



# Australian Citizens Party

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Australian politicians must grow a spine to stop persecution of Assange**

The British court ruling last week upholding the USA's appeal on extraditing Julian Assange is the final straw. The US and UK pro-war faction, and their Australian apologists, want to kill the Australian journalist who exposed their war crimes; indeed, Assange has just suffered a stroke from the stress he is enduring—Australians must not stand for it. According to Assange's legal team, advocacy by the Australian government would have made the difference when Donald Trump considered pardoning Assange back in January, and it would still make the difference, but the government hasn't bothered. It's time for all Australians to stand up and demand our political leaders grow a spine and tell Joe Biden in no uncertain terms to let Assange go.

Hit the phones! All concerned Australians should make three phone calls *today*—to PM Scott Morrison, Foreign Minister Marise Payne, and Defence Minister Peter Dutton—to demand they tell their British and American counterparts to end the persecution of Assange immediately. (See contact details below.)

The official narrative about Assange is a tissue of lies. Assange's only crime was exposing that our "side" commits war crimes and covers them up. For two decades the USA and UK, with Australia always in tow, have weaponised "human rights" to conduct permanent warfare in the guise of "interventions", fueled by a never-ending stream of accusations of crimes against humanity by so-called "authoritarian regimes". WikiLeaks exposed that the real crimes against humanity were the resulting endless wars, and it exposed the inner workings of the intelligence-diplomatic-military-corporate machinery that orchestrated these wars. It also exposed the cover-ups of horrific war crimes committed by our side, which gave the lie to the Anglo-American sanctimony over human rights. If WikiLeaks had not released the "Collateral Murder" video of US helicopter gunships coolly but murderously gunning down two Reuters journalists and their companions in Iraq, it would likely still be covered up to this day.

The US charges against Julian Assange are false:

- He did not "hack" classified documents, in breach of the US *Espionage Act*; he published documents leaked to him by Chelsea Manning, who served time for her crime before US President Barack Obama commuted her sentence in 2017. Essentially, except for being the first to publish, what Assange did was no different to many major media outlets all over the world which published the same documents, sourced from WikiLeaks. In June 2021, the only witness supporting the US charge of espionage, convicted serial paedophile and financial fraudster Sigurdur Ingi Thordarson, admitted in an interview with Icelandic newspaper *Stundin* that his "evidence" is a lie.
- He did not put lives at risk; rather, he carefully vetted the documents and even called the US State Department in 2011 to forewarn them when WikiLeaks lost control of some diplomatic cables that were about to be published. Australian journalist Mark Davis was present in the WikiLeaks bunker when Assange released the Afghanistan war documents in 2010, and he testifies that Assange took great care to redact the documents so as to remove sensitive identifying information about US agents. This accusation is a hypocritical smokescreen, however, as, in truth, Assange was exposing the lies about the wars that were really to blame for mass death and destruction.

Australia's treatment of Julian Assange has been deeply shameful. From the beginning, Australian politicians and media marched in lockstep with the USA and denounced Assange for exposing the Anglo-American war machine. In 2010, then-PM Julia Gillard called his publishing of leaked documents "illegal"—an extraordinary claim given that publishing leaked documents has always been a cornerstone of real journalism. To this day high-profile Australian mainstream media journalists snidely insist that Assange is not a journalist, simply because he exposed the war lies that they had faithfully regurgitated and never questioned. Successive Australian governments have gone through the motions of providing Assange with the bare minimum consular assistance, while effectively sacrificing this Australian citizen to their subservient strategic relationship to the United States.

The only politician who has consistently advocated for Assange has been former Australian intelligence official and Tasmanian Independent MP Andrew Wilkie. In recent years, however, Wilkie

has been joined by a growing band of MPs, including Queensland LNP MP and co-chair of the Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Group, George Christensen, Greens Senator Peter Whish-Wilson, Labor MP Julian Hill, and more than a dozen others, to pressure the Australian government to act for Assange. A sign of the turning tide is that prominent Labor politicians who toed the line behind Julia Gillard in 2010, including former PM and Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, former NSW Premier and Foreign Minister Bob Carr, and current Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese, have now switched to call for the persecution of Assange to end. And Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce, chair of the National Security Committee of Cabinet, is now also calling for Assange not to be extradited to the USA.

### **Stand up!**

Concerned Australians must direct their justified anger over the persecution of Assange at the right place, which is the Australian government politicians who are in a position to demand Joe Biden release him. Starting today, everyone telephone the PM, Foreign Minister, and Defence Minister to deliver the message that they will be held politically responsible for the fate of Julian Assange. Tell them they must immediately contact the US and UK governments to demand they let Assange go.

Contact details:

#### **Prime Minister Scott Morrison**

Parliament: 02 6277 7700 Electorate: 02 9523 0339

#### **Foreign Minister Marise Payne**

Parliament: 02 6277 7500 Electorate: 02 9687 8755

#### **Defence Minister Peter Dutton**

Parliament: 02 6277 7800 Electorate: 07 3205 9977