

The Big Picture

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“News to use & bemuse”

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Across the news

As our indolent and greedy governments continue to waste our money, the constant demands for more are starting to hurt...

SOME of the state's biggest employers are secretly planning to leave NSW after rises of up to 50 per cent in their power and gas bills.

Steel, construction, manufacturing and mining companies are fed up with successive governments that have not delivered an effective power grid [Telegraph](#)

During the previous federal election, Wayne Swan continued to 'explain' that they couldn't 'let the inflation genie out of the bottle' (apologies for the technical economic terms there), but it is governments that are fuelling inflation. As predicted years ago, this is hurting voters...

MORE than 138,000 people in NSW can't pay their energy bills, with the number of customers who have deferred or changed payment plans soaring to new highs.

Energy companies have been inundated with calls from struggling customers and are training their employees to be makeshift counsellors.

Energy Australia call centre staff have been told to remain calm and talk customers through payment options. [Telegraph](#)

Meanwhile, governments continue to mislead both themselves, and taxpayers in ever greater cons...

The big lie, almost universally believed by Australians, is that after the failure of the Copenhagen summit to come to an agreement, we would be foolish to go it alone.

The argument goes: why should we impose a huge cost on our export industries and our standard of living when the rest of the world has walked away from taking action on climate change?

The rest of the world *is* doing something. Australia and the US - the two heaviest emitters of carbon per head of population - are the laggards. In fact, 32 nations now have emissions trading schemes in place. We're not talking obscure countries in exotic locations. Try Britain, the country with its flag in the top left hand corner of ours. Think all of the European Union. And then, of course, there is New Zealand.

Even China, the world's biggest polluter and the country accused of torpedoing a global agreement on climate change at Copenhagen, has imposed stringent undertakings upon itself to reduce emissions, with a commitment to cut 40 per cent per unit of GDP by 2020. [SMH](#)

The bigger the issue, the bigger the lie it seems.

And, in a last tribute to our political leadership, we read...

TREASURY has flatly rejected Julia Gillard's election campaign call for a population growth slow-down.

The department has told the Prime Minister rapid population growth is both inevitable and a key part of Australia's adjustment to the resources boom. [Australian](#)

We're going to need all the luck we can get.

That Was The Week That Was

Governance + spin

More Labor dodging of cost benefit tests: Ergas [TheAge](#)

Terrorism laws are return to bad old days of policing [SMH](#)

Vic Labor in politics of panic [WeeklyTimesNow](#)

Food/forestry

Cost of eating keeps rising [TheAge](#)

Is GM salmon the 'Frankenfish'? [Independent](#)

Climate/water/energy/resources/environment

Huge fines for holding back the sea [Telegraph](#)

'Wild Rivers' a cage for aborigines [SMH](#)

Power price rises drive NSW industries out [Telegraph](#)

Health & education revolutions/communication/defence

Foreign student education under threat [TheAge](#)

NBN should be cut in two [BusinessSpectator](#)

Labor's failed revolutions: Costello [SMH](#)

Government thwarts action on under age depression [Mercury](#)

Economy/social/shelter/transport/free speech/World

Electric car maker forced overseas [SMH](#)

Banks crippling small businesses [Telegraph](#)

Debt levels dangerous [BusinessSpectator](#)

Vic stamp duty a rip off [HeraldSun](#)

Rent rises eat up pension rise [TheAge](#)

Insider reveals disturbing facts about detention [TheAge](#) [Age2](#)

Problem is detention, not asylum seekers [TheAge](#)

Vic prisons fail AG tests [TheAge](#)

Informal vote shows election was a turn off [TheAge](#)

House prices a classic policy failure [TheAge](#)

Wasted years for Vic infrastructure: Davidson [TheAge](#)

Reform the loser under Gillard: Kohler [BusinessSpectator](#)

NSW police numbers exaggerated [SMH](#)

1 in 7 Americans in poverty [TheAge](#) [ICHVideo](#)

Vatican bank probed for money laundering [TheAge](#)

Holiday? How about Chernobyl? [Telegraph](#)

Childcare centres failing toddlers [HeraldSun](#)

US has gone mad: John Le Carré 2003 [ICH](#)

Euro Labour pays price for capital GFC mistakes [TheAge](#)

The home in the valley

Art & article by Brenda Rosser



At the end of the first decade of the new millennium a revolution is happening. Don't look for the instigators, there are none. There's no fighting in the streets. It's happened all by itself. Capitalism just stopped 'working'.

The portent of this change can be evidenced in the way the Charters of the 3 major political parties can no longer be implemented. The Libs can't support a 'free enterprise' economy where the one that exists is populated with giant, globalised tax-dodging, transfer-pricing, too-big-to-fail, monopoly, conglomerate 'businesses'. Labor can't protect workers where these 'elephants' labour arbitrage from country to country. The Greens can't advocate for small business, biodiversity and land stewardship when absentee rural agribusiness has taken hold of the land and won't give it back.

To many the end of this 'accumulation through dispossession' is no surprise. Eventually there would be nothing left to take. The prophesies of a new age were there in the 60s. Karl Marx wrote about capitalism's unavoidable tendency to destroy the economy and the environment (the very basis upon which capitalism rests) as far back as the 1800s. The warning signs of decadence and disruption have always been on full view for those who managed to climb out of a world of denial promulgated by a corporate media of narrow vested interests.

In 1970 the ripples of the Vietnam War had the new generation of young adults looking for a way out. It was a mere two years after the US Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Brigade went into the Vietnamese hamlet of My Lai and shot all the women and children, destroyed the crops and livestock and then burnt "the fucking place down" as ordered. Two years after the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy and leading members of the Black Panther movement.

That year, at the age of 16, I was mesmerized by the haunting spiritual lyrics of Joni Mitchell's pied piper song 'Woodstock'. The command was unmistakable and irresistible. The children of the Age of Aquarius first hit the street and then ventured further; out onto the roads and highways in droves. Out of the towns and cities and into the winding rural valleys of Tasmania and coastal New South Wales to build mud and stone shacks with our boyfriends and our babies.

"I'm goin' to camp out on the land. I'm gonna try and get my soul free... I feel to be a cog in something turning."

In the old second-hand wooden bookshelf in the back porch I still have my Whole Earth Catalogue with a picture of Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome. Hippies seized upon this dome idea as a means for them to quickly construct a cheap dwelling. It worked and then the concept was quickly dropped as a corporate media gained its ultimate monopoly on our thoughts through decades of subversion and unrestrained mergers and acquisitions. A whiff of self-reliance and independence amongst the general population might lead to further realisations.

Buckminster Fuller is described as "a visionary who coined the phrase "Spaceship Earth" and wrote a book on the idea of 'synergy': the behaviour of whole systems cannot be predicted by the behaviour of their parts taken separately. My favourite quotation comes from this author. Fuller wrote in 1975:

"We are in an age that assumes the narrowing trends of specialization to be logical, natural, and desirable. Consequently, society expects all earnestly responsible communication to be brief. Advancing science has now discovered that all the known cases of biological extinction have been caused by overspecialization, whose concentration of only selected genes sacrifices general adaptability. Thus the specialist's brief for pinpointing brevity is dubious. In the meantime, humanity has been deprived of comprehensive understanding. Specialisation has bred feelings of isolation, futility, and confusion in individuals. It has also resulted in the individual's leaving responsibility for thinking and social action to others. Specialisation breeds biases that ultimately aggregate as international and ideological discord, which, in turn, leads to war."

His warning went unheeded and the prophesies of war, isolation, confusion and discord turned into reality even as far as the isolated rural valleys of the now aged hippies. Some, like myself, looked out on the clearfelled forests, poisoned land and napalmed soil. I took it as a wake-up call. The values so beautifully espoused in the Green Party's Charter could not be implemented with simply a lifestyle change after all.

As unpleasant as the prospect is for most of us, there can be no opting out of politics and arguments.

We've got to get together sooner or later. We've got to talk these local and global problems through. My hope is that the monologue of Parties talking down to people finally becomes a dialogue.

A new kind of mind thus beings to come into being which is based on the development of a common meaning that is constantly transforming in the process of the dialogue.

David Bohm

Meanwhile...in Europe....

