The Informer

Newsletter of the Association of the Former Members of the Parliament of New Zealand

October 2021

Reflections on 37 Years in Public Office

Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith

Address to Association of Former Members of Parliament
Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith - July 2021

Thank you for this privilege to share some thoughts. You've forced me to reflect on the past 37 years, 29 in the New Zealand Parliament, and more recently involvement in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Ghana and Nigeria - although the latter was so chaotic I never actually set foot there.

There have been memorable moments. As the new High Commissioner being welcomed to New Zealand House in London by our wonderful kapa haka group, Ngati Ranana, high up on the 18th floor, I looked across to the Thames where the East India docks once were, and from where in 1862 my great-grandparents had left on the sailing ship Hanover, bound for the Kaipara, one of the first two ships in the Albertland Settlement.

Just 150 years later, I was returning to represent the country they chose to be their home, in the place they grew up in.

It seems only yesterday I was selected to stand for the seat of Kaipara at the Town Hall in Dargaville. I'd never been a political wonk. I was a scientist and, more latterly a young international marketing executive, dabbling in television to make a bit of pocket money after 13 years at university.

I'd only joined the National Party three years before I was nominated. It was an interesting selection. I had to beat the Chair of the Electorate, the Chair of the Auckland Region, two sitting Board Members of the Party and a former Member of Parliament, the blue-eyed boy of the Party at the time.

Surprises

Shocks were to greet me in both my early days at Parliament and also many years later during my early days at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

At Parliament it was the Press Gallery. If history depended on what was recorded about politics in the media, the world would have a cocked up notion of what really went on.

At MFAT, I couldn't believe my eyes as I walked into the head office in Wellington to start my pre-posting programme - row

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

Reflections, 37 years 1, 2,3
Satisfying Journey 4, 5
ANZUS at 70 6, 7
Challenges to Democracy 8
New Books in Parli Library 9
Holiday Trees 10, 11
President's Report 12
AGM Report 13
Deaths of Former Members 13
Association Directory 14
Subscriptions 14

(Continued from page 1)

upon row of desks with no personality or character to be seen. The CEO sat up the front of a long row, and visitors met with him in a bland meeting room. It would have made the Soviet Union proud. I determined never to let London look like that.

I really want to reflect on just four issues tonight and then a final thought.

Brexit

First, Brexit. It was an amazing time to be in London. Under UK law, I could have voted but chose not to. I didn't want to vote against my Government's official position, yet my heart wanted to see the UK freed from the numbing bureaucracy of the EU.

That night I set my alarm clock every two hours to keep an eye on the result. I wasn't totally surprised at the outcome. Prime Minister Cameron had failed to convince the EU of the reforms needed to keep the UK in.

In 1973 Britain had joined a common market – the EEC. Many British people were never going to be comfortable with the goal of 'ever closer political union' that resulted from the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

And the ultimate aim of the 'United States of Europe' was on a collision course with Britain's heritage. The cultures were too different. Britain had been shaped by generations of democracy whereas much of continental Europe had been under dictatorship until after the Second World War.

It wasn't just the institutions of democracy that were so different, but the legal and regulatory systems as well. The UK had a Global Britain heritage and would always feel frustrated by the inward looking EU. Growth in the UK's trade lay elsewhere and the protectionist mind-set of the EU would inevitably limit exploitation of that potential.

I have recently been serving on the Trade and Agriculture Commission of the United Kingdom – the only non-British person - laying the ground work for Global Britain to emerge.

We did much background work on access for agricultural products, preparing for the FTA negotiations with both Australia and New Zealand, as well as trying to ensure UK policy would meet the requirements of acceding to CPTPP, the Transpacific Partnership.

The post-Brexit world in the UK is not without its challenges, but it is an exciting one. I just hope a rational relationship can also be restored with the EU over time. The EU and the UK remain vitally important to each other.

Constitutional Monarchy

This issue pops up from time to time. Should New Zealand become a republic, or, why maintain ties to the British royal family?

I would argue strongly that the royal family, much as I personally got to know and like them, is not the issue. At the heart of this debate should be the effectiveness of our democracy.

While High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, I of course served on the Board of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Among the Commonwealth's 54 members are both republics and realm countries. Helping sort out governance problems is part of the work of the Secretariat.

View from top of New Zealand House, toward London Eye

While I was on the Board, it was invariably the republics that experienced difficulties. The constitutional monarchy evolved over hundreds of years. The republic system was designed by experts. As a biological scientist, I would go with evolution every time. The problems in the republics centred on the relationship between the executive, the courts and the congress or parliament.

The constitutional monarchy has tremendous strength in that the executive is drawn from the parliament. That means the executive can be held to account every sitting day in the parliament. It's why question time our Parliament is so important. Ask yourself, how often does the US president get questioned directly by Congress?

We should not abandon what works well without very good reason.

MMP

My third issue is MMP. It has undoubtedly diversified the face of Parliament and that is good. But at what cost?

Local representation has clearly suffered. There are too few constituencies, with some of them so large that serving constituents, a fundamental role for MPs, becomes impossible.

The reduced number of constituency members also means there are fewer MPs learning about the impact of policies on people's lives, learning that comes from helping people in an electorate.

That is a powerfully important part of the job. Over my 27 years as a constituent MP, I learnt so much from helping people, often people who probably didn't vote for me. In fact, if I had my way, I would require all political party signage to be removed from electorate offices.

What's more, the accountability of MPs has been dramatically altered. Accountability to local constituents has been almost lost completely. Because the party vote is all that really matters in an MMP election, accountability to political parties is now absolute. Again constituents miss out.

Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith in the Speaker's Chair

My final point on this matter is that real debate in parliament has also been destroyed. When I was first elected in 1984 members expressed real personal views in the House, personal views based on the wider world experience they brought to the House as elected members.

Years later, while Speaker, I hardly ever saw real debate. I'll never forget the day I interrupted a Green Party member reading a five-minute speech during the general debate. The Member immediately got to their feet under a point of order to tell me that their Party required them to read speeches written for them.

It seemed to be news to the Member when I explained that no stranger was ever allowed to tell a Member what to say in that House.

A better balance is needed. The list should not be a rescue parachute for failed constituency MPs. We need smaller constituencies and the list should provide for diversity and special skills only. Candidates should stand either for a constituency or the list, but not both. A Supplementary Member system would provide far better balance.

MFAT

My fourth issue is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I had never worked for a government department before. I found it frustrating. I've always struggled with bureaucracy.

My wife, Alexandra, did a huge amount of charitable work in London. It ranged from fund raising for breast cancer, to serving on the UK/NZ Link Foundation, the Board of the Festival for the Australian and New Zealand Arts, not to mention putting on numerous concerts for young Kiwi musicians.

MFAT provided her no support. I found it hugely rewarding when she was voted UK New Zealander of the year for her work, despite MFAT's failure to recognise its value.

More important though was the focus I found on reporting back to Wellington what other people thought. It was as if promotion depended on it. I tried to encourage my staff to seek to influence what others thought, to encourage our colleagues in the United Kingdom to see things our way, rather than just reporting back to Wellington what the UK thought.

My approach saw some success. I appeared in front of parliamentary committees, delivered numerous lectures at universities, a key note address to the British Society of Animal Science and almost every agricultural conference across the UK and Ireland.

Then, shortly after leaving London as High Commissioner, I was brought back to address the Prosperity UK Conference on global trade strategies, and have since spoken at the Oxford Farming Conference and delivered seminars on trade negotiations for the Oxford University program for developing and small island states.

As mentioned earlier, the UK Secretary of State for Trade also appointed me to the UK's interim Trade and Agriculture Commission. During months of

(Continued on page 7)

ANZUS at 70: How Does New Zealand View the Treaty Today?

With ANZUS having turned 70, how does New Zealand view the Treaty today?

By Kennedy Graham

In political opinion, virtually not at all; in terms of its legal, strategic and cultural context, the answer is more complex and nuanced.

The trans-Tasman differentiation regarding ANZUS was starkly portrayed on 1 September. In the Australian Parliament, the prime minister delivered a statement – effectively in praise of a bilateral alliance since New Zealand attracted no substantive mention. ANZUS was the foundation stone of Australia's national security; a key pillar for peace and stability in "our" Indo-Pacific region. For seven decades, it has underpinned vital military, national security, and intelligence cooperation between Australia and the US. It breathes and adapts with each passing generation. Its two peoples see the world through the same lens. They should pledge again to renew and modernise the Alliance. They will meet the challenge of the current strategic environment with the same courage, daring, and unbreakable bond that carried them to this day. May God continue to bless the US-Australia alliance.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, there was no acknowledgement of the anniversary – no statement by the PM or by her foreign or defence ministers. That same day, however, the Defence Force issued a statement paying respect to the country's oldest citizen – a war veteran who had died just short of 110. With his passing, the torch is handed to Bill Mitchell, a fellow Pacific veteran with whom he shared birthdays. The difference is stark, unwittingly metaphorical: a panegyric to the future; an obituary to the past.

How a country perceives a regional self-defence pact reflects an underlying worldview – how the world was to be governed in the 20th century; how it might be governed in the 21st. The choice is basic: a global community of peoples sharing a fundamental common interest despite national differences; or an international community of states, pursuing competitive national goals that overshadow the common interest. Two issues differentiate the countries in policymaking: the lawful use of force, and the possession of nuclear weapons. ANZUS has been the lightning rod for their interconnection.

Use of Force

After millennia of sovereign war-fighting and peace-making, the 20th century witnessed the establishment of international organisations on a global scale and the strengthening of international law with the theoretical prohibition of war through distinguishing "lawful" from "unlawful" armed force. Collective security, at the global level, was initiated in 1920, cemented in 1945.

But the UN Charter contains a dual weakness – the veto and the right of collective self- defence. Australia and New Zealand jointly opposed the veto but were over-ridden by the major powers, especially by the US. The draft Charter initially allowed only for the collective use of armed force, individual self-defence of states being regarded as an inherent right in natural law. The belated inclusion of Article 51 transformed that into a positivist right of collective self-defence.

These two features have, ever since, had implications for global governance, pitting two strategic methods of security within the same rules manual: global collective security, hampered by the veto; regional self-defence, unhampered through subjective justification. The Cold War doctrine of containment spawned regional self-defence pacts across Europe, Central Asia, South-east Asia, and the Pacific. Their wording was carefully designed for compatibility with the UN Charter, their existence justified on grounds of Security Council inertia. But with the rise of the Non-Aligned Movement and the collapse of the USSR, only NATO and ANZUS survived – the latter acting effectively as a bilateral, along with those for Japan and South Korea.

In the early Cold War period, the tension between global collective security and regional self- defence played out in earnest. Military engagement by both countries in Korea was legally sanctioned through UN authorisation. Yet shortly thereafter, both were on the wrong side of the UN through active support for the British (French-Israeli) invasion of Egypt. The following decade, their military participation in Vietnam without UN authorisation indicated political reliance on regional self-defence superseding legal justification. ANZUS hovered in

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

the background, but was not invoked.

With the terrorist attacks in the US in 2001, Australia explicitly referred to ANZUS. But the invasion of Afghanistan was UN-authorised, with NATO's operational leadership. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003, however, involving Australia militarily with US, UK, and Poland, was a breach of international law. New Zealand refused to participate. ANZUS was nowhere to be seen.

Nuclear Weapons

Early in the Cold War, Australia and New Zealand accepted a reliance on the potential use of US nuclear weapons as part of strategic doctrine for regional self-defence. In the mid- 1970s, however, the first intimation of New Zealand's concern with this surfaced, with sponsorship at the UN of a South Pacific nuclear-free zone. Both countries provided leadership for the regional zone in the mid-'80s, but they differed over banning nuclear- armed vessels and aircraft from national territory, prompting New Zealand's stronger domestic legislation in 1987. No citizen or resident shall aid or abet in the control of any nuclear explosive device within the national zone. No Crown servant (cabinet minister) shall do so anywhere in the world – a criminal offence with ten years imprisonment. A public advisory committee has operated for 30 years to advise the prime minister on the implementation of the Act.

For three decades New Zealand refused entry of any nuclear-capable vessel or aircraft. Recently, a higher "level of trust" in US assurances has prompted national leaders to allow their entry despite the US non-disclosure policy. A new issue of contention, under the 1987 legislation, is the launching from Mahia Peninsula of satellite payloads sponsored by US military agencies. NZ intelligence stations at Waihopai and Tangimoana are operated by the country's intelligence service. In Australia, Pine Gap is operated jointly with the US.

Of greater global significance than a territorial ban by a small and distant nation was New Zealand's explicit repudiation of nuclear deterrence as a national self-defence strategy. In 1985, New Zealand advised the UN that "deterrence is a theory that can never be proved successful. It remains a paradox that, although one can be certain, when it is too late, that deterrence has failed, one can never have absolute proof of its success.." In 1988, Prime Minister David Lange stated, "we do not subscribe to the validity of nuclear deterrence theory and we do not support it."

This repudiation of nuclear weapons, and deterrence strategy, prompted the US to suspend cooperation with New Zealand under ANZUS in 1987. Annual ANZUS meetings have since been bilateral (US-Australia) while separate defence ministerial meetings (ANZDMM) are held between Australia and NZ under their Closer Defence Relations arrangement. Bilateral US-NZ security cooperation has been re-established through the Wellington and Washington Declarations (2010; 2012). No NZ leader, however, has revoked the country's repudiation of nuclear weapons, which remains emblematic of its national security identity. More broadly, regional security cooperation in the Pacific, reflecting a contemporary approach to human security, has strengthened with the Biketawa and Boe Declarations (2000; 2018).

Most recently, New Zealand continues to pursue, separately from Australia and the US, a global nuclear disarmament policy, taking a leading role in the negotiations for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which entered into force in 2021. The central aim of the Treaty, along with its two main features (irreversible elimination; universality of adherence) is opposed by the US and Australia. But the illegality and elimination of nuclear weapons now exists in international law, as fulfilment of both the NPT's Article VI and the ICJ's advisory opinion of 1996 which foreshadowed a "future general prohibition."

In short, the two countries embrace a qualitatively different view of global security, while successfully collaborating in most areas of conventional military cooperation. ANZUS is neither a prompt nor a barrier.

Dr Kennedy Graham, Director of the New Zealand Centre for Global Studies and former member of Parliament. He has been a NZ diplomat and MP, UN official and visiting professor of international relations (College of Europe). He was a member of the NZ delegation for the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, and has authored or edited five books including National Security Concepts of States: New Zealand (Taylor & Francis, for UNIDIR).

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https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/anzus-at-70-how-does-new-zealand-view-the-treaty-today/

A Most Satisfying Journey

By Margaret Austin

Who would have predicted that in the 10 years to 2019 there would be 9 different Starlight attractions in the Mackenzie and 930,000 visitors in 2019, of whom 60% were international tourists?

It all began with a dream of Graeme Murray and Hide Osawa in 2005 marvelling at the night sky at Lake Takapō and declaring "we must have a Park in the Night Sky capitalising on the pristine night sky, the Observatory on Mt John and the foresight of the Mackenzie District Council in putting in place Lighting Ordinances back in 1981. I came on board right at the beginning through my engagement with UNESCO. Initially the plan was to seek UNESCO World Heritage (WH) status building on their 2005 decision to celebrate achievements in Science through Astronomy.

A Declaration in Defence of the Night Sky and the Right to Starlight emerged from the 2007 Conference on La Palma in the Canary Is. attended by Graeme Murray. Why La Palma? Light Pollution in Europe had resulted in the research telescopes relocating there to be able to continue their work. With Paramount Chief Tumu Te Heu Heu in the Chair the World Heritage met in Christchurch 2007. The Takapō group were accepted as Observers and as a result of networking several senior WH Officials visited Takapō and since by then they had been persuaded that 65% of the earth's inhabitants never see the high sky as it really is, they were very impressed.

Over the next three years there were a series of Conferences, workshops, development of Case Studies of which included Takapō and the International Year of Astronomy in 2009. I was privileged to be invited to participate and was able to refer to NZ as the only nation discovered twice by navigation by the Stars 800 years apart. Martin Lord Rees asserted that "The Night Sky is one part of our environment we have shared with all cultures in all periods of human history". The Italian Franco Pacini followed with "If the stars were only visible in one place on earth people would stop everything just to see them." An overwhelming conclusion was that light pollution is a global problem exercising the minds of urban planners, engineers and astronomers. That message has yet to resonate in the main centres of NZ.

Margaret Austin

A Thematic Study – The Windows of the Universe with 12 Case Studies was presented at the WH meeting in Brasilia in 2010 and an undertaking given that it would be distributed internationally. Regretfully examination of the WH Convention led Paris to a decision that the criteria did not allow applications without a land-based site.

The Takapō Working Party had been fortunate to be recognised as having potential to contribute to the Canterbury economy and three Summer scholarship students were funded to examine the WH guideless and criteria for Outstanding Universal Value, Integrity and Authenticity. In spite of the WH decision the student's work was invaluable in providing all the background details which contributed to the application to the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) for recognition. The dossier defined the boundaries, and gave details on the demographics, geology, geography, ecology, Maori and Pakeha cultural history, tourism, the Mt John Observatory, educational opportunities and the required details on lighting in Takapō, Twizel and Mt Cook village. It included support letters from three former Prime Ministers, Tourism NZ, Department of Conservation. The University of Canterbury. The Royal Society, Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce and the CEO of the Airport who declared that the Airport was the "Gateway to the Stars".

The application was submitted in January 2012 and in April the IDA declared the Aoraki Mackenzie Dark Sky Reserve the first in the Southern Hemisphere, the first with Gold Status and the largest of the world's three Dark Sky Reserves. This success gave enormous pleasure and satisfaction to the working group and was officially announced by the president of the IDA at the First International Conference held in Takapō in June 2012. The

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Aoraki Mackenzie International Starlight Reserve Board emerged with a Constitution and focus on engaging Domestically and Internationally to promote appreciation of the night sky, provide educational experiences, recognise the cultural significance of dark skies and to hold Festivals and Conferences on alternate years. Conferences in 2015 and 2109 attracted great attention and provided an opportunity for participants to interact with presenters. Equally at the Festivals in 2013 and 2017 local people have enjoyed activities such as building their own telescope and then using it at night to explore the stars.

Another important function of the Board has been to monitor compliance with the Council's Ordinances, to measure the brightness of the night sky and report on infringements. The support of the Mackenzie District Council (MDC) has been invaluable. It has been at their insistence that LED lighting in the whole of the Mackenzie is set at 2200Kelvin and not 4000K and all new areas have Bollards rather than street lights. The message to NZTA is "get on board, remove the blue light from the LEDs and direct the light downwards everywhere. People deserve to see the stars."

In 2019 the MDC conducted a Mayoral Forum which attracted 19 Councils many of who have committed to working on their Dark Sky areas with a view to NZ eventually becoming a "Dark Sky Nation". Will we achieve World Heritage Status. There is a potential avenue. The Westcoast of the South Island Te Wahipounamu is a Natural WH Site that could be extended eastward to take in the Mackenzie country. It could also be declared a Cultural Landscape. It requires a great deal of effort to put together the case, have DOC take it on Board and the Government to endorse it to the World Heritage Committee. We will see.

I will conclude with some "one liners" from speakers at the 2019 Conference.

"People are Environmental Custodians: We must use the power of Citizen Science."

"Every day needs a night – sleep resets the button."

"Lights are giving wildlife the blues."

"Humans are as sensitive to light as cockroaches."

"Truth is, light makes the burglars feel safe."

Reflections on 37 Years in Public Office *(continued)*

(Continued from page 3)

working half the night, we succeeded in getting all the Farmers' Unions in the UK to agree to open access for agricultural goods produced to equivalent standards to those in the UK.

I was also appointed to a commission reviewing of the UK public sector by a major London think tank. Again, the only non-British person involved.

I believe I was able to show MFAT what could be done – to influence what others thought, rather than just reporting on it.

In Closing

And so to my final thought.

Every year in London, the Global Prosperity Index is published by the Legatum Institute. It ranks 149 countries on an index based on nine evaluations; economic quality, business environment, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedom, social capital and the natural environment.

A large function in London accompanies the publication of the Prosperity Index each year. With tremendous pride I was able to attend the 2016 publication when New Zealand was rated No 1 in the world – the most prosperous country in the world.

What was so special about that is that when I, and some of you, entered Parliament in 1984, New Zealand was economically bankrupt. Successive subsequent governments had the courage to face up to the need for challenging policies to haul us out of that mess.

To go from bankrupt to No 1 in the world over a period of 32 years is something you can all be so proud of. I just hope today's generation of politicians doesn't squander that extraordinary achievement.

Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith, former Speaker and former member for Kaipara, Rodney and List MP

Opinion: Cliff-hanger US Election Challenges Democracy Everywhere

By Graham Kelly

Our democracy cannot be taken for granted. If this sounds unrealistic then just look at what is happening around the world and here in New Zealand

Should those with ambitions for political power and a different way of structuring our economy and our social order gain power, just as has happened in countries with right-wing leaders, such as Brazil, Poland, Austria, Philippines, Turkey, and others, then we risk gradually losing our democracy.

The result is that human and civil rights are the first to disappear. The latest being Hong Kong and Myanmar.

Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the election result in America has not only revealed vulnerabilities of American democracy, but had he been successful, it would have been more of an encouragement for leaders in other democracies to emulate his behaviour and policies.

That has happened already in those countries already mentioned.

This would not only have been disastrous for American democracy, but for other countries, with or without right wing leaders. Once this behaviour becomes the norm, then democracies are threatened.

In New Zealand?

Could it happen in New Zealand? Just look at our social media and the number who peddle right wing conspiracy theories and fake news, including bloggers.

They are part of the tens of thousands who almost entirely obtain their information from social media. They believe what they read, whether it is true or not. And increasingly they do not read newspapers to seek the truth about issues.

Trump and other politicians in America and other countries who became emboldened and more adventurous in feeling free to promote the same type of misinformation (even though they knew it to be untrue) are a danger to democracy.

The minority party based in Whangarei at the last election, who relied on fake news and conspiracy theories, had up to 1,000 at their meetings. This was one such movement, but they did not stand candidates.

Attacks on Minorities

The increase in attacks on minorities on social media in New Zealand is a copycat version of Trump's attacks on Jews, Gypsies, Muslims, refugees and coloured races, as well as on women. In Trump's case, he totally disregarded being the cause of 500,000 deaths from the Covid-19 coronavirus, which was a deliberate policy.

As in nearly all the cases where these "strongmen" and/or right-wing politicians have taken power in the countries already mentioned, we have seen the same pattern of behaviour of attacks on minorities, and those who have opposed them, just as happened in America.

But equally, the economic policy of giving tax cuts to the rich, including the super wealthy, while the middle class and the poor continue to struggle, is even more obscene. That is the agenda of many of those who support such policies, including some in our own democracy.

Some would-be politicians, right wing bloggers, white supremacists, religious extremists and others who gain a following, thus begin to to undermine our politicians and institutions of the state, using the same tactics as Trump and his supporters have in recent times.

Is this a warning of things to come?

Promoting Democracy

One of the aims of our Former Members Association is to promote democracy. In developing our Association policies, we have actively promoted the "Civics" education programme in schools in an attempt to increase the numbers of young people voting by understanding "why" they should vote and to find out how a democracy works.

Previously our Association involved our members in engaging with politicians in Pacific Island and other developing countries in the techniques of how to undertake their roles to understand how a democracy

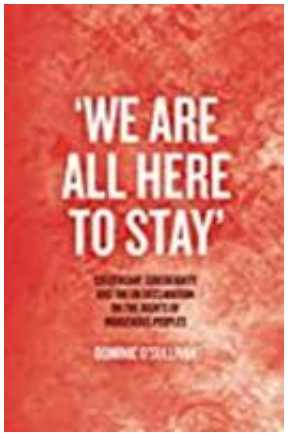
(Continued on page 10)

New Books in the Library

Former members may access certain services from the Parliamentary Library, including the ability to:

* borrow two books at a time
* consult material in the Library
* have Library staff retrieve specific materials from the collection

To access the Parliamentary Library, use the Parliamentary Information Service.



'We are all here to stay' : citizenship, sovereignty and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples /
Dominic O'Sullivan.

In 2007, 144 UN member states voted to adopt a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US were the only members to vote against it. Each eventually changed its position.

This book explains why and examines what the Declaration could mean for sovereignty, citizenship and democracy in liberal societies such as these. The book draws on the Declaration to imagine what non-colonial political relationships could look like in liberal societies.

Activism, feminism, politics and parliament /
Margaret Wilson.

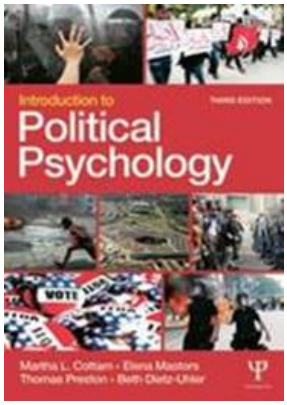
Margaret Wilson has always lived a political life.

From her days as a child growing up in the Waikato in a Catholic family attuned to fairness, an unlikely law student in the 1960s in a class with a few other women, and an emerging socialist feminist who read radical texts and attended women's conventions, her key concerns became cemented early: the rights of women and equality for all under the law.

Lowering the voting age to 16 : learning from real experiences worldwide /
Jan Eichhorn, Johannes Bergh, editors.

This book explores the consequences of lowering the voting age to 16 from a global perspective, bringing together empirical research from countries where at least some 16-year-olds are able to vote.

With the aim to show what really happens when younger people can take part in elections, the authors engage with the key debates on earlier enfranchisement and examine the lead-up to and impact of changes to the voting age in countries across the globe.



Introduction to political psychology /
Martha L. Cottam, Elena Mastors, Thomas Preston, Beth Dietz.

"This comprehensive, user-friendly introductory textbook to political psychology explores the psychological origins of political behavior.

The authors introduce readers to a broad range of theories, concepts, and case studies of political activity to illustrate that behavior.

It Started With "Holiday Trees"

Ten years ago this article was published in "The Informer" and we are reproducing it again because of its significance to attitudes about Christmas.

It signifies that political correctness, and not offending anyone has dominated our society, just as it has throughout the western world over the past few decades.

Graham Kelly recalls, “my overwhelming impression when I served in Canada in the early 2000's was one of not ever offending, to the point of almost being in denial of reality. As an example, in the mall near where we lived in Ottawa, there was a sign advising the staff at Christmas time, not to wish anyone a Happy Christmas because they might offend a Jew or a Muslim.

Yet there were Christmas trees and Christmas music blaring from speakers in the mall and Father Christmas and Christmas sales from mid-November each year. And if they did wish people a Happy Christmas their employment could be at risk!

While there for three years, I sent out cards each year wishing people a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year, because this is what we were celebrating and remembering. All the cards I received wished me a Happy Holiday!

It seemed to me that the whole country was in denial of Christmas. How bizarre in a country of educated and intelligent people. Christmas is a fact, just as is Anniversary Day or Labour Day or New Year’s Day.

Ben Stein's article is still very relevant for us, whatever your religion or beliefs.”

Apparently the White House referred to Christmas Trees as *Holiday Trees* for the first time this year which prompted CBS presenter, Ben Stein, to present this piece which I would like to share with you. I think it applies just as much to many countries as it does to America .

The following was written by Ben Stein and recited by him on CBS Sunday Morning Commentary.

(Continued on page 11)

Opinion: Cliff-hanger US Election (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

operates.

Democracy is precious and sometimes fragile, and it does not take much to undermine or fracture, it should some elements in our country want to pursue their own agendas to gain and dominate political power.

Trump, like Hitler before him, renounced democracy by gaining support of enough of the population, sufficient to gain power and impose his will on his own people.

The type of behaviour seen in New Zealand recently was not a wildly theatrical performance. It was about deliberately laying the ground for undermining the credibility of our political and institutional experts during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The net result is political unrest, a lack of confidence in our political leaders as well as the institutions of the state. This is using the same tactics as Trump ‘s supporters were engaged in to gain and retain political power.

It is a warning of things to come…..

"Holiday Trees"...

Ben Stein, actor, writer, economist, lawyer

My confession:

I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful, lit up, bejeweled trees, Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are, Christmas trees.

It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, 'Merry Christmas' to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a crèche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away.

I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from, that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution and I don't like it being shoved down my throat.

Or maybe I can put it another way: where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where these celebrities came from and where the America we knew went to.

In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke; it's not funny, it's intended to get you thinking.

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her 'How could God let something like this happen?' (regarding Hurricane Katrina). Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, 'I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?'

In light of recent events... terrorists attack, school shootings, etc. I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found a few years ago) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said OK. Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school. The Bible says thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbor as yourself. And we said OK.

Then Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave, because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide). We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said OK.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with 'WE REAP WHAT WE SOW.'

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says. Funny how you can send 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Are you laughing yet?

Funny how when you forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it.

Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us.

Pass it on if you think it has merit. If not, then just discard it.... no one will know you did. But, if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.

My Best Regards, honestly and respectfully,

Ben Stein

President's Report

Hon Peter Dunne, President

I am pleased to present the President's annual report to the Association's 2021 Annual General Meeting.

This year has been a quiet but steady one for the Association. The ongoing presence of Covid19 has continued to have an unwelcome influence on a range of public activities which has affected our Association, as it has most organisations. But, as I said in last year's annual report, the Association remains an important vehicle for encouraging and upholding the special bond we all have as former Members of Parliament, once divided by politics but now united by the common link of having served the public.

In that regard, contact and communication with our members remains an important priority. Our newsletter, The Informer, which has been our primary vehicle for doing so, has undergone change this year. Sadly, Graham Kelly, The Informer's long-standing editor, stood aside from that role during the year because of ill-health. Graham has done a superb job over the years in producing a consistently high quality, varied and interesting publication. The Association owes him a huge debt of gratitude for this and all the other work he has done on our behalf over many years. We wish him well for the future.

However, Graham's departure has caused a rethink about the production of The Informer. Our efforts to find a replacement editor from amongst the membership have not been successful so far, but we remain open to any expressions of interest. In the meantime, an editorial committee has been established by the Executive Committee to oversee the production of future issues of The Informer on the same basis as before. I want to acknowledge the contribution of the editorial committee to the preparation of the first edition of The Informer earlier this year. Work on the second edition will begin shortly, and, as always, all contributions will be welcomed.

In last year's annual report, I recommended that the Association develop its own website, both to enable us to better keep in touch with members, and to boost our wider profile. The Executive Committee has been working on proposals from website developers for an interactive website. Discussions are ongoing and I expect they will be finalised shortly, and a website established.

I also suggested that the Association look to more widespread use of technologies like Skype and Zoom, which we have all become much more familiar over the last year or so, to better communicate with members. The Executive Committee has begun using Zoom for its meetings.

Also, in October last year, I was privileged on behalf of the Association to take part in the first global meeting of former Parliamentarians, via Zoom, to discuss the various national responses to Covid19. This meeting, which was organised by the Former Members of the United States Congress, and included the Former Members of the European Parliament, along with New Zealand, was highly successful. People from around 80 countries signed into the discussion, with questions coming from many different quarters. A follow-up meeting is proposed for later this year.

At a local level, we remain interested in organising regional meetings of members from time to time. However, we acknowledge the difficulties involved, and the new uncertainty that Covid19 has caused about community functions generally. Nevertheless, we are still keen to proceed with occasional regional gatherings where we can.

The civics programme in secondary schools, which has been a matter of interest for the Association for some years, remains important, but unfortunately there is not much progress to report. Much of last year's intended progress was written off by the disruption brought on by Covid-19. At the start of this year there was an unfortunate misunderstanding between the Ministry of Education and the Association about how schools were to be approached regarding the involvement of former Members of Parliament. There were also staff changes within the Ministry that did not help either, but a meeting was eventually organised between the Ministry and the Association to iron out the difficulties, only for it to be cancelled because of the recent Covid-19 alert in Wellington. It is currently being rescheduled.

This is, of course, extremely frustrating but the Association will continue to work towards ensuring there is a role for former Members of Parliament as part of the civics programme, for those schools that

wish to involve us. The daily level of public discourse on so many current issues constantly reinforces the need for a civics programme!

Membership of the Association has remained steady over the last year, with some new members joining after last year's Election. We welcome them and look forward to their playing an active role in the future of the Association.

I would like to thank all the members of the Executive Committee for their efforts, commitment and support, and Bessie Sutherland who provides our secretarial and administrative services for her competence, thoroughness and professionalism. We would be all at sea without her.

Overall, the last year has a period of quiet consolidation. I hope the new Executive can build on the foundations laid so far over the year ahead.

Hon Peter Dunne CNZM, President

8 July 2021

Annual General Meeting

The Association's Annual General Meeting was held in Wellington on 16 July. While most members attending did so in person, there were some who participated on-line in what was a first for the Association.

Officers elected were:

President:	Hon Peter Dunne
Vice President:	Hon Harry Duynhoven
Junior Vice President:	Ann Batten
Committee:	Graeme Reeves, Graham Kelly, Brent Catchpole, Ross Robertson, Hamish Hancock, Kennedy Graham, Ian Revell, Sir Kerry Burke, Rick Barker, Jeff Whittaker, Mark Burton and Belinda Vernon (welcomed as a new committee member)

Afterwards, a number of members attended the Annual dinner at the Wellington Club and heard a very informative and interesting after dinner address from former Speaker, Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith. The text of his address is reprinted elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Deaths of Former Members

The Association is saddened to note the recent deaths of the following former members:

Murray Rose, former National Member for Otago Central, 1969-72.

Hon Dr Ian Shearer, former National Member for Hamilton East, 1975-84. He was a Minister in the 1981-84 Muldoon Government.

Hon Sir Michael Cullen, former Labour Member for St. Kilda, 1981-96, Dunedin South 1996-99, and a list Member 1999-2009. He was a Minister in the 1987-90 Lange, Palmer and Moore Governments, and Minister of Finance 1999-2008, and Deputy Prime Minister 2002-08, in the Clark Government.

Hon Taito Phillip Field, former Labour Member for Otara 1993-96 and Mangere 1996-2008. He was a Parliamentary Under-Secretary in 2002-03, and a Minister 2003-2005, in the Clark Government. He was the first New Zealand Member of Parliament of Pacific Island descent.

Jenny Kirk, former Labour Member for Birkenhead, 1987-1990.

The Association acknowledges the service of all these former Members to New Zealand and extends its deepest sympathy and condolences to their families on their sad losses.

Association Directory

To maintain and encourage the system of Parliamentary government in New Zealand

Office Holders

President:	Peter Dunne.....	[redacted]
Senior Vice President:	Harry Duynhoven.....	
Junior Vice President:	Ann Batten.....	
Immediate Past President:	Mark Peck.....	
Secretary Treasurer:	Bessie Sutherland	former.members.nz@gmail.com

Committee Members

Rick Barker.....	[redacted]
Sir Kerry Burke.....	
Mark Burton	
Brent Catchpole.....	
Kennedy Graham.....	
Graham Kelly	
Hamish Hancock	
Ian Revell	
Graeme Reeves.....	
Ross Robertson.....	
Belinda Vernon	
Jeff Whittaker	

Association's Presidents Emeritus

The late Gerald O'Brien, the late George Gair, Hugh Templeton, Graham Kelly, Graeme Reeves

Contact Address

Postal	c/- Office of the Clerk, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand
Email	former.members.nz@gmail.com

Subscriptions to Association

We greatly appreciate members paying their subscriptions via internet banking. When doing so, please make sure you include your name so that we know who has paid.

The Association's bank account number is: 38 9014 0325181 00

How to Apply for a Security ID Card – Former MPs and Spouses

Most Former Members' details are already set up on the Parliamentary Precinct's Security database, so you can go directly to the Security Systems Office on the Ground Floor of the Executive Wing any time between 7am-5pm, Monday-Friday, to collect your ID Cards.

[redacted]