands for investigations into police brutality, and the release of arrested protesters. The protests were marked by violent conflicts between both protesting Hong Kong Citizens and the Chinese police force, with tear gas, rubber bullets, and live rounds used by the police. The protests also had a significant impact on Hong Kong's economy, with many businesses suffering losses as a result of the unrest.

Throughout 2019 and into 2020, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, protesters remained highly active and increasingly more violent. As such, June 2020 saw the Chinese government passing a new national security law for Hong Kong, once again criminalizing acts of secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces. The law has been criticised for its broad and overarching ideological critiques, and its further violation of Hong Kong liberty and political autonomy. The passing of

the national security law provoked further crackdown on pro-democracy activists and protesters. Many activists and lawmakers have been arrested or charged, and several pro-democracy media outlets have been shut down. The law has also had a chilling effect on freedom of expression and the press in Hong Kong.

### **The Future of Hong Kong Politics**

The current political situation in Hong Kong remains uncertain. Weary from protests harmful government legislation, concerns have deepened regarding Hong Kong's political and ethical legitimacy. The Chinese government has shown little willingness to compromise or make concessions, and the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong is facing increasing pressure and repression. However, Hong Kong has a long history of resilience and activism, and there are many people in the city who are still fighting for democracy and civil liberties. With expressions of concern about the situation in Hong Kong, many countries have openly expressed demands upon China to respect Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights.

In summary, a unique complexity overshadows the Hong Kong-Beijing relationship, with a history of protest, disregard, and political turmoil. With the citizens of Hong Kong still fighting for their right to civil liberty and democratic freedom, the future is far from predictable, however their strive for justice will remain a vital demonstration of humanity's drive towards political structures that enable freedom. It was Martin Luther King Jr. who said, "the arc of moral history is long, but it bends towards justice." With the continual infringement on the liberty of Hong Kong's residents, and refusal of Beijing to maintain respectful dialogues with representatives from the city, perhaps this moral arc is bending too slowly.

Fraser Newman

The Australian Football League or AFL is the predominant sporting fixture in the country, which generates over \$750 million every single year as a result of its cult-like following for the best part of 8 months. Whether it be the regular season, the finals, pre-season or off-season, there is always someone in Australia talking about footy. From late march to early October, it dominates the TV networks in Australia from Thursday through Sunday, with some states even getting public holidays just for the football. All this attention begs one to ask the question, how does the economy of the AFL work?

Firstly, it must be stated that the league is divided up into 18 teams spread across 5 states with a significant number in Victoria, each with various amounts of success and support. Thus, the League has to fund each club differently. For example, in 2021 the Gold Coast Suns were distributed \$25.4 million (all amounts in AUD) directly from the AFL, whilst the West Coast Eagles were distributed only \$11.8 million, and yet the Eagles had the second largest income in the league with two and half times the like of Gold Coast. So where is this income coming from?

Most of this income is coming from club membership, where an individual can buy essentially a season pass where the more money you spend the higher quality experience of which is received (i.e., better seats which are reserved for an entire season, club updates, special club memorabilia). All of these factors increase the loyalty of a supporter base, and unsurprisingly, these memberships are highest for clubs that have been in the AFL for a long time. Thus, as a club ages, the trend has been towards them earning more money as people are literally born into supporting an AFL team. In states where football is not the dominating sporting fixture (as in Queensland and New South Wales where rugby is also a large spectacle), memberships aren't as high as people are split between AFL and NRL. This results in teams like West Coast and Richmond having memberships of over 100,000, while Brisbane, GWS and Gold Coast have less than 40,000 each.

A final place in which the income of the AFL clubs generate income is through home games marquee time slots (Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, and unsurprisingly Victorian teams sell a lot more tickets than mosts) which generate on average 25% more income than other games due to them not being in awkward times.

Because there is a much higher number of Victorian teams, it can be almost guaranteed that each weekend at least 1 marquee time slot will be in Victoria, whilst it might be every other week for the rest of the clubs in the league. However, due to this over-saturation of games in Victoria, clubs like Adelaide West Coast and Fremantle have much more consistent participation in marquee games, likely due to the scarcer nature of them.

Now that we have established where most of this income is coming from, (AFL distribution, club membership and home games at marquee times), it must be discussed where all this money is going. Predictably most of it is going to the players, as well... you can't have a sporting league without the players... Anyway, out of the AFL's total revenue, an astounding 28% of it goes to players, a group of 762 in a larger group of over 120,000 people employed in the industry, either by the AFL, the clubs or by separate organisations affiliated with the AFL. The players earn about 11% of their clubs' revenue. These wages are not spread evenly, as those who are perceived most 'valuable' to a club earn disproportionately higher salaries. Whether this value be the increased chance of winning games, or in Lance Franklin's case, selling merchandise depends on the player. Then players can often earn upwards of \$800,000 a year, and in 2021, six players earned over a million dollars a year (which equates to over a generous \$40,000 a game). However, as I alluded to earlier, these wages are not distributed evenly, with the average AFL player only earning \$370,000 a year, as well as over 130 players on less than \$200,000 a year.

However, with 28% of the revenue going to just 0.635% of those employed by the AFL, how does it make a profit? Well, that's the neat part - sometimes they don't. In 2021, the AFL lost around \$46 million, but in 2022 they made a profit of \$23 million. So, it fluctuates year to year, with 2021 being at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic likely being one of the key reasons to this loss, as well as infrastructure developments and maintenance which contributes to a significant part of the AFL's income. Ultimately, the AFL is truly an economic powerhouse. They remain in a very healthy financial situation, and until football dwindles in popularity (an extremely unlikely circumstance at the moment), will remain so for years to come.

Thomas Henchcliffe

I was only three when Prince Charles told my baby-self that we only had "96 months to save the world." Of course, being the clueless baby I was, I probably thought he meant the oncoming threat of some terrible monster that only Superman could defeat. But then I heard it again from the British Prime Minister in the same year, saying we had 50 days to 'save the planet from catastrophe'. So, then I logically thought, Superman better hurry up, or we're doomed. But then, when I was 7, I was told by Professor Peter Wadhams that we would be "ice-free in two years". And then I was 8 when France's Foreign Minister said we had "500 days to avoid climate chaos". And although I may still be the same three-year-old child, as you have probably worked out by now, we didn't all die in 2017, nor late 2009 or even in 2016. And the Arctic certainty isn't ice-free. So, at this point, you may be wondering what this Essay is even about. Is it a denial of climate change? A scepticism of scientific literature? Or a rant about left-wing political discourse and decision-making? In this article, I'll be exploring the secret of the fearmongering from climate change and the impacts that it has had on young people and on the way, we approach the issue. Firstly, I will preface this piece by saying I am not a climate change denier. Climate change is obviously an issue and a significant one, albeit a long-term one. My gripe comes with so-called 'solutions' which, in an ironic turn, are unsustainable and detrimental for Australia.

So firstly, what do I mean by 'fear mongering' and how does this play out in Australia? Fearmongering broadly implies deliberately arousing public fear and alarm over an issue. But concerning climate change, it's so much more. Everywhere you look at any day of the week or month of the year, you are bound to find articles from scientists, opinion pieces from political commentators or speeches from MPs about climate change. Irrespective of the rest of their material, they all have one central theme: the impending doom of climate change. The irrevocable force of nature caused by us. Or, as Prime Minister Albanese put it, "the biggest threat" to Australia. All this is perpetuated by a media cycle that repeatedly spits out bold headlines promoting the end of humanity. And for the average Australian, especially a young person, this can be extremely overwhelming. It's easy to look at the commentary, the speeches and the articles and say, 'We're finished'. But there are a few responses to this.

Firstly, as I began this article, the predictions from numerous professors, scientists, governments and even royalty have been wrong. People have been claiming



an imminent end to the world for decades. But time and time again, the deadline has come... and passed without a hiccup. It's essential to recognise that not all estimates are wrong; in fact, many have eventuated. But often, as has been historically proven, the more radical the claim, the less it happened. The issue, however, is that these radical articles become the basis of public discourse, enshrined in our conversations and even into the furthest reaches of government and parliament. And as I said, for the average Australian, these 'deadlines' become significant in everyday thought. To the extent that it is detrimental to human psychology, a persistent fear of inevitable and imminent death follows overhead like the plague.

It has wide-reaching impacts on Australia's mental health, priorities, and everyday interactions with each other. But it also disproportionately affects young people. As a young person, I can attest to the amount of concern, angst and worry about the spectre of climate change. From hushed conversations between peers in the corridor to outright protests and calls to parliament, it seems the most significant issue facing young people is climate change. This predominately stems from the perception that there won't be a planet to inherit for people our age and that it's our future being whisked away. Anger and anxiety are the names of the game. But even if I need more than my anecdotal evidence, there are numerous research papers, like a new inquiry by Professor Tianyi Ma, outlining climate change and its impact on young people's well-being, with more and more research being done. But what is the effect of this aside from the devastating impact on young people's mental health? It pushes a much broader and possibly more severe issue of how we as a country address Climate Change. As it stands, Labour and the Greens, in their quasi-coalition, along with a few other left-leaning independents, are continually pressing for a more progressive climate policy in response to the fear and the pressure from citizens of Australia, particularly the outspoken youth. This pressure leads to the classic political pitfall: prioritising optics and doing 'things' instead of solving the problem. The current issue for the government is that they won the election in strong part due to their campaign on climate change with various promises of emission goals etc., thus further locking them into this path.

But what does this path look like, and why is it wrong? Firstly, in the energy sector, it manifests in constant messaging around the harmful use of fossil fuels and the push to adopt renewable alternatives. This includes setting destruction deadlines for coal-fired power plants, investing in new renewable technology, and creating more sustainable forms of electricity. The problem is that they are doing too much too soon because of external pressure. I agree with the need to move away from fossil fuels, but when NSW and a lot of Australia are facing electricity shortages, or are projected to, the last thing that should happen is hampering our electricity production. This is especially true given the lack of renewables in place. When writing this article,

Australia's oldest coal-fired powerplant, NSW's Hunter Valley Liddell power station, is set to be shut down in a week. But as highlighted, there is currently no renewable electricity substitute available, meaning that NSW will be at a severe deficit of electricity for the foreseeable future. This is just one example, but the point here is that renewables are all well and good, as long as they are spaced out, and certainly not at the cost of an Australian family's ability to light their home. Coal currently makes up 69% of our electricity, and the irresponsible and frankly stupid approach of just 'shutting it down' is highly harmful. They can't have their cake and eat it. Additionally, on other fossil fuel uses, let us analyse exports and domestic consumption. There has been an increasing push from Labour to reduce Australia's coal exports significantly to allow for carbon emission targets to be met. Coal makes up 15% of our exports or around \$60 Billion in revenue. The loss or even reduction of this industry significantly impacts jobs, government spending, and our overall GDP. In domestic consumption, the government has had renewed efforts at increasing the budget for things like electric vehicles, e.g., subsidising purchase and development, all the while raising taxes on fuel and the cost of a petrol car. The only problem is that 3.8% of new car sales are electric with nearly all of those being in rich neighbours in cities like Canberra, Sydney, and Melbourne. This disproportionately affects lower-income families who cannot afford the still exorbitant subsidised electric vehicle costs and now have to pay for a heavily taxed petrol car. They didn't have much money to spend in the first place, and because of this overly ambitious, progressive climate policy, they have even less. Electric cars can never happen on a wide scale in Australia. The reason why is quite intuitive. If you were to drive from Adelaide to Alice Springs, you would likely need to stop for fuel at some point. With a petrol car, it's easy. Stop for a second, fill up and off you go. But for electric cars, you first need to find a charging station in the middle of nowhere and then wait hours for it to charge before you can hit the road again with your quickly depleting battery. The reality is that because of Australia's geographical orientation and the nature of our roads/way of travelling, electric cars are simply impractical for anything other than inner-city driving.

But thirdly and quite importantly, we are but a grain of rice in a bowl. While still important, our actions to reduce our emissions will have little impact on global emissions. For every coal-fired power station we demolish, China builds two more. Or a developing nation, in need of power produces four so that their people can have electricity at night. And indeed, our 'Net Zero by 2050' pales compared to China's annual 11.47 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> released annually. When it comes at the cost of so much for so little gain, that is the point at which it is no longer the right step for Australia.

Ultimately, even three brief examples clearly show the irrational and irresponsible 'solutions' the Labour Government currently are pushing, backed by other left-wing

parties. It's fuelled by desperate election promises and rooted in the fearmongering caused by Labor, which generates enormous pressure, particularly on young people. This is especially concerning given that such detrimental impacts to Australia result in minimal global impact. But unlike Greta Thunberg, the most childish famous person I can think of, I will actually provide solutions and not just badger on about issues facing us. As highlighted throughout this article, the solution is quite evident and realistic. Admit climate change is real; admit we must do something about it. But don't set unrealistic targets for emission reduction but look to doing so proportionally to a decrease in global emissions. Push for countries like China that can invest in more renewable energy sources to do so. And assist developing nations in providing their countries with electricity by providing them with renewable and sustainable energy sources and encouraging them to continue that path. That is what reduces global emissions. Invest in more renewable sources like nuclear power, which is an excellent substitute in both quantity of electricity outputted and cost to the government. Fix our electricity shortages before we shut down more power plants. But then, when we have electricity security, we can start shutting fossil fuel plants down, reducing our emissions and replacing them with renewable sources.

And finally, and most importantly, we can remove the stigma and fear around climate change. For centuries, humanity has adapted to changing circumstances, whether that be the plague to the world wars. We will do so once again, but continuing to propagate harmful messaging around climate change only worsens our mental health and polarisation within politics, particularly in young people, all while currently and ultimately being futile in the face of global mismanagement. It isn't the imminent end of humanity as we know it. And it's not the destruction of Planet Earth. It's a problem with a solution; in the end, it's only a matter of finding the right one.

## Bibliography

Searles

- Abounader, T., 2022. *The Question of Pure Altruism*. [online] New York: Niagara University. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333759433\\_The\\_Question\\_of\\_Pure\\_Altruism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333759433_The_Question_of_Pure_Altruism)
- Asri, A., Asri, V., Renerte, B., Föllmi-Heusi, F., Leuppi, J.D., Muser, J., Nüesch, R., Schuler, D. and Fischbacher, U. (2021). Wearing a mask—For yourself or for others? Behavioral correlates of mask wearing among COVID-19 frontline workers. *PLOS ONE*, [online] 16(7). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0253621.
- Bir, C. and Widmar, N.O. (2021). Social pressure, altruism, free-riding, and non-compliance in mask wearing by U.S. residents in response to COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, [online] 4(1). doi:10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100229.
- Brooks, S.K., Webster, R.K., Smith, L.E., Woodland, L., Wessely, S., Greenberg, N. and Rubin, G.J. (2020). The Psychological Impact of Quarantine and How to Reduce it: Rapid Review of the Evidence. *The Lancet*, [online] 395(10227), pp.912–920. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8.
- Cato, S., Iida, T., Ishida, K., Ito, A., Katsumata, H., McElwain, K.M. and Shoji, M. (2022). Vaccination and altruism under the COVID-19 pandemic. *Public Health in Practice*, [online] 3. doi:10.1016/j.puhip.2022.100225.
- Cole, D. (2022a). Altruism and Egoism. [online] Study.com. Available at: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/egoism-altruism.html#:~:text=Altruism%20and%20egoism%20are%20two>
- Feng, Y., Zong, M., Yang, Z., Gu, W., Dong, D. and Qiao, Z. (2020). When altruists cannot help: the influence of altruism on the mental health of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Globalization and Health*, [online] 16(1). doi:10.1186/s12992-020-00587-y.
- Filkowski, M., Cochran, R.N. and Haas, B. (2016). Altruistic behavior: mapping responses in the brain. *Neuroscience and Neuroeconomics*, [online] Volume 5, pp.65–75. doi:10.2147/nan.s87718.
- Gaus, G.F. (2022). Egoism, Altruism, and Social Contract | Free Essay Example. [online] StudyCorgi.com. Available at: <https://studycorgi.com/egoism-altruism-and-social-contract/>
- Honest liars -- the psychology of self-deception: Cortney Warren at TEDxUNLV. 2014. [video] TEDxUNLV.
- Hu, Y.-A. and Liu, D.-Y. (2003). Altruism versus Egoism in Human Behavior of Mixed Motives: An Experimental Study. *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, [online] 62(4), pp.677–705. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3487758>
- Kraut, R. (2020). Altruism. Fall 2020 ed. [online] Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/altruism/#NagelImpeStan>
- Kraut, R. (n.d.). Egoism and altruism - Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. [online] [www.rep.routledge.com](http://www.rep.routledge.com). Available at: <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/egoism-and-altruism/v-1> [Accessed 9 Aug. 2022].
- Nagel, T. (2008). The possibility of altruism. 1st ed. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Oakley, B.A. (2013). Concepts and implications of altruism bias and pathological altruism. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, [online] 110(Supplement 2), pp.10408–10415. doi:10.1073/pnas.1302547110.
- PINSKER, J. (2022). *How Can Individual People Most Help Ukraine?* [online] The Atlantic. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/04/help-ukraine-donations-effective-altruism/629453/>
- Ricard, M., 2013. *Altruism: The Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and the World*. 1st ed. New York: Back Bay.
- Savulescu, J. and Wilkinson, D. 2020. *Extreme altruism in a pandemic*. [online] Journal of Medical Ethics blog. Available at: <https://blogs.bmj.com/medical-ethics/2020/04/23/extreme-altruism-in-a-pandemic/> [Accessed 3 August 2022].
- Sidgwick, H. (2007). *The Methods of Ethics*. 1st ed. London: Gardners Books.
- Steiner, P. (2019). Altruism, sociology and the history of economic thought. *The European Journal of the History of*
- Wang, Y., Vasilakos, A.V., Jin, Q. and Ma, J. (2012). On Studying Relationship between Altruism and the Psychological Phenomenon of Self-Deception in Rational and Autonomous Networks.

Bui

- Daley, J. and Coates, B., 2018. *Housing Affordability: Re-imagining The Australian Dream*. Grattan Institute, p.3.
- ABC, 2021. *Going, Going, Gone: What's driving Australia's property frenzy*. [video] Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/4corners/four-corners-what-s-driving-australia-s-real-estate-frenzy/13612062>
- Thodes, E., 2014. *Integrated affordable housing models ideas towards affordability*. University of Melbourne, p.3.
- Burke, K., 2022. *Neighbourhoods where house prices have fallen by six figures as interest rates rise*. [online] Smh.com.au. Available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/property/news/neighbourhoods-where-house-prices-have-fallen-by-six-figures-as-interest-rates-rise-20220802-p5b6lv.html>
- Burnside, C., 2015. *Understanding Booms and Busts in Housing Markets*. Northwestern University, p.23.
- (No Author Given) Dss.gov.au. 2020. *Housing*. [online] Available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/housing-support/programmes-services/housing>
- (No Author Given) Government of South Australia, 2022. *Metro median house sales*. Adelaide: Data SA.
- Bowden, T., 2022. *How much you need to earn to buy in every SA suburb*. [online] Adelaidenow.com.au. Available at: <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/property/how-much-you-need-to-earn-to-buy-in-every-sa-suburb/news-story/fed3d3c3223c67c62aeed43bb5f4fb156>
- (No Author Given) Westpac.com.au. 2022. *Mortgage Repayment Calculator*. [online] Available at: [https://www.westpac.com.au/personal-banking/home-loans/calculator/mortgage-repayment/?cid=wc:hl:WBCHL\\_1904;sem:sem:sem\\_westpac%20loan%20calcula%20tor\\_e](https://www.westpac.com.au/personal-banking/home-loans/calculator/mortgage-repayment/?cid=wc:hl:WBCHL_1904;sem:sem:sem_westpac%20loan%20calcula%20tor_e)
- (No Author Given) Westpac.com.au. 2022. *Savings by age*. [online] Available at: <https://www.westpac.com.au/personal-banking/solutions/budgeting-and-savings/savings/savings-by-age/>

- (No Author Given) Moneysmart.gov.au. 2022. Savings goals calculator. [online] Available at: <<https://moneysmart.gov.au/saving/savings-goals-calculator>>
- Lucas, F., 2021. Educators are essential...but can't afford to live in Sydney or Melbourne much longer. [online] The Sector. Available at: <<https://thesector.com.au/2021/05/31/educators-are-essential-but-cant-afford-to-live-in-sydney-or-melbourne-much-longer/>>
- Dabu, B., 2021. Why FOMO is a real worry in an overstimulated and undersupplied market. [online] Smartpropertyinvestment.com.au. Available at: <https://www.smartpropertyinvestment.com.au/advice/investor-stories/22256-why-fomo-is-a-real-worry-in-an-overstimulated-and-undersupplied-market>
- Whitten, R., 2022. Historical home loan interest rates in Australia. [online] Finder.com.au. Available at: <<https://www.finder.com.au/historical-home-loan-interest-rates>>
- (No Author Given) Reserve Bank of Australia. 2022. What is Monetary Policy?. [online] Available at: <<https://www.rba.gov.au/education/resources/explainers/what-is-monetary-policy.html>>
- Bond, S., 2022. Australia housing market: what to expect?. [online] Canstar. Available at: <<https://www.canstar.com.au/home-loans/rising-interest-rates-property-values/>>

Thomas

- MacAskill, W. (2022) *What We Owe The Future*. OneWorld Publications, London.
- Ord, T. (2020). *Why we need worst-case thinking to prevent pandemics*. The Guardian. [online] 6 Mar. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/mar/06/worst-case-thinking-prevent-pandemics-coronavirus-existential-risk>>
- Ord, T. (2020) *The Precipice*. Bloomsbury Publishing, London.
- Singer, P. (2020) *The Life You Can Save* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) Random House, New York.

Newman

- Athauda, Y. (2022). *The Economics of the AFL*. [online] Cainz. Available at: <https://cainz.org/11482/#:~:text=As%20one%20of%20the%20biggest>.
- Jones, R. (2023). *AFL scores AU\$20.7m operating profit for 2022*. [online] SportsPro. Available at: [https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/afl-profit-financial-report-2022-aflw/?zephir\\_sso\\_ott=pyGYEQ](https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/afl-profit-financial-report-2022-aflw/?zephir_sso_ott=pyGYEQ)

Whyte

- Open Knowledge Repository Bank. "Information and Communications for Development 2018." Open Knowledge Repository. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30437>.
- Congress. "S.3548 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): Cares Act." Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3548>.
- Corporate Finance Institute. "European Sovereign Debt Crisis." <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/fixed-income/european-sovereign-debt-crisis/>.
- IMF. "Debt Relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative." IMF, February 3, 2023. <https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2023/Debt-relief-under-the-heavily-indebted-poor-countries-initiative-HIPC>.
- IMF. "From 1980s Debt Crisis to Crypto Era, Financial Stability Monitoring Is Always Evolving." <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/06/22/from-1980s-debt-crisis-to-crypto-era-financial-stability-monitoring-is-always-evolving>.
- McKinsey Global Institute. "Debt And (Not Much) Deleveraging." McKinsey Global Institute, February 2015. <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Employment%20and%20Growth/Debt%20and%20not%20much%20deleveraging/MGI%20Debt%20and%20not%20much%20deleveragingIn%20briefFebruary%202015.pdf>.
- Office for Budget Responsibility. "Post-World War II Debt Reduction." Office for Budget Responsibility. <https://obr.uk/box/post-world-war-ii-debt-reduction/>.
- Reserve Bank of Australia. "The Global Financial Crisis: Explainer: Education." <https://www.rba.gov.au/education/resources/explainers/the-global-financial-crisis.html>.
- Investopedia. "What Is Quantitative Easing (QE), and How Does It Work?". <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/q/quantitative-easing.asp>.
- World Bank. "Overview." World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/overview>.

Dhingra

- Christiano, P. (n.d.). Current Work in AI Alignment | Effective Altruism. [online] [www.effectivealtruism.org](http://www.effectivealtruism.org). Available at: <https://www.effectivealtruism.org/articles/paul-christiano-current-work-in-ai-alignment>.
- Brown, S. (2021). Machine learning, explained. [online] MIT Sloan. Available at: <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/machine-learning-explained>.
- Guinness, H. (2023). *How does ChatGPT work?* [online] Zapier. Available at: <https://zapier.com/blog/how-does-chatgpt-work/>.