



Australian Citizens Party

Craig Isherwood, National Secretary

PO Box 376, COBURG, VIC 3058

Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** info@citizensparty.org.au **Web:** citizensparty.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Converge on Canberra for Assange on Thursday

Join the chorus of voices telling Anthony Albanese to demand our UK-US allies free Julian Assange.

Every Australian who can, should join the "Converge on Canberra for Assange" rally at Parliament House, 12 Noon Thursday 28 July.

Send a message to Anthony Albanese: Follow through on your previous statements and demand our UK and US allies free Julian Assange from Belmarsh Prison so he can come home.

In December 2021, then-Opposition Leader Albanese said: "I've said for some time that enough is enough ... He has paid a big price for the publication of that information already and I do not see what purpose is served by the ongoing pursuit of Mr Assange."

But when asked about Assange after winning the May 2022 election, the new PM said: "My position is that not all foreign affairs is best done with the loudhailer."

In other words, "Trust me, I'm a politician."

Sorry Prime Minister, not good enough.

Australians can have no confidence that that's not a spin doctor's answer to duck the issue.

Especially when, by contrast, Albanese has had no trouble using a loudhailer against our biggest and most important trading partner China, repeating his predecessor Scott Morrison's rhetoric, even though Australia's exporters are desperate for that relationship to improve.

Australians should be angry that Albanese is willing to say something in Opposition that he won't back up when he's in government.

It raises the question: was Albanese just using the Assange issue as a cheap electoral ploy, to indicate a point of difference with Scott Morrison to harvest votes but with no intention to follow through?

The truth about Assange

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" until 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 of 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 in the Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Group to pressure the Australian government to act for Assange. Not only was Anthony Albanese a member of the Group, but under his leadership the Labor Party adopted a position in its 2021 national policy platform that "it is now time for this long drawn-out case against Julian Assange to be brought to an end".

Demand freedom

Anthony Albanese must not be allowed to duck this issue now that he's in a position to do something about it. Australia is the most faithful ally of both the UK and USA, as evidenced by our participation in all their wars. He should demonstrate foreign policy independence by using a 120-decibel loudhailer to *demand* Assange's freedom.

Everyone who can, should join the Converge to Canberra this Thursday to send the Prime Minister this message.

When: 12 Noon, Thursday 28 July

Where: Parliament House, Canberra

Contact: Canberra4Assange@protonmail.com

Instructions: Bring signs and banners