



# Australian Citizens Party

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Mary Kostakidis symbolises the danger of Albanese's MAD censorship bill**

*Share Mary Kostakidis' article with Greens Senators to show them the intent behind the MAD bill—see below.*

Iconic Australian television news anchor Mary Kostakidis is the target of a malicious “professional media” smear campaign, and lawfare on behalf of a foreign power, to silence her outspokenness on the Israel-Gaza conflict on social media.

The Kostakidis case is emblematic of the intention behind the Albanese government mis- and disinformation (MAD) social media censorship bill.

Mary Kostakidis has written a comprehensive explanation of the issues driving her experience in a 23 October 2024 article in Pearls and Irritations titled “[Free speech, journalism and democracy in a time of genocide](#)”.

Kostakidis is one of numerous experienced “professional media” journalists who now operate on social media where their reporting cannot be censored by managing editors, publishers, and media barons cooperating with governments.

She recounts her experience at SBS, where she was part of the original management team that established the public broadcaster in 1980 to serve immigrant communities, before moving in 1988 to anchor its flagship SBS World News, becoming the face of the broadcaster for the next 20 years.

#### **Anglocentric worldview**

Most of the time the media covers a conflict in a foreign country, most Australians have no idea about the history of those regions and the context for the conflicts; Australia's “Five Eyes” partners the USA and UK (supported by Canada, Australia, and often New Zealand) have long taken advantage of this ignorance to run criminal regime-change operations all over the world that spark wars and chaos, but which they twist as “democracies” helping people in those nations win “freedom”.

This is the dominant Anglocentric worldview in Five Eyes countries like Australia.

However, immigrant communities are not ignorant about the context of the conflicts in their home regions (and are often better informed about the rest of the world too), because they don't have an Anglocentric worldview.

Kostakidis reveals that SBS, like the rest of Australia's media, always reported from the Anglocentric perspective of the backgrounds of its Chief Producers and management.

“This determined the perspective on every war covered in the 20 year period I was there, including the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, with the Middle East seen through an Anglo and Israeli lens”, she recounts.

“The junkets to Israel and free lunches for Chief Producers were par for the course, one Chief Producer freshly returned from Israel fobbing off my request to have a Palestinian guest on for a change with ‘Why? They're all mad’. So, an Anglo-centric perspective because ... well, we were Australian.”

#### **Social media threat to Establishment narrative**

For years before the horrific Hamas attack on 7 October 2023, social media increasingly informed people all over the world of the daily violent repression Palestinians in the occupied territories endured from the Israeli Defence Force and criminal settlers backed by the Israeli government and United States.

This source of information powerfully contradicted the narrative of the “professional media”, and not just in Israel-Palestine, but also in other conflicts and trouble-spots including Syria, Ukraine, the US-backed Hong Kong riots, and Xinjiang.

The context this provided for the conflict in Gaza showed that, while horrific, October 7 was not the beginning of the conflict, Palestinians were not simply jihadist terrorists (like Al-Qaeda and ISIS which the USA backed to fight wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria) who woke up one morning and read the Koran and decided to kill Jews, and the Netanyahu government was not motivated by the “democratic values” it “shared” with the West.

Thanks to social media, the pro-Israeli narrative has never been weaker in countries like Australia, the USA, and the UK, leading to an unprecedented political backlash against the governments of those countries pathetically justifying the subsequent mass-slaughter of Palestinian children and women as Israel’s “right to defend itself”.

As a result, the most extreme right-wing politicians in Australia and the United States, such as Australian Liberal Senator James Paterson and US Republican Senator Tom Cotton, who are shameless shells for the US military-industrial complex, have hysterically blamed social media, especially TikTok, for young people rejecting the pro-Israel justification for mass slaughter.

And high-profile independent journalists covering the conflict on social media, including Mary Kostakidis, have been targeted: in the UK, a number of independent journalists have been violently raided and detained by UK police; in Australia, the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA), which is a lobby for a foreign power, is using “lawfare” to attack and silence Mary Kostakidis with a complaint under 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* for a 4 January post on X (Twitter) in which she posted a statement by Hezbollah leader Nasrallah saying that “from the river to the sea the land of Palestine is for the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian people only” to which she added: “The Israeli govt getting some of its own medicine. Israel has started something it can’t finish with the genocide.”

The ZFA action against Kostakidis is clearly intended to snare her in expensive court proceedings that make an example of her to other commentators, and bankrupt her.

### **MAD censorship**

The Albanese government is pushing ahead with the MAD censorship bill initiated under the Morrison government, which is intended to extend the narrative management of Australia’s tightly controlled “professional media” to social media.

That’s why “professional media” is exempt from the bill—it already toes the line.

The MAD bill defines “serious harm” in the same way the ZFA is weaponising 18C against Mary Kostakidis: “vilification of a group in Australian society distinguished by race, religion, ... nationality or national or ethnic origin, or vilification of an individual because of a belief that the individual is a member of such a group” that has “significant and far reaching consequences for the Australian community or a segment of the Australian community; or severe consequences for an individual in Australia”.

The Greens have the power to stop this dangerous bill—tell them to read Mary Kostakidis’ article.

Click here to read “[Free speech, journalism and democracy in a time of genocide](#)”.

### **What you can do**

Call and email the Greens and Independents in the Senate, to express your opposition to the MAD bill, point out that they too will be censored, and urge them to vote against it.

Click here for Greens Senators:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Parliamentarian\\_Search\\_Results?q=&sen=1&par=295&gen=0&ps=12](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian_Search_Results?q=&sen=1&par=295&gen=0&ps=12)

Click here for Independent Senators:

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