



# STAYING the DISTANCE!

Peter Consandine's Wattle Day Newsletter #15

August, 2020

To: Friends, Colleagues, Supporters, Rellies & Customers (as addressed)

Given that since the beginning of the Corona Virus [Covid-19] pandemic I have been utilising the sign-offs to my e-mails and text messages: "Stay Safe"; "Stay Sane"; "Stay Smart"; "Stay the Course"; "Stay Strong"; "Stay Ahead"; "Stay Alert" and "Stay Calm & Carry On" etc, the heading I have chosen for my annual epistle this time around is apposite.

Upon occasions I have included the terms "Adapt or Die" and "It's UNlucky to be Superstitious" and similar sentiments in my correspondences but pretty much always cognisant of what grim and dreadful times the country, indeed the World is going through as the pivotal year 2020 unfolds. Believing that comedy and humour are jointly conducive to unity, purpose and countering what, for multitudes is an unmitigated disaster, I have 'kept score' since the commencement of what I am declaring is the Lockdown Second Great Depression and I have sent or on-sent no less than 12 jokes or limericks and generally funny stories so far to my vast network of contacts. On this subject I totally agree with 'Speccie' occasional columnist, **Joan McCaul**, who opined in a 10 August, 2019 article: "Comedy is the great Uniter. It's in comedy that we find relief from the inevitable disappointments and losses of life and the energy to keep going...to laugh is to momentarily experience the lightness of being".

Of course, the CV pandemic, per se, has many alternative names – amongst them crisis; emergency; fight of our lives; wicked problem and debate/ongoing battle between the so-called eliminationists and suppressionists. I am by the way, pragmatically, more of the latter rather than the former. Pointedly, I take UNSW Economics Professor **Gigi Foster's** opinion on board: that lockdown regimes create more costs than benefits; that lockdown regimes do more harm than good.

Reflecting on the 'Spanish Flu pandemic' which kicked in and wiped out over an estimated 100 million people post-World War One (the Great War and supposedly, *then*, the War to End ALL Wars) in the period 1918-1920, it can fairly be claimed that these pandemics, as such, have lasting consequences. And Covid-19, in-the-broad, will change how humanity works. Indeed, there is going to be a vastly nuanced re-assessment, country by country, of the relationship between work/employment + government policies/community development + freedom/leisure + money/finance as I see it. In the last category 'Enlightened Capitalism' will be phased in here in Australia as a result of a massive economy re-set and a new form of Mutualism will be ushered in concurrently because businesses – medium-sized to large – henceforth will need to achieve commercially sustainable social impacts writ large. If for no other reason than the post-CV pandemic period is likely to, at least historically, see a repeat of the Great Depression (1929 – 1939) when fully a third of Australia's then workforce – for the most part of that horrendous decade – was stubbornly UNemployed. Insofar, Australian corporations of the future will become not merely value-driven but values-driven...for it is an ill-wind that blows for mankind for myriad reasons. Dealing with the ramifications of Covid-19 and avoiding a hot war – in ANY theatre – is going to be the supreme test of World co-operation going forward.

Irrespective of the afore-mentioned gloom, there are manifold reasons to be optimistic and hopeful and I will address just some of the reasons in my ongoing narrative. In the interim though, I am certain that one of the main reasons **Jennifer Gwen** (my spouse and Life Partner of going-on 34 years – 'Jen' for short) and I are keeping sane – and our marbles together – is because we have a vast music (both LPs and CDs) collection and we play music [mainly classical and jazz] ALL day long in the house from first thing every morning of any given week. We are painfully aware that we simply cannot 'blank out' entirely the media bad news apropos the CV pandemic which is inexorable and inescapable. To counter the daily shocking vibes **Jen** & I have read a lot of books – my favourite genre being historical fiction. We have also "discovered" our local twice-a-month Saturday markets where we now perform a lot of 'outdoor shopping'. And it took just over 7 weeks but **Jen** knitted me a beautiful blue jumper courtesy of the Bendigo Woollen Mills. Oh, and we both have become Zoom participants on an ever-increasing basis.

At this juncture, I must acknowledge with sadness – in my 'Passing Parade' segment – those who have died or met with fate since the issue of Wattle Day Newsletter #14. Vale: **Philip Howell, Tim Fischer, Neil Purcell, Paul Cronin, Hal Colebatch, Roger Farraway, Patrick Stevens, Tony Porter, Doug Forbes, Brian Powyer, Clive James, Karla Mathews, Allan Drew, John Cain** (the former Victorian Premier), **Bill Collins, Bruce Every, Geoff Forster, David Bellamy, Les Carlyon, Mike Willesee, Tony Bilson, June Dally-Watkins, Don Furner (Senior), Bruce Gillespie, Russ Kenny, Don Burrows, Michael Coper, Vicki Potempa, Yvonne (Vonnice) Barnett, Quenton Leach, Jon Utley, Frank Crook, Jack Munday, Arthur Summons, Roslyn Yeomans and Noel Kelly.**

In 'STAYING The DISTANCE' terms, The Writer reports the following series of attainments, achievements and *pleasant* experiences in the convoluted year since the issue of Wattle Day Newsletter #14:

On 6 August, 2019 The Party bestowed 'Republican of the Year 2019' status on **Clem Jones**, the former Lord Mayor of Brisbane and great Legator of Real Republic Australia.

On 22 August, **Jen** & I caught **Kitty Flanagan** "live" at the Parramatta Riverside Theatre. Flanagan is surely Australia's best comedienne?!

On 30 August, **Howard Brady** addressed the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Wattle Day Luncheon gathering at Hunters Hill. Brady delivered in the fashion of a sincere, expert climate rationalist.

On 2 September, **Ron Manners** spoke at the Sydney launching of his book 'The LONELY LIBERTARIAN'. Manners is a most accomplished mining magnate who delights in sharing his knowledge and business acumen with the coming generations.

From 2 October, holidaying with **Jen** on two (2 no less!) Queensland islands: Heron Island off Gladstone and Stradbroke Island off Brisbane. Two entirely different islands, to be sure. In fact, the former is a misnomer and really should be named 'Egret Cay' because there are NO herons on that coral reef, merely egrets (lots of 'em) whereas 'Straddie' is virtually a "weekender" getaway place for an ever-growing population of SEQ. **Jen** and I actually celebrated our 33<sup>rd</sup> Wedding Anniversary at the Whales Way Restaurant on "Straddie" and we can enthusiastically recommend the venue. Top Nosh!

Over the 2 days 11 & 12 October I manned a stall at the HHI Expo, South Brisbane where, most fortunately, I met on the second day thereat entrepreneur and potential big time Bequestor **Brendan Miskell**. Before and after the Expo gig I toured both the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and Greater Brisbane. After the SEQ stint I toured Coastal NSW all the way back to Hubtopia [Republic Central] in North West Sydney. And, when I say I was 'touring' I was using that all-embracing word in lieu of the modern term "pastoral republicanising" – holding one-to-one, republican-orientated meetings, door-to-door, ONGOING.

Between 4 and 11 November I was in Western Australia 'doing the rounds'.

On 5 December I was in Melbourne for the 23<sup>rd</sup> EGM of The Party and thereafter in and around regional Victoria followed by The Riverina of NSW.

On 10 January, 2020 The Party chalked UP 38 years as a continuing, viable tax-deductible entity – no small feat!

Over 17 and 18 February **Jen** and I sojourned to Orange NSW where on the second night I was a judge of the Yarn-Spinning Competition at the **Banjo Paterson Arts Festival**.

Over 8 and 9 March I toured Newcastle and Hunter Districts.

Over 13 & 14 March I toured the Blue Mountains.

On 18 March The Party "launched" its new website. WebMistress, **Tara Whitie**, has *really* produced for The Quest! The Party is, decidedly, 'ready for the future'.

Over 15 – 19 June **Jen** and I short-holidayed at the South Coast NSW Murramarang Beachfront Resort. A local pod of dolphins "farewelled" us on *our* last morning there which was a remarkable and entertaining experience, simultaneously. 'Really lifted our spirits did the dolphins!

And just as the CV pandemic has frightened, confused and disrupted many an Australian citizen, employee, business-owner et al, **Jen** and I have had *our* share of disappointments – the primary one being the cancellation of our planned 6-week overseas holiday which was to have begun from 21 March. **Jen** had 'mapped out' a fantastic plan – and made ALL the requisite bookings – for our return to Continental Europe and adventure to select parts of the Middle East. Perhaps, *another* year but maybe never, now. Alas. Then there was the cancellation of the **Randy Newman** tour; the putting on hold of an *alternative trip* to Western Australia together; the cancellation of RPA Annual Convention #34 set down for Katoomba in late May; the hacking of Peter's party PC by identifiable Indian (Sub-Continent) scammers; the postponement of the 'Republic by Default' campaign; the cancellation of several booked SSO and ACO orchestral concerts and the loss of The Party's Serviced Office at Bella Vista. So far, so good in keeping confirmed the long-arranged 15<sup>th</sup> Wattle Day Luncheon gig at Inner Western Sydney's Rozelle this year albeit there had to be a replacement (**Brett Kelly**) negotiated for the appointed Melburnian Guest Speaker (**Andrew Ford**) in late-in-the-piece July. Ford has propitiously agreed already to performing the gig in 2021.

Presciently, **Jen & I** jointly invested in a subscription to Netflix as a 2019 household Christmas present and Boy, Oh Boy, have we 'dined out' on a helluva lot of darned good films/movies and series fare since December 2019 in the night times. In this period also, we have made Companionship in to an Art Form and gladly we have stamped our *own* meaning on to the coined term: 'Coupledom'.

Co-incidentally, haven't there been a whole array of new words and terms (neologisms) since the coming of the CV pandemic? A veritable neologist's feast, uh-huh. I am a new words and terms aficionado, UNapologetically. Some of the following delighted me: pandademic + blursday + cabin fever + quadroom + network-nepotism + death porn + casino capitalism + programmatic + herd immunity + causal primacy + artificial intelligence + presentism + chinwag + cruisey + comorbidities + speechcrime + covidots + iso + lawfare + sonder (Wordplay's **David Astle's** "word for our times" which essentially means [Astle's definition]: "the feeling you get when realising everyone around you has a rich & complex life just as you do". Not 'favourites' but there's no denying the impacts of the terms 'social distancing' and 'physical distancing' together with 'cancel culture'. Back in to play came some old-fashioned words and terms e.g. fancy pants + petri dish + clusterfuck + rekindle + discombobulate + murmuring + moral hazard + proformalist + baloney + vicious circle. Magnificent!

The Australian Republic is in a 'holding pattern' for the time being and whereas the important matter got an indirect fillip as a result of **The Duke of York's [Prince Andrew's]** dalliancing and attendant scandal, the so-called 'Palace Letters' being released by the National Archives in July, 2020 haven't *discernibly* resonated all that much in the body politic. Even the flight to Canada/America of **The Sussexes [the former Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle]** hasn't been the boon for Oz constitutional reform that it might have been. Bearing in mind just how much the CV pandemic has camouflaged the limited media coverage of *other* major issues, e.g. China's effective "filing for divorce from Australia" [**Greg Canavan's** quotable quote from an 8 June article headed: 'CHINA DIVORCES AUSTRALIA' in a Crisis & Opportunity report, it is quite understandable. Interestingly, Canavan, in a lengthy dissertation as the Editorial Director of Port Phillip Publishing, asserted that: "Australia's 30 year stretch as a recession-free economy, ended with the CV pandemic" and, moreover and frighteningly, he echoed the view of **David Robinson**, the CEO of RTS Private Wealth Capital: "when your main economic partner is also your main security threat, well that poses some concerns (read: threats)". Other salient posits by Canavan in this extraordinary article were, by the way: "Covid-19 has caused an UNfixable tear between China and the rest of the World and especially between China and Australia"... "this strange, cosy even, marriage – which worked for many years – is 'on the rocks' and is undeniably over"... "Beijing was Australia's bullet-proof vest during the GFC and beyond" and, lastly: "the China divorce will be the biggest hit to Australia's modern economy...Yep, even bigger than the Great Depression proved to be".

The National Convenor of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, **David Flint**, never wastes an opportunity to deride what he calls the 'fake republic'. His rantings this year prompted me to 'dust off' and refresh a 2013 position paper I wrote headed: 'WHY A REPUBLIC?' and I am mailing a hard copy of this re-written, double-sided position paper with this newsletter. Anyway, I am more convinced than ever now that Australia will NOT become a republic until the ascension of **Prince Charles** to the Australian Head-of-Stateship. **Chukka's** role in the World Economic Forum over the 26-29 January, 2021 week at Davos, Switzerland – when the next 'Great World Monetary Order' re-set is formulated – I forthrightly predict, will be his big time UNdoing and, catylistically, Australia's saving grace. But, lamentably, Australia will "advance to a tenth monarchy".

One of two highlights of my current affairs viewing, overALL, was when on a 14 April Fox News channel broadcaster **Mark Steyn** interviewed the former media tycoon, **Conrad Black**, relevant to the book the latter has written and had published this year: 'THE CANADIAN MANIFESTO'. Given they are *both* Canadians – and Canada is a Constitutional Monarchy as is Australia and New Zealand who share the same Head-of-State (**Lilibet**) – Black advocated a 'Royal Republic of Canada'! I have gotta look more in to this! For its significance!!

The other highlight occurred on 12 June when Royal Biographer, **Andrew Morton**, boldly claimed: '**The Queen's** reign is effectively over since, because of the CV pandemic and being in semi-permanent lock-down at Windsor Castle, she cannot perform her (multifarious) duties".

Regrettably and in conclusion on this matter, I must report that I made continuing, repeated attempts to conference with the Australian Republic Movement hierarchy – UNSuccessfully, as usual. Auspiciously, The RPA and Real Republic Australia remain 'on song' to purposefully continue jointly championing the Direct Election concept apropos the Oz Presidency. In RPA Campaign Bulletins #47 & #48 of, respectively December 2019 and June 2020, I was much more expansive on Oz Republicanism and related matters so I envisage there being no need to re-visit same at this juncture. \*I note that of late **Fitzy**, my Chief Adversary, is sporting a crimson red facemask instead of a bandanna having 'gone the full egghead' **Yul Brynner** cum **Telly Savalas** style...a change, at long last, of his image? One hopes so.


In Wattle Day Newsletter #14 last year I wrote a paragraph on my increasing concerns about China – more particularly the 'Chicoms' of the ruling Communist Party [the CCP] and its increasing diplomatic belligerence/bullying and militarisation as an 'outlier' state. Nowadays, I am becoming NOT paranoid but almost equally concerned with the phantom-like, UNknowable menace which is **Vladimir Putin's** Russia. In a telling 'Speccie' article by **Owen Matthews** on 25 July the author wrote:

"Putin and the Kremlin are pushing the idea that the West is really in trouble, racked with violent culture wars and suffering from a profound loss of faith in its own values". The Kremlin's new party line is (that) "we (Russia) may have it bad but their (The West's) crisis is much worse". Furthermore, Putin's fundamental message to his own people and to the World is (that) "Western democracy is a weakness not a strength". A 3-part series on ABC-TV entitled "PUTIN: A RUSSIAN SPY STORY" over 3 nights in late July and very early August, 2020 touched on the Putin aims which, for ALL intents & purposes, are to facilitate The West's destroying of itself. Social commentator, **Joan McCaul**, actually believes Stalinism is detectable in modern-day Great Britain per perceived paths to totalitarianism. This considered view *might* translate to Australia. There are indubitably perceived indications of such paths with the State of Play in "Hellbourne, Sicktoria" [Thank You, **Tim Blair**] as at early August. Watch this Space!

I would like to single out for a 'Special Mention' a Great Australian who has probably been robbed of due cultural achievement recognition here in Australia this CV pandemic year: **David Williamson**. Williamson, *this* year was to have celebrated 50 years of successful playwrighting – with, indeed, 50 outstanding plays in the half-century. Bravo!

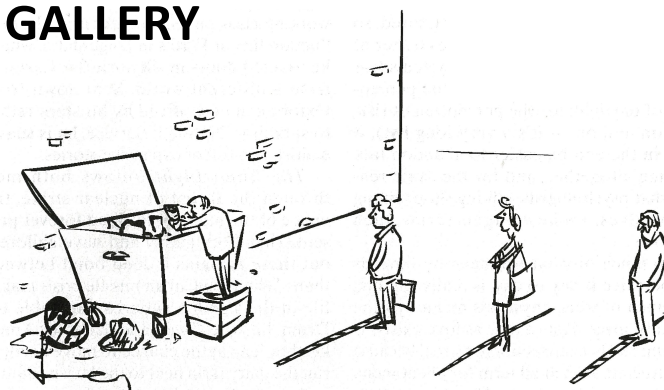
In longevity terms a former Western Queensland cattle farmer, **Dexter Kruger**, who turned 110 in January of this CV pandemic year 'takes the cake'. Interviewed at his Roma, Western Queensland nursing home on 13 January, Kruger let fly with his recipe for a long life: "when you feel tired have a rest – always sleep when you are tired"; "everything in moderation"; "don't stop breathing – if you do, you'll die"; "choose your parents well – it's important to have good genes"; "eat when you are hungry" and "drink when you are dry". There's lotsa wisdom and sage advice in his mix, hmmm?! Onya, Mate.

OK...In Conclusion, I can admit that my 2020 Annual Newsletter amounts to confluences of National and International content. And more than usual. Put it ALL down to 'Editorial Licence'. 'Tis the same story with the selection of cartoons which I have chosen at random to fill the last page. Stay the Distance and Stay as Happy as you possibly can.

*All Good Getting & Happy With Day!* 



## GALLERY



Recession social distancing

