

# The Big Picture

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“News to use & amuse”



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## A better Australia

Since we've been publishing TBP for a year now, I thought it might be interesting to define what we might usefully expect from the governments of Australia. Here goes...

### Independent representation of the people's needs

I'd like a system whereby the disparate needs of the people were discovered by our paid representatives and then taken to the centres of power where competent and independent public service professionals, whose goal was to deliver high quality services, incorporated the people's needs in policy so as to deliver as many benefits as possible.

I'd like certain rights in exchange for the responsibility of paying taxes and serving the state (military, jury duty etc.) and the most fundamental is that the people I'm paying to represent me, make it their business to understand my needs and commit to delivering as many as practical. I wouldn't want to taxation without representation anyway.

I would certainly want systems to assure that taxpayers, who contribute the most to our political and government systems, got the most say and that there were no damaging lobbying asymmetries.

Implicit in this is a system that is not controlled by parties with minority memberships, but is instead controlled by a majority of Australians.

### Independent house of review

It would be nice to have an independent house of review staffed by competent and independent thinkers to help assure that government decisions were focussed on the people of Australia and not special interest groups.

### A professional, competent and independent public service

So that our society didn't mire itself in making decisions based on the needs of pressure groups and lobbyists, I'd want an independent public service that was unafraid to speak up and that was dedicated to delivering the best possible service to the public. I'd want a service to also assure the independence and competence of the public service to help avoid people writing fake emails to distort policy etc.

Because the world is so complex, I'd want skilled professionals to manage the public services, and I'd want their salaries and benefits to be directly connected to the achievement of useful outcomes for the public. It pretty much goes without saying that I'd expect efficient service delivery that treated taxpayers with respect, and that always used the best and most efficient methods to achieve results.

### An independent media

So that the political system didn't get too easily corrupted, I'd want politicians and public services to be scrutinised and reported by an independent and well informed media. If politicians knew that they were under scrutiny it would help avoid problems, and good quality reporting would help to reassure the public and, in the event of problems, would raise key weaknesses and mistakes up for discussion and correction.

To keep the media independent, I'd want there to be no special links or favours possible between the media and government. The media would be an essential protection to a free democracy.

### Rights to offset responsibilities

Apart from the right to representation, I'd also like other rights like the rights to common shared ownership of Australia's resources rather than having them controlled by an outmoded legal entity called 'the Crown'. I'd also like the right to be governed by known and agreed principles of democracy and participation (e.g. Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the right for everyone to be treated equally, without exemptions or exceptions.

I'd like the right to know who my vote will finally go to, and the right to know exactly what services to expect from the taxes and charges that we all pay. The right to have politicians and public services held responsible for their actions and decisions would also be welcome. I also believe we should have the right to choose a painless death for ourselves, rather than a government run 'Checkpoint Charlie' that prevents us from leaving except under the most painful and humiliating circumstances.

### Capped levels of taxation

Australia's 3 tiers of government are tremendously wasteful and there is no requirement for them to contain their excesses within any limits. They can just legislate to reach further into our pockets at any time. (see [here](#) for example).

So I believe that we need to set an Australia wide limit on the total amount of our money that governments can take from us.

I hope these things are not too much to ask.

## A year of TBP!

Issue 52 represents a year of production for TBP.

We're now going to look at new forms of production and different ways of presenting content.

Thank you all for your support. We'll be back with issue 53 next week.

## Victoria escapes forecast winds

### TheAge

The fierce weather forecast for Victoria failed to eventuate last night, with the Bureau of Meteorology and SES reporting that roofs and trees stood firm in blustery conditions.

Forecasters yesterday predicted the state's second front of damaging winds in less than a week, with a squally change expected to bring gusts of up to 120km/h overnight.

But the severity of the front fell well short of predictions.

How about 'Forecast wrong'?

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# That was the week that was

## Governance & spin

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ATO sets sights on work related deductions [TheAge](#)  
Vic Councils vote themselves pay raises & rate rises [HeraldSun](#)  
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ALP staffer faces 42 counts of fraud [TheAge](#)

## Forestry/Food/Agriculture

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22,000 workers to be shipped in for harvesting [TheWest](#)

## Climate/water/energy/environment

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## Health/education revolution/communication/defence

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## Economy/social/shelter/transport/free speech

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Volunteer captains blast CFA leadership [TheAge](#)  
Red tape strangles indigenous homes program [Australian](#)  
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## World

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Pentagon wants to make 30,000 lb bomb [Telegraph](#)