

*Post-Albanese / Chalmers Summit on Business & Skills
(1-2 September 2022)*

*Repairing Australia's Rising COVID, Climate Mitigation,
Bushfire & Flood Risks
&
Integrity Crises*

Re-formulation of
Faux-“National Cabinet”
into a

“NATIONAL COVID COUNCIL”

Robert Gibbons ©

4 September 2022

Re-formulation of “National Cabinet” into a “National Covid Council”

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Governance is a little-understood feature of democracy where the usual emphases are on political lies, broken promises, biased journalism and obvious corruption. Two main factors bore on the way coronavirus was managed around the world: division of functions, resources and values between the Capitol and States; and systemic integrity, whether conflicted or professional and independent.

The National Cabinet was created for somewhat decent reasons on the part of the states and territories, but followed Trump’s line of foisting Capitol responsibility on the States but then abusing them. Their role was servitude and they wasted a year of possible positive planning. Here it is worse – the Labor States and Territories have clearly outperformed most international comparators, which infuriated Morrison and Berejiklian and their News and ABC jackals.

There is a full governance report which outlines detailed proposals which meet OECD and IMF protocols where the Governments’ arrangements do not. This focuses on the 2022 Budget cycle as it, like the four preceding it, is not meeting the challenges of the day as did Keating’s and Beattie’s, in fact the acts of “suppression” are characteristic of Morrison’s whose influences need to be hosed away. A stronger “National Council” might achieve major reforms if properly implemented.

Mapping of “needs” and analyses through the SWOT matrix are forgotten skills in Canberra and Sydney which is a technical impediment to be added to their methodological and moral failures. All are redressed here. It is also necessary to wake up journalists.

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The Business & Skills Summit produced a wave of enthusiasm around issues that were generic and should have been addressed immediately after 21 May. Before Treasury had directed Budget cuts to medical precautions towards maintaining subsidies to carbon corporates; and since to minimising social support payments to insignificance compared with needs.

2022 was much the same. Clear written advices were published on re-balancing past mistakes, waste and corruption, with reducing debt and increasing certainty and resourcing of climate,

corona, integrity and social support – none new, all in OECD guidances, all in this author’s books and websites:

*Rising COVID, Climate Mitigation,
Bushfire & Flood Risks*

&

Integrity Crises

Defects & Shortfalls left by Summit

- COVID
- Resources for preventative and “community resilience” programs – development & urgent implementation (most set out in “Border Wars” and Murray/Gibbons Template)
 - Resources for National Covid Commission – staffing & office program set-up, procedures manuals etc
 - Education programs for political and executive office-holders, then local charettes
 - Local hotspots redressed through Mitigation program including compensation for Murray businesses bastardised by Frydenberg/Kennedy and Berejiklian
- CLIMATE MITIGATION AT REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS
- Adaptation of “Newcastle NSIP” as template and precedent, SOP manual written and distributed
 - National co-operative infrastructure review developed and applied on basis of RG template (as suppressed by Kennedy for 7 years, him to be set aside) – cost sharing with purchase of IP, reducing waste, corruption, failed infrastructure programs esp in Sydney & Melbourne, regional needs to be built into 2023 MYEFO & Budget
 - International agreements built-in re technology spin-offs from AUKUS and Fed/sate renewables investments
- BUSHFIRE & FLOOD RISKS
- Set-up plan for national indigenous bushfire landcare model – 8,000 rangers properly trained and equipped, payment for IP
 - Integrated purchase for RAAF of heavy-lift water’suppressant bombing helicopters to complement fixed-wing but also engaged in flood rescue
- INTEGRITY CRISES
- Co-operative cycle will redress corruption left by Morrison/Frydenberg/Kennedy, with side-lining of Kennedy
 - Payment for IP will redress grossest plagiarisms in Australian history
 - Systemic improvements will achieve \$3 trillion in flow-on benefits through the national and even world economies

Lead scholar in Sydney Uni 1971-78 - urban politics, economics and governance, in Merit List in 9 of 10 courses, with two HD theses on Chicago and Sydney (HD plus was awarded).

Manager Planning Coordination and later Executive Director Planning & Projects in NSW DOT. Drove freight & transit reforms.

Executive Analyst in Council on the Cost of Government twice. GM in Admin Services. Policy Manager in State Development. Leader of reform of Elcom and AGL.

Reforming General Manager of Newcastle City Council, Author of ReviveBlue Mountains, “Greater Sydney from the Centre” (Sesquicentenary history of NSW), “Revitalise Sydney” (applying 1908-09 philosophies to current NSW), myths about value capture (in OnLineOpinion), “Faux Amalgamations”, and “The Eddington Bedrock: from Christie to Greiner to Gibbons”.

Lead consultant Rockdale 2020+ - new pier, marina, pool, international hotel and F6 option. (Re-designed gateway to Katoomba.)

Producer of the richest trove of IP since 1909 in the view of former Directors-General and leading academics.

That trove was callously stolen by our “protectors”, governments, so as to stifle independent thinking and cause hubristic harm, in Aristotle’s words, “Hubris consists in doing and saying things that cause shame to the victim... simply for the pleasure of it. Retaliation is not hubris, but revenge....” (Wiki)

In November 2021 I published a guide on matters in disarray and solution, pointed to Stephen Kennedy, head of Treasury as still is:

The PM has rejected a new template for on-ground medical and economic balancing, having decried early hospitalising of cases. We are entitled to suppose that fewer disease effects would have been caused had early hospitalisation been enforced, which was the medical advice. Further, that dithering cost millions of jobs and puts more pressure on the next generations which are already facing walls of debt. J'accuse!

Labor meekly accepted. Both sides’ rejection and contradiction of OECD and IMF guidelines was seemingly unconscious but could have been psychotic fear of being exposed for stimulus failure. There had been no “plan” and this was my idea, then as now, this should have been the situation:



The sequence of the argument is ~ the 2017-19 contexts is a base of analysis, as an important OECD and IMF theme is to repair negativities including the \$100 billion over 10 years; followed by the intermediate challenges of rorts, fires and coronavirus; then the 2020 "repair" proposals. Process, planning, leadership, management and other elements follow the "repair" so as to provide ready explanations of practical ways forward.

"Stimulus" is up to 2 years hence but building onwards. **Everything that could go wrong, has – in unbelievable ways.** THIS IS NOT A HAPPY STORY.

Setting the context for the counterpoint proposal, this is an helicopter perspective on 30 months of experience:

National Cabinet's objectives were unclear, its powers non-existent, and its constitution fraught with potential for unresolved conflict especially around the politically-fused mavericks, the PM and Berejiklian.

It was never a sustainable model and after more than two years, this is my judgement on its systemic failures ➡

PM acted to prevent multiple ministries. Good. National Cabinet failed 1) supply info on vaccine stocks/beds/PPEs 2) supply/quality quarantine 3) border closure rules 4) stop Berejiklian/Frydenberg/Kennedy smashing Border Economies July '20 5) transparency/minutes 6) behaviours. Refused to consider "community resilience" in "BORDER WARS" and since. Time for community, business, churches to say ENOUGH! **Push Summit hard** to insist Govt rids this remnant of Morrison manipulation

Its Minutes were closed to the community which seemed strange as Minutes do not show more than the committee wants. That caused political angst and should be reversed in the manner of local authorities and SOC boards, with conditioned restrictions say on personnel matters and property dealings.

Spectacular personality clashes occurred between the border laissez-faire pro-corporate PM and Berejiklian, and Premiers and Chief Ministers who gave initial priority to community protection. That they are now weary of slogging it out without support needs to be assessed in the light of better arrangements for a "National Covid Council".

There was no countervailing positive political force, with Labor appeasing Morrison at six key points. The widescreen perspective of the context is:

| | 2008 to 2012/3 | 2015 to 2019 | 2019 - 2022 | 2022 | Future |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| | Budgets for Needs > Gifting to Family & Friends > Gifting & Rorting > Budgeting to avoid criticism > Avoid Budget Reform | | | | |
| Budgets | Strong inheritance but GFC stressed all govts. iA set up as gifting contra to Tanner. Baird /Gaetjens distorted NSW Budget Funds, probity X | Truss (Nats) further subjugated iA, pushed Inland Rail w/o merit, Berejiklian 2017 Budget hidden nasty – debt will harm Health/Education | Chaos re compens'n for fire victims, water bomber malice, corona responses & stimuli, sloppy amounts/debt re Budget blow-outs. Climate lies X, OECD ✓ | Election campaigns ignored corona and climate Budget options & better outcomes. Labor pro-2030 targets but wants more carbon projects. No “repair” | Chalmers rejects Budget reform re climate & demographic responsiveness/ reduce waste & corruption. 2 CEOs kept on despite poor performances. Tried to cut preventatives X |
| Ethics / Probity | 2008 Baird <u>stole</u> Nth Beaches BRT scheme, Berejiklian promised no metros but in 6/12 lied > chaos over tunnels, forced changes, crowd overloads at Chatswood, crisis-thinking into expensive band aids, Albo/iA weak in response, Berejiklian progressively destroyed Goanna (“best idea in 100 yrs”) & port planning | Turnbull lied re “bust congestion”, Kennedy WS City Deal damage (c \$400 b), he suppressed 2015-6 Budget reform re climate /demographic changes, Parra tram gift to Mrs Turnbull who wrecked housing affordability. Berejiklian malice to tram-inflicted communities. Cruel <u>forced RG homelessness</u> re denied payment for plagiarisms | Morrison mayhem, <u>stole</u> RG “public affairs” reports, bushfire & corona erraticism, panicked over Budget/MYEFO, Kennedy refused Budget reform and confused corona economics, ALP wrongly endorsed WS Metros which damage freight, transit & employment re-balancing/reducing congestion. Albanese appeased Morrison over 6 critical aspects | Labor suppressed Budget reform, continued loose corona thinking, all misled by Kennedy. Suppressed community resilience in face of professional angst over loss of direction in corona programs. ALP + LNP refuse ethical treatment of <u>plagiarism</u> even though Albanese promised integrity including “end shameful tolerance of corruption”. | No reform to corona and Budget, Economic Update / Summit lacked punch of Newcastle fast & effective results, Kennedy designed Summit to suppress corona/climate economics, ethics and OECD's reduce waste/debt to focus hard on new economy challenges. Very unhappy prospects for 2022 Budget which already has LNP-type delays |

National Cabinet was irrelevant when quarantine breakdowns were raging and in July 2020 Frydenberg/Kennedy joined with Berejiklian to smash the Border economies, especially the Murray because I live there – their malice was bigger even than their egos. National Cabinet was nowhere to be seen.

Background

It is important to match needs with process protections, skills and knowledge. The Coronavirus assault on China thence the world required discipline first in line with previous pandemics, science second and as fast as possible, with media reinforcing a medical message. Australia has a balkanised federal system and saw confusion, delays and false starts with an hysterical PM and media shouting and screaming. He despised state and territory administrators who had more discipline than him and tried to haul them back from movement cordons but failed. Then his brainwave, set up a body he could chair behind a tight shield of confidentiality. Did that work and what can we learn after 30 months?

That seemed to suit the administrators whose only claim is that decisions could be made quickly. One has to ask what they are hiding especially after PM Albanese was left speechless after his first meeting with them. “National Cabinet” should be assessed against whether or not it did the job that Australia needed, not whether Premiers find it comfortable. In a culture that is notoriously anal behind smokescreens, what is the true SWOT? How did it succeed or fail against the matrix of issues facing the national?

Three precursors come to mind. **Infrastructure Australia** was set up with structural and staff exchanges between developer and construction lobbies, with stakeholder ministers intent on doing deals, thus pre-destining it towards corruption. There are almost no gates. That was predictable but missed by journalists. The deskilled iA is now a critical impediment to post-carbon economic productivity.

The second is the **Health Care Complaints Commission** in NSW which deals with complex interfaces between patients & professionals with hospitals, doctors, pharmaceutical companies and multi-millionaire owners, in a totally professional manner. It has strong gates and near universal respect. It shows in medicine what our professionals need in corona, a system that reflects scientific needs and standards.

Finally there was the **Urban Transport Advisory Committee** (became state-wide as TRANSAC) in NSW which co-ordinated policy and budget submissions on behalf of the Railways, Ports, Traffic, Urban Transit, Ministry and Treasury. It had no links with contractors who worked at political levels. It was positive and peaceful even though ministers were sometimes at war. That made for effective budgets at times of stringency. It needed no legislation or separate funding. Later Lib minister Bruce Baird mused publicly about bringing it back. Its 1976 and 1979 Reports stand like beacons across the decades.

It would not have survived the later lunatic LNP Premiers and their ministers who abhorred professional independence. PM Albanese's promise to reintroduce "integrity" is what URTAC did in practice and which iA does not do even in the Government's dreams.