

Anointed Vision obscures reality and incites government to ‘manage’ Free Speech Gushing Australian Media seeded current threat to Free Speech

My right to speak my mind as an Australian citizen, a right all Australians have had courtesy of our Westminster common-law traditions, is to be ‘managed’ by a government funded body which, according to the recommendations of the Finkelstein report, needs ‘managing’ because of a ‘market failure’.

In the following discussion, I am exercising my right to free speech. Other than in the quotes below, the following views and observations are mine alone.

It is useful to recall how we got to this point, where an enquiry was demanded and conducted and where the recommendations await government acceptance or otherwise; by the government that wrote the terms of reference, selected the Commissioner and funded the enquiry.

I see here more the predilections of the left towards regulation and control coinciding with a flawed government compelled, by an impractical and unsustainable vision, urged on and protected by a fawning media of like-minded souls; all suffering in the rarefied atmosphere of Canberra, a form of 'wilful blindness' which means that, rather than provide a constant public evaluation and critique of government policy and implementation, they provided the Rudd government with an unparalleled honeymoon period where the 'media bride' could 'see' no 'wilfully blind' wrong. So, rather than a conspiracy to stifle free speech, I see an inept government untempered by the critical gaze of an alert and enquiring fourth estate upon which to hone the skills of policy development, implementation and communication; I see the government going into a panic when some in the media, no longer capable of hiding the tide of incompetence and spin, eventually began to ask serious questions of a government incapable of, and unprepared to, respond(ing) intelligently.

An excerpt from the Lord Monckton Foundation charter informs this discussion (underline mine).

(The Lord Monckton Foundation).....which shall conduct research, publish papers, educate students and the public and take every measure that may be necessary to restore the primacy and use of reason in science and public policy worldwide, especially insofar as they may bear upon the rights of the people fairly and fully to be informed, openly and freely to debate, and secretly by ballot to decide who shall govern them, what laws they shall live by and what imposts they shall endure.

My right as an individual to be fairly and fully informed and to openly and freely debate any topic of my choosing, should brook no regulatory interest from any government especially insofar as how such activities determine my vote nor the policies and laws I reject or support with my vote. It is my responsibility as a free citizen to fully inform myself and to hear open and free debates on any topic I choose. It is the government's responsibility to encourage citizens to express and receive all other points of view to allow me as a citizen, to inform my own opinions. My right to speak my mind and my right to hear others speak theirs, no matter how ill informed or idiotic these views may be, tempered in Australia as they currently are, by the laws of defamation, contempt of court, racial vilification and numerous other existing instruments; my right to consume and produce information and opinions of varying degrees of quality should, if anything, be increased rather than ‘managed’.

Conceptually in today's world of iPhones, blogs and global communications, each of us is either, or both of, a producer and a consumer of information, ideas and points of view. In my view, it is interesting to note that the seeds of this current effort to persuade us is of the need for a media watchdog to regulate all forms of the media, has its seed in the political abuse of the truth, beyond familiar beacons, in a similar fashion to that which could catch mere non-political-elite mortals under the laws of defamation or false advertising or fraud. And let's not forget that the media is made up of flawed individuals just like you and me, who find themselves in the happy position of holding a microphone, standing in front of a camera, or writing in a column space or a blog, which to date, nobody is compelled to watch, read or listen to. Freedom of speech, freewill, creativity and the pursuit of happiness are still valued in our democracy for the very reason that they are fundamental to ‘best practice’ in operating a democracy. It is interesting to note that in Australia around 99% of politicians and 99% of journalists in the mainstream media are scientifically illiterate. If we divide the philosophically inclined in society into those who favour a bigger role for

government in our lives on the one hand and those who feel that individuals, under the laws overseen by a government limited constitutionally to providing the nation's citizens with an environment and incentives conducive to the pursuit of happiness and prosperity on the other, it is clear that the Labor Party see themselves as being of the left and have a leftish vision, which Thomas Sowell elegantly describes as the 'vision of the anointed'. This Vision of the Anointed, the 'we know what is best for you' elite mindset, compels those of the left to remake society in their 'vision', often built on foundations of sand, shifting, and without evidence of either utility or efficacy.

Such was the case with the energetic furtherance of too many aspects of the vision of the anointed embraced by the Rudd government. And the vision of the Rudd government was embraced by the bulk of the mainstream media, especially those in the rarified atmosphere of the Canberra press gallery and especially those with a teary reminiscence on the great left political actions of the past, once again forgetting that many of these political actions had unforeseen, unintended, and costly consequences, then and now, where 'evidence based public policy making' is replaced by 'policy based evidence making'. This embrace of the Rudd government and of its frantic activity meant that the ladies and gentlemen of the press failed to note, comment upon, research or otherwise do their job as journalists, which meant that they ignored the signs of poor government, poor character, poor leadership and poor legislative reform. Signs such as these, if they had been detected in a conservative government, would have been noticed, dissected, embellished and broadcast far and wide, by this same mainstream media.

This media behaviour observed in the early stages of any new government, is often excused as a honeymoon period but in the case of the Rudd government this honeymoon period extended over the entire marriage term. This failure of the mainstream media to do its job and to comment on, and investigate the activities of government, meant that their beloved Labor government, untempered by public criticism, unimpaired by exposure to public scrutiny and unencumbered by warranted scandalous stories in the press, led to complacency on the part of that preferred left leaning government. Having enjoyed an easy uncritical path, simply basking in the glory of having fulfilled many of the feelgood 'visionary' promises, the Canberra Press Gallery saw it all come to an end with the unceremonial and unforeseen dismissal of an encumbant and somewhat surprised Prime Minister Rudd (no one had questioned his activities before).

However, rather than ask the hard questions of the Rudd Labor government then (... 'like', .. in the vernacular, what was wrong with Rudd? Why were we not fairly and fully informed so that we could openly and freely debate?). The people wanted to be informed and the Canberra Press Gallery let them down. As Abraham Lincoln observed:

"It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

And with apologies to Edmund Burke, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of ignorance and mass hysteria, is for good men to do nothing."

The left leaning mainstream media chose to do nothing, and unquestioningly swallowed the 'Labor had lost its way' spin and thus in the mind of the Canberra based left leaning mainstream media, created a new starting point for a new honeymoon period with Australia's new and first woman Prime Minister. They even managed for some time to maintain a wilfull blindness to major policy flips, reversed promises, major election policy lies, massive blow-outs in costs and rorts in policy implementation and so on and all this whilst giving comfort to a government becoming increasingly isolated from public scrutiny and increasingly willing to choose spin over truth even, when truth was the better option.

See Mark Steyn writing more elequently on Free Speech ([here](#))

The recent unsavoury outing of the generally unreported truth at the time of the dysfunction and shambles of the authoritarian internal workings of the Rudd Labor government during the recent leadership challenge, clearly illustrates the conspiracy on the part of the mainstream media to keep quiet about such matters so as to save the 'visionary Labor government' from itself. As previously alluded to, a sort of wilful blindness, or inability on the part of journalists in Canberra to do their job properly, or perhaps more accurately; simply barracking for 'the team', or supporting 'the cause'.

However, even incompetent or wilfully blind journalists, when faced with increasing evidence of erratic government and maladministration are eventually forced to reconsider their journalistic integrity and recognise that history will treat them poorly unless they actually perform as journalists. This insight came upon the Canberra press gallery slowly, confined to one or two individuals initially and growing into larger numbers as time went by. As a consequence of journalists actually asking questions of the government, some of which were indeed hard questions, the government, being an alliance of Labor and the Greens, un-practised as it had become at dealing with an inquisitive and increasingly sceptical media, suddenly became a 'hate media' in the eyes of some in government. Certain sections of the media were singled out as being particularly critical of the government and pressure was brought to bear, threats were made and journalists quietened and the Greens, facing the highlighting of the inconsistencies and impracticalities of many of their policies, perhaps for the first time, through Senator Bob Brown and on the pretext of checking out whether Australian journalism standards were tainted by the Fleet Street disease (phone tapping etc), pushed for this enquiry.

Following the response to the recommendations of the Finkelstein enquiry Bob Brown has stated that the media, "...want to be exempted from what every other Australian has to do and that is to make sure that if they do a wrong it gets rectified and gets rectified quickly". Justin Quill, a defamation lawyer, is quoted as saying of Senator Brown's notion that the media is exempt and is asking to be exempt, that,

"I've never been a fan of Bob Brown, but that really is misleading...The media is not exempt. And the media is not asking to be exempt ... It is hard to imagine a more regulated industry than the media industry....I would love to list all the different ways the media can be hauled over the coals for mistakes. The list would make Brown look even sillier than he does now.....Of course for Brown, our judicial system is not a good enough regulator of the media. I wonder if that has anything to do with the fact that Brown cannot control the judiciary? The separation of powers doctrine sees to that.

So why not get around it by creating an environment of fear or, better still, hate, of the media and then use it to justify a government entity to regulate the media?... "

Justin Quill goes on to say,

"Bob Brown has so much power within our democracy and yet, it seems, a complete disdain for the organ in society that keeps that democracy alive and free from corruption."

The Finkelstein Media inquiry failed many tests including respect for centuries of common law highlighting my right to say it, as I see it. But more than other sins, it failed to discuss fully, the folly and possible unintended and unforeseen consequences of meddling with (or 'managing') such a fundamental tenet of our democracy, namely, free speech. Similarly, most of the recommendations seem to relate to how government regulation can solve the problems and the failings of the 'media', without understanding that each individual is now, a media 'player'. If anything our desire as Australian citizens who find it necessary to,

"...restore the primacy and use of reason in science and public policy worldwide, especially insofar as they may bear upon the rights of the people fairly and fully to be informed, openly and freely to debate, and secretly by ballot to decide who shall govern them, what laws they shall live by and what imposts they shall endure...", where the individual needs to be protected from the State and not the other way round; our desire is to free up our rights to speak our mind unimpeded, and in particular to speak our mind to government officials, unimpeded.