

What is government for, if not this?

The *Australian Alert Service* is the weekly publication of the Australian Citizens Party.

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Lead Editorial

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An image from the Citizens Party's latest YouTube video ad: [A National Bank to fund flood relief and infrastructure—now is not the time for penny-pinching!](#)

If you were destitute, what would you do to feed your children, or your elderly parents? You would beg, borrow, or steal! Many of our ancestors were sent to this country for stealing a loaf of bread or poaching a rabbit. But what should a *government* do—even if it is bankrupt—in order to keep the nation functioning, to pay nurses in public hospitals, to keep the garbage collected, to maintain infrastructure and keep the power and water on? It is not good enough for governments to cry “we don’t have the money in the budget”. This endangers the lives of the citizens, as much as a parent who would not take extraordinary action to provide for a child. Even worse would be to cut the budget and raise taxes—implement austerity policy—at such a time.

Governments are constituted to act on behalf of the entire citizenry, and therefore have commensurate power. This means that unlike a parent trying to provide for the family, governments have the capacity to *create the means* to provide for the nation. Powerful institutions have been established and utilised over history to ensure this capacity. The most seminal of these is a national credit bank. As a piece of critical infrastructure to ensure the future growth as well as the day-to-day function of a nation, such a bank is vital to ensure the livelihood, and therefore the freedom, of a nation (see back page feature).

As a result of the bipartisan “post-1983 consensus on economic reform”, families are facing the extreme crunch of a collapsing economy, despite claims of “28 years of uninterrupted economic growth”. Among the worse affected areas are:

Housing: Australian house prices relative to income have doubled in the past 40-50 years, Alan Kohler wrote 4 April article in *The New Daily*, a ratio which decreased in most developed nations. This means “household debt has had to increase from half to twice average disposable income”, putting Australians under huge stress. The Australian Citizens Party is developing a policy for a massive expansion of public housing.

Health and aged care: Most of the promises of expanded health infrastructure made in the early stages of the pandemic have not materialised for want of politicians willing to think outside the

constraints of neoliberal economic policy and budgetary restrictions. Inadequate emergency departments, ambulance and emergency call infrastructure is costing lives. One of the most pressing requirements is increasing the pay and conditions of crucial health and aged care staff, many of whom are quitting in despair.

Energy: The Australian Energy Market Operator has warned of potential gas shortfalls by next winter, foreshadowing “voluntary” rationing, according to the *Australian*. Regarding petrol price and supply, the ACP is reviving a Whitlam government proposal to create a local petrochemical industry, also crucial for a revival of manufacturing and agriculture.

Flood relief: The Citizens Party has shown in recent AAS issues that the government’s approach to flood (and other disaster) infrastructure is severely flawed. We are also proposing a government insurance scheme.

One of the biggest criticisms from the latest Liberal MP to turn on the Morrison government, Cath Cusack, who has quit the NSW state parliament, is the Morrison government’s politicisation of flood relief—neglecting affected citizens living in non-government electorates. Cusack explicitly backed the characterisation of Morrison by recently disendorsed Liberal Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells (that the PM is “an autocrat and a bully who has no moral compass”), remarking that she could not even bring herself to vote for the leader of her own party.

Add to the above crimes of omission the plight of financial victims, exemplified by the victims of the Sterling First scam, many of whose lives are at risk, if they have not already died amid their battle (p. 3). We must understand that governments *can* act, and compel them *to* act!

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