

Establishment's power games won't save it



The *Australian Alert Service* is the weekly publication of the Citizens Electoral Council of Australia.

It will keep you updated of strategic events both in Australia, and worldwide, as well as the organising activities of the CEC.

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The salacious exposure of One Nation Senate candidate Steve Dickson's unsavoury activities less than three weeks before the federal election, timed with the Liberal Party elevating Clive Palmer's United Australia Party through a preference deal, reveals the dirty, controlled nature of Australian politics and the desperation of the political establishment.

Even London's *Financial Times* reflected the concern in a 29 April 2019 article titled "Australia's fringe parties become political power brokers", which reported that "The shift away from established parties mirrors a trend in Europe and the US, where a populist wave has catapulted maverick politicians and parties into power."

Already in 1997, in the midst of the Asian financial crisis which threatened a global financial meltdown, the support for the Citizens Electoral Council was growing so rapidly, particularly in rural areas, that the establishment imposed a media blackout on the CEC, and started giving blanket coverage to the new Queensland MP Pauline Hanson to siphon away CEC votes. One Nation proved difficult to keep in the anti-immigration box, however, embracing such CEC policies as national banking, and the establishment cranked up a nasty campaign to shut it down. However, when there was a surge of support for the CEC in the 2001 Western Australian state election, and at least one candidate looking like winning a seat, the media engineered a last-minute One Nation revival. The front page of *The Bulletin* magazine at the time asked: "Pauline Hanson: Can this soufflé rise twice?"

The establishment wants One Nation to stick to immigration issues, soak up the protest vote, and direct preferences back to the Liberals. Instead, Hanson has taken on the power-centre of the establishment, the banks, by introducing the CEC's Banking System Reform (Separation of Banks) Bill 2019 into the Senate on 12 February, and attempting to amend—blocked by government dirty tricks—APRA's emergency powers passed in February 2018, so they couldn't be used to steal depositors' money in a crisis.

On cue, we have the second coming of Clive, his collapsed party reinflated to absorb political ferment in a climate where people have had enough of the major parties, and where One Nation, the Greens and even Nationals have been increasingly prepared to take on the banks. In the last two years Australian politics has been dominated by the process surrounding the banking royal commission, where the fraud committed by the Big Four banks, protected by the major political parties which they fund, drove smaller parties (and before elections, those in opposition) to take them on. The CEC set the standard for the fight by campaigning relentlessly against the global banking dictatorship's drive for a "bail-in" regime, and working with independent experts and advocates to expose other mechanisms of bank fraud. Even more importantly, we put up the alternative which terrifies the banks, and their masters—the Glass-Steagall bank separation legislation which would block the banks' speculative money-grubbing—supported by a loose but growing coalition of Katter's Australia Party, One Nation, the Greens and members of the Centre Alliance, in addition to individual members of both major parties.

Hence why first-term senator Jane Hume, elected from among the banking fraternity in 2016, was installed in Parliament as the protector of the banks (p. 3). With the housing bubble crashing, even deniers are getting panicked, as seen in economist Peter Switzer's latest column, "Scott & Bill, do something about property prices!" (p. 5). The action they are begging for is, incredibly, even lower interest rates and a flood of money which would wipe out the Australian dollar—Citi has just proposed injections of cash known as "helicopter money", something the Reserve Bank already studied as an option in 2016 (back page). Fortunately the CEC is working with a growing group of economists and experts—a brains trust—who realise this is insanity and are fighting for real solutions.

In this issue:

- Senator for bankers kills Separation of Banks inquiry under cover of election
- Developing property disaster

- Great Debate II
- Bradfield Scheme strikes controversy
- Breathtaking plans to rebuild the world emerge from Beijing
- The Australian connection to the Sri Lanka Easter massacre
- The Christchurch massacre: British imperial 'population control'. Part II
- What's behind the Trump-Federal Reserve battle
- Ukraine election: stepping away from disaster
- Analyst: USA and Co. are 'losing World War III' in Syria
- Collaboration and peace is not impossible: first Glass-Steagall!
- 'Helicopter money' won't save the economy
- ALMANAC - Case study: MI6 and the Manchester Terror Attack

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