

The Big Picture

Issue 92
7 August 2010

"News to use & bemuse"

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Across the news

More election tosh from the federal level as each party tries to trump the other's dysfunction...

The sublime irony, in effect, is that Gillard needs Rudd to legitimise her coup against him since such legitimisation comes only through winning the election.

The reason Rudd looks prime ministerial is because this election is about his record, his legacy, his former government. He spoke with passion about the need to halt Abbott, about Rudd Labor's success in saving the nation from recession, about stopping Abbott from wrecking the National Broadband Network and of Abbott's dismissal of climate change as "absolute crap". "Let me say this proudly and clearly," Rudd said. "The policy directions of our country are absolutely right." And these are Rudd's directions. [Australian](#)

And that's not the only irony either...

...the Rudd revival defies comprehension. The man who was cut down because the government lost its way is invited back to prominence because the campaign lost its way. The man strategists believed was electoral poison two months ago is now the vital tonic.

Of course, Abbott is right in saying the offer reflects panic in the Gillard camp, but why wasn't he prepared simply to see her and raise her? Why not say: "Yes, I'll debate you on the economy, as long as you agree to a third debate on government mismanagement and waste." [TheAge](#)

One of the reasons that Abbott cannot debate mismanagement and waste is that those are characteristics of Australian government that are induced by its structure and methods. A debate would therefore need to include methods of preventing those outcomes which would require structural and leadership changes like 'granting' Australians the right to value for their taxes. Almost everything they do is, and has been, a mess...

The Bushfire commission slammed Energy Safe Victoria, the statutory body charged with overseeing safety in the electrical system, as a weak regulator that lacked influence over power companies.

It said co-regulation by ESV "appears to be nothing more than 'compliance ritualism'. The focus is on ticking boxes rather than substantive matters", the commission found. [TheAge](#)

Pursuing the economic orthodoxy of growth has led to...

Households now spend an average 11 per cent of their income on interest bills. This is down from 14 per cent before the financial crisis, when interest rates fell sharply, but remains double the rate of a decade ago. [TheAge](#)

Buy anything you like...just borrow. Meanwhile in the US...

The truth is that the US and allied regimes do not have anything substantial to offer Afghanistan beyond feeding the gargantuan war machine they have unleashed.

In the affluent West itself, modernity is now about dismantling welfare systems, increasing inequality (disenfranchising women in the process) and subsidising corporate profits. [Age](#)

Look at some of the things that last sentence really means...

Paved roads, historical emblems of American achievement, are being torn up across rural America and replaced with gravel or other rough surfaces as counties struggle with tight budgets and

dwindling state and federal revenue. State money for local roads was cut in many places amid budget shortfalls. [Wall Street Journal](#)

...but wait! There's more...

In Colorado Springs, the downturn will be remembered, quite literally, as a dark age: the city switched off a third of its 24,512 streetlights to save money on electricity, while trimming its police force and auctioning off its police helicopters.

Clayton County, Ga., a suburb of Atlanta, decided to cut all the way, and shut down its entire public bus system. Its last buses ran on March 31, stranding 8,400 daily riders. [Salon](#)

Wow! We can only learn from these people...

That Was The Week That Was

Governance + spin

Garnaut denounces political leadership failures [SMH](#)

Forestry/Food/Agriculture

Sustainable forestry industry asks for \$100 m bailout [Mercury](#)

Surprise! Gunns pipeline to go on acquired land [Mercury](#)

Climate/water/energy/resources/environment

New Tas water bodies run out of cash [Mercury](#)

Health & education revolutions/communication/defence

Funding shortfalls risk illiteracy [Mercury](#)

Medical 'gap' costs jump 30% under Labor [TheAge](#)

Learning the lessons of a rushed revolution [TheAge](#)

No cost benefit study spells trouble for NBN: Davidson [TheAge](#)

Economy/social/shelter/transport/free speech

Pollies do nothing about house price increases [SMH](#)

Bracket creep sends 1 million pay rises to taxman [Telegraph](#)

US lingo diluting Oz culture [TheAge](#)

Are you part of the mob? [Punch](#)

Economy lost in empty slogans [SMH](#)

Australia tops miser ranks on refugees [TheAge](#)

Disaster resilience sorely lacking [TheAge](#)

World & GFC

What collapsing empire looks like [Salon](#)

Simplistic moralism sells Afghans short [TheAge](#)

Wildfires threaten to go radioactive near Chernobyl [SMH](#)