

Marles and Hegseth talk AUKUS

'Pact' gets bigger – and worse

Graham Holton

On 2 September Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister, Richard Marles, met with US Secretary of Defence, Pete Hegseth, at the Pentagon in Washington, DC, to discuss expanding the US military presence in Australia.

Marles also met with US Vice President JD Vance regarding the broader bilateral alliance. The meeting took place around the 75th anniversary of ANZUS, which Marles described as the cornerstone of Australia's foreign and strategic policy.

RISK

The meeting marks AUKUS as far more important than the original submarine agreement signed on 15 September 2021. The US submarine presence and increased Australian military infrastructure, joint logistics, weapons production and AI/autonomous warfare, guarantees a broader US force in our region.

This creates a dilemma for Australia. The more Australian infrastructure becomes integrated within US military operations, the greater the potential for involvement in a US-China conflict.

Mainstream coverage has centred on regional geopolitical implications concerning China. The Marles-Hegseth meeting took place against a rapidly changing Indo-Pacific strategic environment, with Washington and Canberra explicitly linking the pact to the US-led 'alliance' maintaining a favourable balance of power.

The timing of the meeting is significant. While Australia strengthens its defence relationships with Pacific and Southeast Asian states, China recently conducted a ballistic-missile test in the Pacific. From Beijing's perspective, the significance of AUKUS is no longer just Australian nuclear-powered submarines. Australia is now important to the US military as an operating platform in the Indo-Pacific.

China's growing "assertiveness"

formed the background to the talks, with the US plans to intimidate a potential rival on the menu. Hegseth told Marles their meetings reflect "the deepening partnership at a personal level between our administrations; between our countries; between our militaries; between our defence industrial bases that goes back, I believe today, all the way back 75 years."

For Hegseth, the pact ensures that "our capabilities match and are complementary if and when something were to have to take place." Marles replied that America's military use of Australia in World War II, "feels very pertinent today." He continued, that it "is as important and relevant today as it has ever been."

Both leaders agreed to accelerate "force posture initiatives" at Australian military bases. Specific details and formal announcements are expected later in the year at the next joint ministerial meeting. The planned expansion builds on current cooperation, including US Marine rotations through Darwin and the Submarine Rotational Force-West in Western Australia. Marles said that US personnel, "are there readying HMAS Stirling for the Submarine Rotation Force-West, which is on time and on track to occur from the end of next year."

SPENDING

Continuing the Trump administration theme of pushing 'allies' to spend more on the military, Hegseth reminded Marles that US allies must "invest in their own sovereign security" as both nations agreed to accelerate joint military efforts. According to the US, "capable" allies must "invest" in their own collective defence and sovereign security, with Australia to increase defence spending to 3.5 percent of GDP. Marles seemed proud of this, saying that the spending "puts us ahead of most NATO countries, with the exception of the Nordics, the Baltics, Poland."

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China's warnings

Graham Holton

The significance of the Marles-Hegseth meeting for Australian strategic policy cannot be overstated. Australia is moving from being a US ally that hosts occasional American forces into a permanent component of US military power projection in the Indo-Pacific.

This raises an important political question. How much strategic autonomy can Canberra retain as Australian bases, logistics, weapons systems, greater interoperability, and military planning become increasingly integrated with the US military?

The most significant outcome was agreement to accelerate US force-posture initiatives at Australian bases. Marles stressed that Stirling and the new Henderson Defence Precinct will allow US nuclear-powered submarines to receive maintenance closer to their operational area. Tindall air base in the Northern Territory, could host nuclear-armed B52 bombers. Through Australia, Washington gets a strong forward position for its strategic encirclement of China.

China has criticised AUKUS as dangerous and has warned it could spur a regional arms race.

From Beijing's perspective, the recent meeting is another step toward making Australia an integrated component of the US Indo-Pacific military system.

The pact creates a southern extension of the US military network stretching from Japan to Guam, Philippines, Hawaii, Australia and the Indian Ocean. Australia is the important southern anchor and military platform for operations.

This complicates Chinese naval operations beyond the South China Sea. Beijing sees the Marles-Hegseth meeting and Australia's Pacific diplomacy as part of the same strategy. The US and Australia announced \$580 million in joint funding for Pacific Island countries, explicitly in the context of regional security and Chinese influence.

Former PM Paul Keating pointed to the 2026 Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community. In its China Strategic Overview, the US intelligence community does not see China as an immediate risk, rather "President Xi and his government aim to achieve 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' by 2049."

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CPA submission to the AUKUS Public Inquiry

Guardian

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Going for a run, taken for a ride

Defenders of Israel's campaign of slaughter and dispossession in Palestine sometimes have to be indirect. Once in a while, they scold pro-Palestine protesters for caring about a 'conflict' that's so far away and has nothing to do with Australia. It's a tactic with one fatal flaw – while it's true that Palestine is a long way from Australia, it's totally false to say Australia has nothing to do with Israel's genocide. This country is in it up to the hilt.

Australia's involvement has been highlighted by some high-profile participants in the Sydney marathon. 40 members of the Israeli 'Defence' Force took part in the famous race. They were guarded by undercover police at a cost to the NSW taxpayers of \$30,000.

At the same time, an Egyptian comedian, Bassem Youssef was trying to come here to perform. He's brought his act to Australia twice with no problems, but this time the Executive Council of Australian Jewry lobbied Home Affairs to have him kept out. The Council's Peter Wertheim gave as his reason that anyone with a record of "debased generalisations about entire national or religious communities" should not be granted a visa. Wertheim should be campaigning against visits from the Israeli government, if that's his thinking.

At the same time as wanting to ban a comedian from entry, Wertheim's organisation was welcoming IDF veterans from units plausibly accused of war crimes.

Recently Penny Wong has expressed outrage that the IDF decided no charges would be laid after their attack on an aid convoy that killed six aid workers including Australian Zomi Frankcom. She's shown no such anger over Australia letting 40 soldiers from an army that is committing genocide run over the Sydney Harbour Bridge guarded at Australian expense.

As a member of the Labor government, Wong is committed to being part of a system that serves the US, not the Australian people. Israel is part of the US imperialist project in the Middle East, and Australia's government is, as usual, a loyal deputy sheriff.

As for the race, this country should be arresting war criminals at the border, not giving them a bib so they can have fun running over the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles likes to talk about the international rules-based order (never mind that his great friend US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has publicly repudiated the idea).

Here's a rule the government could follow: arrest war crimes suspects. Among the 40 IDF members in marathon are people involved in drawing up Israel's kill lists for Gaza. There are also members of the IDF's Golani Brigade, which fired on a convoy of ambulances, killing 15 medics and rescue workers.

This is not the first such incident. The IDF get to use Australia to recover from the hard work of killing and oppressing Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The government is not too fussed about Australians who choose to fight for the IDF.

Geographically Palestine is far away. When it comes to Australia's involvement, what Israel is doing in Palestine is as close as the wallets of New South Wales' taxpayers. It's as close as the factories here that make parts for F-35 bombers Israel uses to attack Gaza, and explosives for the IDF's dirty work.

Marles and Hegseth talk AUKUS

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The Australian government had allocated a further \$117 billion into the 10-year time frame. The defence ministers discussed the joint efforts to improve the industrial base in the US to allow the sale of second-hand Virginia-class submarines to Australia in the 2030s, before Australian-built SSN-AUKUS submarines begin entering service in the 2040s.

AUKUS is more than a (so far failed) submarine acquisition program. US personnel are preparing for the rotation of US nuclear-powered submarines, expected to begin at the end of 2027. Marles says the associated Henderson Defence Precinct will enable US submarines to receive maintenance closer to their operational area, effectively making WA a major forward operating and maintenance hub for the US submarine fleet. In other words, a target if the US starts a war.

PERMANENT

The Marles-Hegseth meeting is significant as AUKUS is increasingly embedded in a US military build-up in Australia. AUKUS is evolving into a

permanent framework for US-Australian military integration, with WA becoming one of its most important strategic centres. US investment in Australia's military infrastructure and Australian facilities give US submarines additional operational availability.

PILLAR 2

While the submarine program remains the centrepiece, the alliance is increasingly about logistics, weapons, technology and preparing for a potential Indo-Pacific conflict. The ministers discussed cooperation on guided weapons and next-generation technologies.

This suggests that AUKUS Pillar II – AI, autonomous systems, advanced weapons, undersea systems and other technologies – is becoming increasingly important politically, because it produces capabilities much sooner than the SSN-AUKUS submarines. Marles has stressed AI is an important issue of Australian sovereignty, indicating that Canberra wants Australian participation in the development of these technologies rather than buying US systems. ✚



Survey Time! Prizes!

So that we know more about what the *Guardian's* readers think, we have made a survey. You can access it three ways:

1. Through this link <https://shorturl.at/kKVj4>
2. With the QR code
3. If you'd rather do a survey on paper, please email info@cpa.org.au or call 0424 638 601 and we'll mail one out

Anyone who does the survey and provides contact details will go in a draw for either some Cuban coffee beans or a \$50 shopping voucher.



Coal mine approval as Albanese meets Pacific leaders

Greenpeace Australia Pacific has branded the Albanese government's approval of BHP's coal mine extension in Central Queensland an affront to Pacific leaders and communities grappling with climate disasters, and a reckless move that undermines Australia's partnership with the Pacific as the PM met regional leaders at the Pacific Islands Forum.

The approval of BHP's coal Saraji Mine Grevillea Pit Continuation Project, an extension of one of Australia's largest coal mines, would allow mining to continue for another 30 years, locking in the production and export of polluting coal and fuelling dangerous extreme weather disasters and sea level rise in Australia and across the Pacific. It will be the 10th fossil fuel project approved during this term of government and the 37th new fossil fuel project approved since the Albanese government was elected in 2022.

The announcement comes as a UN report warns of dangerous climate overshoot, and

just two months before Federal Climate and Energy Minister Chris Bowen is due to take the reins of UN climate negotiations at COP31 – a moment that will test the government's climate credibility and bring global attention to Australia's fossil fuel exports. It also comes as fracked gas from the Beetaloo Basin climate bomb started flowing.

Speaking from Palau, Dr Simon Bradshaw, COP31 Lead at Greenpeace Australia Pacific, said: "It is deeply insincere for Prime Minister Albanese to meet Pacific leaders here in Palau to discuss security, the energy crisis, and regional threats, while his government fast-tracks the biggest security threat to the Pacific, the climate crisis."

"As leaders meet, thousands remain missing or dead in the Nepal-Tibet floods. Parts of Australia are bracing for a heatwave that will see temperatures approach 40 degrees, just days out of winter, and a new report finds 2,000 kilometres of coral reefs along the WA coast experienced the worst coral bleaching on record."

"We are witnessing dangerous climate change driven by the production, export and burning of fossil fuels, wreaking havoc across the world. Continuing down the path of fossil fuels and approving new coal is an act of recklessness at a pivotal moment in the world's energy transition and response to the climate crisis. Communities must not pay the price for fossil fuel greed."

"No more double talk. Australia must get squarely behind longstanding Pacific leadership on climate change, fight to protect the all-important goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C, and ensure that COP31 builds further momentum in the global transition away from fossil fuels."

"A pathway back to 1.5°C is possible. The Pacific Pre-COP and COP31 in Türkiye are critical moments for Australia to work with Pacific leaders to better align energy, climate and trade policies towards a prosperous shared future beyond fossil fuels."

Greenpeace Australia Pacific



Saraji coal mine. Photo: Lock the Gate Alliance – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Vale Ray Ferguson

Graham Holton

It is sad news that on 4 September Comrade Ray Ferguson passed away. He was a great comrade and a dear friend to those who knew him. Ray was Director of Secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Regional Committee for Friendship and Solidarity with the Korean People (APRCFSKP) and Secretary General of the Australia-DPRK Friendship and Cultural Society in Brisbane.

The APRCFSKP has members in 30 countries who strive for stronger solidarity with the DPRK People. As Secretary, Ray was a driving force behind the Australia-DPRK Society, leading it through tough years of US anti-DPRK/North Korea disinformation. The society plans to make Ray an eternal member in honour of his work and service.

Ferguson visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (also known as North Korea) 14 times and received an award for his service to the people of the DPRK. In 2018 I travelled with him on the Society's tour of the DPRK. I was amazed how different the country was to that portrayed in the media. Pyongyang was a prosperous city, and a train ride along the length of the country showed how the DPRK was overcoming years of sanctions.

We visited a farm, hospital, university, museums, government celebrations, and places of historic importance for the country's fight for independence. In an interview, Ferguson said, "The North Korean state provides free education, free medicine, free hospitals, and they even provide free housing."

Ferguson was in the Metal Workers Union and was educated on Marxist theory in the USSR. Since the 1970s he was unwavering in his fight for a better Australia. He led the revival of the Society and the establishment of it as a prominent partner within the Australia-DPRK Society and inter-Korean organisations across our region. In 2005 he helped the DPRK delegation travel from Brisbane to Wollongong and then Melbourne.

Ray Ferguson will be greatly missed. Sincere condolences go out to his family. 🌹



Ray second from right at a DPRK Society meeting.

"The North Korean state provides free education, free medicine, free hospitals, and they even provide free housing."

Thorpe seeks to end shackling during childbirth

Paul Gregoire

Senator Lidia Thorpe has two bills before parliament that seek to prohibit practices that are frankly deplorable. These comprise of shackling incarcerated or detained women during childbirth and the strip searching of children.

As these bills are undergoing the committee process, she's inviting the public to assist in their passing, in terms of signing petitions and making submissions to the inquiries.

Both private members bills, the Crimes Amendment (Prohibiting Shackling During Childbirth) Bill 2026 and the Crimes Amendment (Prohibiting the Strip Searching of Children) Bill 2026 were introduced into

parliament on 18 August 2026, by the Gunnai, Gunditjmarra and Djab Wurrung senator.

Thorpe outlines that these practices that occur to women and children in custody are largely ignored by politicians and the media. A large portion of the community have no idea these harmful practices continue to occur with official sanctioning. These practices are not needed. Federal intervention in these state and territory matters is possible, despite official denials.

The independent senator for Victoria is requesting constituents sign open letters that address Australian Attorney-General Michelle Rowland, in respect of banning the shackling of women during birth and strip searching of kids. Thorpe is also requesting submissions to the Senate Legal and Constitutional

Affairs Legislation Committee inquiries into strip searching kids and shackling women.

"No one giving birth is at risk of running away," explained Thorpe, as she gave her 18 August second reading speech on the Prohibiting Shackling During Childbirth bill. "The main concern during childbirth is to get the medical care needed and ensure a safe delivery. Anyone who has given birth would agree that to be shackled whilst giving birth would be an incredibly violent and terrifying act."

Thorpe stresses that research shows strip searching has no real effect on whether incarcerated kids get their hands on contraband in child prisons. She points to the Office of the WA Inspector of Custodial Services, which found that of 900,000 strip searches of adults in WA jails between 2014 and 2019,

prohibited items were only found on 0.28 per cent of the time.

The senator explained that the data on the searching of kids in Australian correctional facilities is scant. Data from NSW in April 2022 does reveal, however, that 127 strip searches of children at two youth prisons produced items on only three occasions.

The WA Inspector of Custodial Services further detailed in 2019 that technology allowing for body scanning or the X-raying of inmates means that the highly traumatic procedure of strip searching incarcerated peoples is unnecessary, as the electronic devices replace any need.

Sydney Criminal Lawyers
(edited for space) 🌹

Arts Centre Melbourne workers escalate campaign

Arts Centre Melbourne workers have taken protected 24-hour stop work action as part of their ongoing campaign for fair pay, secure working conditions and proper government funding for the sector.

Members of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), alongside colleagues from the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), ceased work on Friday 11 September, after enterprise bargaining negotiations failed to deliver an offer from management that addresses the significant decline in workers' real wages.

The action was expected to affect programming and venue operations, including a Macy Gray concert.

MEAA Deputy Chief Executive, Adam Portelli, said workers had been left with no choice but to escalate their campaign.

"Workers are at a point where they simply can't afford to accept another agreement that leaves them falling behind," Portelli said.

"Arts Centre Melbourne's success relies on its workforce. They deserve fair pay that reflects the value of the work they do."

Almost 40 per cent of the workforce is employed on the current agreement's lowest pay band, while workers' wages have fallen significantly behind inflation in recent years. The current offer fails to address that gap and will leave workers worse off in real terms.

Portelli said the action was also a call for greater government investment in the arts.

"This is about protecting the future of a major cultural institution as much as it is about workers' pay," he said.

"Without proper funding, Arts Centre Melbourne cannot continue delivering the high-quality experiences Victorian audiences expect."



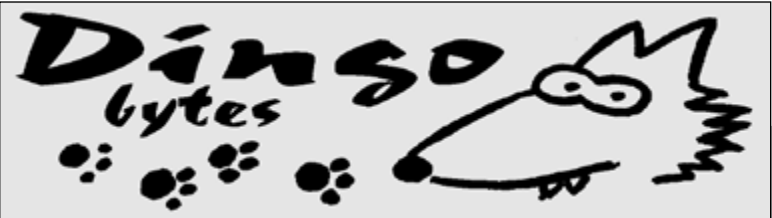
Arts Centre Melbourne. Photo: gérard – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

MEAA is urging the Victorian government to invest in the workforce that keeps Arts Centre Melbourne operating, warning that staff cannot continue to shoulder the burden of chronic underfunding.

Workers say further protected

industrial action remains on the table if negotiations continue to stall and a fair agreement is not achieved.

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance ★



The Australian Services Union (ASU) has secured a historic win for work-from-home rights, after the Fair Work Commission handed down a decision to insert a new working from home clause into the Clerks – Private Sector Award, which covers hundreds of thousands of administrative workers across the country.

For the first time, workers covered by the Award will have the right to request to work from home, regardless of their personal circumstances. The ASU said the ruling was a significant win for workers who stared down big business trying to strip away workers' rights in exchange for the right to work from home.

This decision will protect workers' autonomy over their own arrangements. Under the new clause, only a worker can request to work from home. Employers cannot direct or pressure staff into a remote working arrangement they haven't asked for.

"This is a huge step forward for workers' rights in this country," said ASU National Secretary, Emeline Gaske. "For the first time, every worker covered by the Clerks Award has the right to ask to work from home and not just those that the law specifically protects, like people with disabilities or carers."

"That matters enormously for our professional and administrative members, who have been asking for this for years. It gives flexibility to workers, especially working women who are more likely to be juggling work, caring or other responsibilities alongside their day jobs."

"This is a right that workers have fought for in the face of bullying tactics by big business groups. Despite powerful lobby groups calling for workers to have to forfeit their entitlements including penalty rates and overtime in order to request the right to work from home, workers have shown up, fought to maintain their rights in full, and they've won."

The Commission's decision rejects the worst of the big business group proposals, protecting the penalty rates and overtime entitlements that Clerks Award workers rely on. It recognises working from home is a modern way of working, and every worker should have the right to request it. It is a step forward for productivity and a sensible measure that helps workers during this cost-of-living crisis by allowing many to forego the compulsory and sometimes costly commute.

The ASU says the right to work from home needs to go further. The decision doesn't address how workers are protected once they are working from home, how requests to work from home are considered, or what happens if an employer later decides to change or end a work-from-home arrangement and force staff back to the office.

The union said it would keep pushing for stronger, nationwide protections, including by engaging with the Senate inquiry which is preparing to report on the Fair Work Amendment (Right to Work from Home) Bill before the Parliament

"This is an important victory today, but it isn't the finish line," Gaske said.

"The ASU will keep fighting until every worker in this country has a real, enforceable right to work from home."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is Robodebt. The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) is calling on the Albanese government to immediately pause the use of complex automated Robodebt type decision-making in public service agencies until public service-wide rules are put in place.

CPSU members from across the public service said they were particularly concerned if an algorithm can determine a person's access to or level of support with little or no capacity for human intervention.

They also showed a great concern for the way these tools can harmfully impact the lives of Australian families.

The union pointed to Robodebt as an example of what can happen when warnings from frontline workers are ignored, emphasising the need to learn from those mistakes as complex automated decision-making processes are rolled out.

Mandatory care minutes 'not working'

FK

The 2021 Aged Care Royal Commission's final report required providers to meet a minimum staff time quality and safety standard.

Since 1 October 2024 residential aged care facilities were legally required to provide a daily average of 215 minutes per resident, including 44 minutes by a registered nurse.

Approved registered providers were able to start using enrolled nurses to meet up to ten per cent of their registered nurse care minutes.

The results of a recent Australian Nursing and Midwives Federation (ANMF) 'Aged Care Pulse Check' survey showed that aged care nurses and personal care workers are still working with chronic understaffing.

The Federal Department of Health, Disability and Ageing quarterly reports show a significant number of residential aged care providers are not meeting their

legislated mandatory targets for total daily average care minutes (215 minutes) and registered nurse daily average care minutes (44 minutes).

It's no mystery why this is happening. Understaffing is profitable. A University of Technology Sydney report found that the cost savings of understaffing for providers may be more than the penalties of not meeting mandatory minutes.

Facilities that did not hit the target recorded the highest direct care surplus at \$25.01 per resident per day.

The ANMF is pushing for more transparency about rosters. At the moment, it's possible for providers to get around the rules by leaving someone who's not present on the roster so that they seem to have met the target.

Federal ANMF is calling for a simpler and more transparent staffing system. ★

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For peace and climate action

The Pacific Islands Forum

M Santos

The 55th annual Pacific Islands Forum was held against the backdrop of a UN report warning that the world will likely pass 1.5°C global warming in 2030. It found that a temperature rise peak of 1.8°C above pre-industrial levels was now the best-case scenario.

The Pacific Islands are on the frontline of the deadly effects of climate change. Their very existence is threatened by rising oceans, retreating coastlines, salt water intrusions threatening the supply of fresh water, increasing risks from higher-intensity tropical cyclones, typhoons, and prolonged droughts.

Not surprisingly climate change was at the top of the agenda at the Forum which was held in Palau and chaired by its President, Surangel Samuel Whipps Jr. The Forum has historically emphasised unity of the nations and its decisions are based on consensus.

Its final communiqué “reaffirmed” that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the security, livelihoods and wellbeing of Pacific peoples and underscored the urgency of ambitious global action consistent with the best available science.”

Australia’s PM Anthony Albanese said, “the emphasis, as President Whipps said last night in his opening address, will of course always be on climate change. Climate change is an existential threat to the very existence of some of the countries who are represented here.”

His hypocrisy did not go unnoticed. Vanuatu’s Climate Change Adaptation and Energy Minister, Ralph Regenvanu, said Australia was not doing enough to curb carbon emissions.

“Australia is a major producer of fossil fuels; we all know fossil fuels are the primary driver of the climate crisis,” he said.

“The very least a country like Australia should be doing is stopping future expansion, and it’s not doing that. You need to stop expansion, and you need to start transitioning away.”

NUCLEAR-FREE?

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Rarotonga Treaty). The Forum “reaffirmed the Pacific’s commitment to a peaceful and secure nuclear-free region, in particular one that is free of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing.”

Deep concern was expressed “at rising global nuclear risks,



Photo: Anthony Albanese FaceBook

You need to stop expansion of fossil fuels, and you need to start transitioning away

including expanding nuclear arsenals, increasing tensions among nuclear-armed states, and the erosion of international disarmament and arms control frameworks.”

Signatories to the Treaty, which Australia has ratified, commit to having no manufacture, stationing or testing of nuclear weapons in their territories.

Under Pillar 2 of the AUKUS agreement Australia has given the US military interests control or access to more than 100 defence facilities on Australian soil, according to recent data compiled by Richard Tanter at the Nautilus Institute.

In particular Tindal, which is located near Katherine in the Northern Territory, is being expanded to better accommodate massive American B-52 bombers, known to carry nuclear weapons.

The US government won’t tell Australia if or when they carry these weapons and the spineless Australian government is not going to ask. So much for Australian sovereignty or its legal obligations under the Rarotonga Treaty.

In addition, the US will be using the Bandiana base in Wodonga for

the storage of weapons and fuel, in readiness for deployment in a war against China.

The Force Posture Agreement gives US forces and contractors unimpeded access to and use of bases and other military facilities. “From a Chinese perspective, Australia is not so much hosting US bases on its territory, it’s a US base in its own right ... Australia is a serious piece of real estate in the US warfighting machine,” Richard Tanter said.

CHINA

Five leaders did not attend for various reasons – some possibly because of the presence of Taiwan as a development partner. Palau is one of three out of eighteen Forum members to have diplomatic relations with Taiwan contrary to the internationally recognised policy of One China. The others are Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu.

There are underlying tensions between Forum members over relations with China and the US. The majority of islands seeking to have peaceful relations with both countries.

Australia acts as a US proxy seeking exclusive security agreements with varying degrees of success. Palau is also tied to the US, having entered into a 50-year Compact of Free Association in 1994. The Compact gives the US access to Palau’s land, airspace, and waterways for military purposes.

The Solomon Islands signed a security arrangement with China in 2022. Australia has security treaties with Tuvalu (2023), Naoero (formerly Nauru) (2024), Papua New Guinea (2025), Vanuatu (2026), and Fiji (2026).

These treaties and AUKUS could be seen as contrary to the Forum’s multilateral, aims of a unified and peaceful approach to international relations.

China’s recent intercontinental ballistic missile test that splashed into Pacific waters was discussed with concern expressed over the short notice given before the test.

Other issues discussed include deep sea minerals, energy crisis, artificial intelligence, and the up-coming UN climate summit COP31 to be chaired by Australia. 🇺🇸

Pacific Islands Forum

Founded in 1971, the forum is an intergovernmental organisation which officially aims to “enhance the economic and social well-being of the people of the South Pacific.”

Members

Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Naoero (Nauru), New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Early emergency bushfires in Qld and NSW

Above average temperatures, out-of-control bushfires in Queensland and NSW and a looming monster El Nino send a dire warning to the federal government to stop approving new coal and gas with Australians on the frontline of the climate crisis.

“We are just a week into Spring and already Aussies and emergency services crews are facing emergency-level bushfires fuelled by coal and gas,” said Australian Conservation Foundation CEO Adam Bandt.

“As Australia burns, we’re seeing Ministers grin about fracking the Beetaloo and back drilling for gas off Scott Reef, unleashing climate bombs that will put lives and livelihoods at risk.

“Summer and even Spring are scary seasons now, and the Albanese government must protect Australians by rejecting Woodside’s planned Browse gas project at Scott Reef and the Beetaloo fracking climate bomb in the Northern Territory.

“Woodside’s plan for gas drilling at Scott

Reef off WA’s coast would be disastrous for nature and communities, damaging an oasis for endangered whales and turtles to boost big gas export profits.

“If Beetaloo fracking is scaled up to full production, it would unleash around 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon pollution over its lifetime – three times Australia’s annual emissions.

“ACF calls on the Albanese government to choose people and nature over big gas exporters.”

Recently Brisbane’s temperature hit 34.4° and a large bushfire west of the city caused major disruptions on the Warrego Highway.

In NSW, campers at Sandy Creek were forced to flee a fast-moving bushfire that ground crews and water bombers worked hard to contain.

Australian Conservation Foundation 🇺🇸

Support for RAFFWU and retail workers

Peter Farmer/RAFFWU

Members and supporters of the Retail and Fast Food Workers Union (RAFFWU) have rallied in Naarm/Melbourne and Borloo/Perth to demand that Victorian Labor drop its union-busting Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment Bill 2026.

In Naarm, a crowd gathered outside Labor's headquarters in Docklands and heard speeches from RAFFWU Secretary Loukas Kakogiannis, Community and Public Sector Union Victoria Secretary Jiselle Hanna, retail workers and others.

State Greens MP Aiv Puglielli described the legislation as "an absolute shit of a bill" which would kneecap the ability of workers to organise and build power. He vowed that the Greens would oppose union busting "every vote, every time."

There were very moving addresses from RAFFWU members who have found through hard-won experience that workers have power when they band together and take action. One had helped organise the first ever Enterprise Bargaining Agreement in the bookstore chain Readings. Sadie was sacked by Aldi for becoming a Health and

Safety Rep – agreed to by Aldi – and doing a safety survey.

Loukas led the crowd in chants of "I say union, you say power!" and "What's disgusting? Union busting!"

There was also a rally in Borloo (Perth) on the same day.

Premier Ben Carroll announced the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment Bill 2026 in one of his first legislative moves after taking control of Victorian Labor. The Bill would give Consumer Affairs Victoria the power to wind-up incorporated associations which have an "industrial relations purpose," paving the way for RAFFWU to be shut down. That would harm the interests of retail workers across the country.

The Bill has been criticised as a factional favour to Ben Carroll's allies in the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA) to shut down their progressive rival, the Retail and RAFFWU. The SDA is an affiliate of the ALP while RAFFWU is not affiliated to any political party.

The Bill has divided the union movement, with the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), and the Community and Public Sector Union Victoria (CPSU Vic) condemning the legislation.

Labor faces an uphill battle passing the legislation through the Legislative Council, with both the Coalition and the Greens announcing their opposition. Labor has also faced criticism for including the union changes in legislation targeting hate groups and terrorist organisations. Those groups could obviously be targeted separately.

Carroll's move to shut down RAFFWU arises in the context of a massive ongoing decline in SDA membership of over 31% in the period 2018-2024, according to RAFFWU's analysis.

RAFFWU is a grassroots, member-led Union for workers founded in 2016 as an incorporated association in Victoria. It operates throughout Australia.

RAFFWU has almost 4,000 members nationally and an impressive record of fighting for and securing outcomes for its members.

In 2020, the Federal Court of Australia found RAFFWU acted in the national interest in prosecuting a major McDonald's franchisee for coercion of children. That case established the workplace right for Australian workers to have reasonable access to toilets and drinking water at work.

In July 2026, a class action lawsuit against Domino's Pizza launched by Phi

Finney MacDonald in partnership with RAFFWU showed that in less than eighteen months Riley Gall had been underpaid almost \$12,000 under old SDA agreements – around a third of his income.

RAFFWU condemns the legislation as an attack on freedom of association and the rights of workers to organise in genuine democratic unions and calls on the Victorian Parliament to vote against this cynical attack on workers.

Loukas Kakogiannis, RAFFWU Secretary said that "Ben Carroll wants to mislead people that this bill targets 'Red Unions' – Liberal Party-aligned anti-union fronts. The 'Red Unions' are a red herring to curry support for a legislation that attacks the rights of retail and fast workers to democratically organise in a real union."

"By lumping hate groups and terrorist organisations in the provisions of the Bill, Victorian Labor is cynically putting a genuine, member-led Union in the same category as neo-nazis and terrorists."

"This bill is an attack on freedom of association, and rights of all workers to democratically organise." ✳

Family violence and union assistance

Graham Holton

Senator Pauline Hanson, leader of One Nation, recently described family violence as a "two-way street." Commissioners Anna Cody and Deb Tsorbaris rejected her comments saying women and children face complex barriers to safety.

This is supported by hospitalisation data which shows family and domestic violence rates were highest in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, though violence occurs across all classes.

Modern definitions see family violence as a pattern of behaviour

an intimate partner or family member uses. It includes physical violence, verbal abuse, coercive control, sexual coercion, threats and intimidation, emotional or psychological abuse, economic/financial abuse, social isolation, monitoring phones and movements away from the house, stalking, and using technology to control.

Twenty-three per cent of women have experienced violence from an intimate partner, with 8 per cent experiencing violence from a family member. Nearly 13 per cent of Australians had witnessed parental violence by the time they were fifteen years old.

Low wages and unemployment

lead to economic dependency which makes leaving a relationship difficult. Poverty and financial dependence lead to difficulty escaping a violent relationship as it could mean the loss of the house and assets. Economic stress and control of money substantially increase risk and makes it harder for women to escape an abusive relationship. Employment can provide women with the means of escaping an abusive relationship.

Unions, through collective organisation, can provide higher wages, employment security, workplace protection, and paid domestic/family-violence leave. This makes the workplace an important

site for addressing domestic violence as the union can assure the employer provides paid leave, flexible working arrangements, protection of employment, and financial security. Providing economic independence gives workers greater ability to leave an abusive relationship.

Poverty can increase vulnerability to violence, which can push women further into poverty. Economic abuse may involve preventing a woman from working, controlling her wages or denying access to bank accounts. Among women who had experienced physical or sexual partner violence in the previous five years, 44 per cent

reported cash-flow problems, and 30 per cent could not raise \$2,000 within a week.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) identifies employment, income, housing and access to assets as important components of women's economic security. Unfortunately, leaving an abusive partner can mean a substantial loss of accumulated household wealth. 69 per cent of women who left a violent relationship left property or assets behind. ✳

Union shuts down Sydney University

Denis Doherty

On Wednesday 2 September the National Tertiary Education Union closed Sydney University with a very tight union picket line. Each of the entrances to the University on Parramatta Rd were closed shut by walls of unionists dressed in purple t-shirts and armed with placards. The main entrance was very firmly shut and staffed with huge banners and loud chants of "we've shut down the university!"

NTEU NSW Division Secretary Vince Caughley said university management is now "increasingly disconnected from the staff who actually teach, research, and run our institutions."

A leaflet from the union explained that members of the staff union professional and academic staff are on strike for the day. The strike follows months of negotiations for a new Enterprise Agreement. The union is campaigning about:

- Job security – NTEU opposes the policies that make it easier to sack staff.
- Use of AI and its effects on staff
- Workplace rights and protections
- Secure tenure for staff (casual and fixed term) and defence of the research-teaching nexus – the idea that research informs teaching – as the basis of our university.

The footbridge entrance to the University on Parramatta Road held a series of talks on the hour which explained various aspects of resistance and work for justice from Australian history.

NTEU must be congratulated for the very impressive strike organisation covering all entrances to the University of Sydney and the subsequent march on the administration section of the University. ✳



Photo: Denis Doherty

Union industrial action in Brisbane

Graham Holton

As well as the ferries, Brisbane has also seen strong union industrial action at Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, Queensland Rail, and Qantas. Employers, conservative commentators and the *Courier-Mail* are portraying the Riverfire action as an attack on the public.

Australian Workers' Union (AWU) at Cleveland Youth Detention Centre undertook a 12-hour strike as it escalates its campaign at Queensland youth detention centres. The AWU is seeking 6 per cent annual wage increases for three years and 100 additional staff, arguing that overcrowding and staff turnover are creating serious safety problems. Workers are facing violence regularly and staffing levels are inadequate.

There is an ongoing industrial dispute involving the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU), Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU). Earlier protected action included restrictions by train controllers and other workers. Some elements of the dispute have continued despite agreements being reached with some unions in July. The dispute is the largest industrial-relations conflict in Brisbane.

Queensland Rail had reached in-principle

agreements with several unions, including an 8.5 per cent pay increase over three years for workers covered by those agreements. However, negotiations involving the RTBU and AMWU have continued. Queensland Rail says 37 trains remain unavailable, and the full timetable is not expected to return for months. The union is linking wages with the quality and safety of a public service, rather than a simple pay claim.

Qantas is an emerging Brisbane issue. Nationally, 350 Qantas ground-services employees represented by the Transport Workers' Union (TWU) voted 97 per cent in favour of industrial action. No strike date has been announced, but the union can give three days' notice. This could become relevant to Brisbane Airport if the action includes the airport's ground operations.

Union members of 'Together in Child Safety and Youth Justice' (TCSYJ) commenced industrial action in August. They wore stickers, put up posters, and added their signatures to emails sent as part of the industrial campaign for better wages and conditions, and adequate resourcing for work.

Together coordinated a vigil outside Parliament House for children who the system is failing. The state government applied to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) to have work bans overturned. ★

Maritime Union of Australia's olive branch rejected by RiverCity Ferries

At a tele-meeting called by the MUA's Queensland Branch and National Office, the Union sought to re-engage in good faith negotiations with Graeme Legh, the CEO of RiverCity Ferries, to try to advance a consensus before the weekend's Riverfire event.

Industrial action has been occurring for some time, and RiverCity Ferries has had ample opportunity over more than 17 meetings to engage in negotiations with their workforce in a meaningful way.

Instead, they have forced workers to choose between a disingenuous and counterintuitive draft agreement or ongoing industrial action.

No consensus was achieved at the latest meeting, with RiverCity Ferries' CEO refusing to budge on the many crucial fatigue and pay issues that remain in dispute.

With no meaningful movement from the company, the workforce is left with no choice but to go ahead with the industrial action given notice of earlier this week.

"Corporate greed has won the day in Brisbane, with a billion-dollar company choosing ongoing disputation with its workforce over good-faith negotiations and a fair outcome for hard working ferry crews," said Mich-Elle Myers, Assistant National Secretary of the MUA.

"The CEO's pay has gone up \$500,000, corporate profits have ballooned by 16%, but these bosses want to offer a substandard wage outcome and make no effort to address the significant fatigue management concerns that their crews have raised," said MUA Queensland Secretary, Aaron Johnston.

"Once again, RiverCity Ferries has chosen confrontation over negotiation despite every good faith offer made by the Union," said Johnston.

The other issues in dispute between RiverCity Ferries and the two maritime unions, the MUA and the Australian Maritime Officers' Union, are improvements to paid parental leave provisions, proper protections for heat and inclement weather, a 12-hour break between shifts to address fatigue, and ensuring workers receive their full meal break every day – something that doesn't occur right now.

Maritime Union of Australia - Queensland ★

Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

GREEN NOTES

Peatland reclamation

Graham Holton

Ireland contains a large share of Europe's Atlantic blanket peat bogs, and these peatlands are among the most efficient natural carbon stores in the world. Peat is partly decayed vegetation made up largely of peat moss. Peat bogs cover a fifth of Ireland, of which 85 per cent has been degraded from long-term economic use. With the end of extraction, the area under usage fell from 310,000 hectares two centuries ago to only 1,700 hectares today.

For centuries these bogs supported household fuel gathering, grazing, and seasonal communal labour. Peat heated homes and helped reproduce rural communities. Turf cutting was regulated through local ownership and turbary rights (legal entitlement). During the colonial and capitalist periods bogs were considered unproductive until drainage, reclamation, mapping, and enclosure 'improved' them, making them profitable to landlords and the state.

Ireland's independence did not abolish the capitalist accumulation imperative. The areas were redistributed while maintaining a political economy organised around private title, market production, and national development.

The establishment of Bord na Móna in 1946 mechanically harvested peat extraction to fire power stations. Converting peat into fuel was to overcome dependency on imported fuels and to build sovereign infrastructure. Peat substituted domestic energy for imports and supported national industrialisation. State-led capitalism mobilised land, labour, machinery, and finance on a scale far beyond traditional turf cutters. Rural workers became wage labourers.

With the decline of Bord na Móna's industrial peat extraction, Irish bogs stopped being treated as 'waste' and are being restored as carbon infrastructure and conservation territory. Large-scale rehabilitation by Bord na Móna has restored thousands of hectares.

Compared to thirty years ago, Ireland has made significant progress. Raised and blanket bogs are of international significance, with restoration financed by the EU-funded 'Living Bog' project improving more than 5,200 hectares of raised bog habitat across twelve protected sites in 2021 alone.

A study has found that restoration mitigated 75 tonnes CO₂-equivalent per hectare, successfully re-establishing carbon storage functions. The long-term outlook is optimistic, with many scientists seeing Ireland as a significant international test case for restoring heavily industrialised peatlands into functioning ecosystems.

Restored bogs are a potential platform for wildlife tourism. Rewetting, drain blocking, and other rehabilitation measures reduce emissions, protect remaining peat, improve water regulation, and create vibrant ecological habitats. Biodiversity recovery is witnessed with sphagnum moss, dragonflies, wetland birds and other bog species returning. However, a large proportion of Irish peatlands remain degraded as peat extraction, forestry and agricultural drainage caused long-term ecological damage that cannot be fully reversed.

The problem is that these assessments have not included local cultural continuity and democratic inclusion in the decision making. Deirdre Falvey writes in *The Irish Times* that despite talk of a 'just transition' to help communities, not enough is being done. These peat bogs are landscapes of work, memory, language, poetry, family practice, and political identity. Rural resistance exists because turf cutting is culturally and economically important.

Turf cutting embodied cooperation and connection to place, and industrial employment is remembered with pride despite its destructive ecological effects. Restoration treats them as technical systems, alienating communities who are separated from decision-making, while experts, consultants, and administrators acquire authority over the land.

A just transition should guarantee that workers leaving extraction are not sacrificed to a social and economic crisis they did not create. Former Bord na Móna workers possess valuable practical knowledge of bog hydrology, machinery, and terrain. Publicly funded, unionised, long-term restoration employment could convert this knowledge into ecological stewardship.

Irish peat-bog restoration is a struggle over who defines nature's value, producing a divide between workers' tradition and modern restoration. The transition must include social needs, ecological limits, and collective control. Done justly, it can become a project that socialises restoration, and be a democratic project of ecological repair, regional redistribution, and dignified post-extractive work.



Palantir and Cellebrite – and the country that never

Claudia Weisenberger

In April 2026, Palantir posted a 22-point manifesto on Elon Musk's X platform. It drew from CEO Alex Karp's book *The Technological Republic* – that had triggered an immediate international backlash.

Within ten weeks, five European countries had moved against Palantir contracts.

The UK's Parliamentary Science Committee called the company's presence "an unacceptable point of weakness." France, the Netherlands, Spain, Denmark and Germany's military all moved to reduce or refuse business with Palantir.

Switzerland had already been refusing for years.

Australia did none of this. No review. No audit.

No parliamentary question. No ethics assessments. And nobody has been required to explain why.

The manifesto called for the "rearmament" of Germany and Japan and declared that some cultures are 'dysfunctional and regressive.' It was posted by Alex Karp, CEO of Palantir – a company that has held contracts with Australian government agencies since 2012, holds top-secret security clearance, and has never been asked to explain its ideology to an Australian parliamentary committee.

THE KARP DOCTRINE

Five countries moved against Palantir within ten weeks. Australia did not respond.

Karp has since defined 'enemies' to include not just foreign adversaries but critics of US defence and surveillance policy at home – protesters, academics, and civil society organisations critical of Palantir's work with ICE and the military.

Karp's co-founder Peter Thiel has gone further, funding litigation that destroyed a media outlet critical of his interests. The company that builds the surveillance infrastructure also decides who it is pointed at.

In Australia, nobody has asked Palantir which cultures it considers dysfunctional, which Australians it considers enemies, or whether those definitions influence how its systems operate inside Australian government agencies.

THE PALANTIR STRATEGY

Palantir Technologies was founded in 2003 with CIA seed funding. Its strategy – described by campaigners as 'land and expand' – is consistent: enter through a government's defence or health sector, demonstrate value, expand across agencies, make exit prohibitively expensive.

In the United Kingdom, Palantir landed in the NHS during COVID in 2020. By 2026 it had expanded to police, the military, the financial regulator and more than 34 state contracts worth at least £900 million.

In every country that has examined its Palantir relationship, the same concerns emerged: data sovereignty, foreign legal jurisdiction, vendor lock-in, and the question of what a US company subject to US law can be compelled to hand over.

The response has been consistent too. Build sovereign systems.

France is building Arcadia, a national



Photo: gruntzooki – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

battlefield AI system designed to replace Palantir's platforms. Germany is backing Helsing, a Munich-based defence AI company. Both are investing in sovereign alternatives – reducing dependency on a single US vendor and building national capability that cannot be compelled by a foreign court.

CELLEBRITE UNDER THE SCOPE

Cellebrite, the Israeli phone extraction company, now holds contracts with more than 60,000 agencies in 150 countries. Both companies market themselves as tools for justice. The question of what oversight exists is being asked by governments and parliaments everywhere.

In Australia, it has not been asked by either.

Cellebrite's technology has been used to target journalists, activists and political opponents in Serbia, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

In each case, Cellebrite withdrew – not because governments banned them, but because exposure made the relationship untenable. In Australia, the same company holds 128 active federal government contracts worth more than \$15 million.

No parliamentary committee has examined it. No minister has been required to explain it.

WHAT 'HOSTED IN AUSTRALIA' ACTUALLY MEANS

Switzerland refused Palantir on sovereignty grounds. France dropped it six months after renewing its contract. Spain blacklisted it through boardrooms. Germany's military said granting Palantir access to national databases was inconceivable. Each of these governments looked at its Palantir relationship and found reasons to act. Not one Australian minister has been required to explain why Australia has not looked at all.

Palantir assures Australian agencies that their data is hosted on Australian servers. It is. But the US CLOUD Act gives American authorities the power to compel any US company to hand over data stored anywhere in the world.

Palantir is incorporated in Delaware, United States. The server location does not matter. For Australians whose health records, financial transactions and disability information sit inside Palantir-connected systems, this means a US court could compel access to their most sensitive personal data – without their knowledge, without their consent, and without any Australian minister ever having been required to acknowledge that risk exists.

Palantir staff are now embedded inside the Department of Defence, AUSTRAC, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, and the Australian Signals Directorate.

Services Australia – which co-leads the Fraud Fusion Taskforce – has held its own discussions with Palantir about implementing its platforms. The UK has learned what exit actually costs – a separate NHS department paid Palantir £25 million (AU\$47 million) specifically to manage a transition away from its systems.

Australia has never asked what leaving would cost. It has never been required to.

CUSTOMER. SHAREHOLDER. BYSTANDER

The Future Fund is Australia's sovereign wealth fund – a government-owned body managing more than \$289 billion on behalf of Australian taxpayers. Nobody in Australia chose to invest in Palantir. When Palantir joined the S&P 500 in September 2024, the Future Fund's passive index managers were required to buy shares automatically.

The Australian government became a Palantir shareholder by default. It now holds \$103.6 million worth of stock. The company is intimately linked to war crimes.

When Senator David Pocock asked the Future Fund to divest, it declined.

For Australian taxpayers, the picture is this: your government pays Palantir to handle your most sensitive data. Your sovereign wealth fund profits when those contracts generate revenue that grows Palantir's share price.

The more the Australian government buys, the more the fund grows. You are simultaneously the subject of the surveillance and a shareholder in the company conducting it. Nobody has explained this conflict of interest. Nobody has been asked to.

Senator Shoebridge has called for a full audit and an exit plan. Neither major party has taken it up.

Australia is consulting on new privacy protections that would require organisations to prove their data handling is 'fair and reasonable.' The consultation closes 18 September 2026. None of the proposed reforms address the governance framework governing the Fraud Fusion Taskforce, the vendors processing participant data, or the consent notices that don't mention Palantir.

Switzerland looked. France looked. The Netherlands looked. Germany looked. Every one of them found something worth acting on.

Australia has not looked. Not because there is nothing to find. Because nobody in power has chosen to look.

The ministers who signed the contracts chose not to ask. The parliament that passed the Bill chose not to investigate. The two major parties that ignored Senator Shoebridge's call for a full audit chose not to answer.

That is not an oversight. It is a decision. The Albanese government has not explained it. It has not been required to.

Michael West Report
michaelwest.com.au/the-global-reckoning-over-palantir-and-cellebrite-and-the-country-that-never-asked/ 🇺🇸

the company that builds the surveillance decides who it is pointed at

Travels in China: Red culture and new collective economy

Roland Boer

In a remote corner of Songxi county in northern Fujian province lie two villages, Wanqian and Meikou. In the past the only way to get there was by a boat along the Songxi River, although these days there is a winding road along the river with wonderful scenery of mountains, tea planted on hillsides, and village after village.

In April and May of 2026, I rode my bicycle along this road a few times, bringing with me some camping gear. I camped respectively at Meikou and Wanqian for a week all told. This gave me plenty of time to explore, talk, think, and write. The place would come to captivate me.

You can pitch a tent almost anywhere in the countryside, but it is polite to ask. During the day I explore. In the evenings I look at clear skies full of stars, ponder the universe, and sleep soundly in a tent that can weather steady downpours.

As for food, it is not so common to find an eatery in a village and shops can be fewer and further away. However, there is always a small greengrocer-butcher truck and small-eats truck that come daily through the lanes of the village. Fresh veggies, eggs, tofu, noodles – plenty to cook and eat. Chinese-style food for Chinese-style camping – appropriately.

As one may expect, a tall foreigner on a fold-up bicycle and sleeping in a small tent is not a common sight in such relatively remote regions, so I am often asked about my origins and ventures. On occasion, I meet other campers, such as one evening at Meikou. They were five friends, three men and two women from other parts of Fujian. In their 50s and 60s, they had retired from their farming and working-class jobs. With a desire to explore, they liked to hit the road with their camping gear. That evening they were cooking fresh fish from the river in a wok on a gas stove. We sat and talked, sharing our stories.

Let me say a little more about what struck me most about this quiet corner of China.

MEIKOU'S RED CULTURE

To begin with, there is the “red culture” of Meikou. In a museum housed in a restored traditional house, I found the story of the “Meikou Soviet” from the late 1920s and early 1930s. In recent years, the ruins of the old village of Meikou have been creatively restored, with its river port, Buddhist temple, book academy, dwellings of merchants, and much more.

One of these buildings was the former headquarters of the Meikou Soviet, now a “red culture” museum. Meikou was at times a sub-section of the much larger Jiangxi-Fujian Soviet that had its headquarters further south in Ruijin, and at other times a soviet of its own standing. At this early stage of the revolutionary struggle in China, terms and practices from the Russian Revolution were used in China. The locals were involved in both the struggle against the reactionary wing of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) and against Japanese imperialism. It's very moving to visit, to see and read about the

struggles the locals were involved in. It also struck me how the museum was located in a restored building in the traditional village: a tangible manifestation of the integration of the best of traditional culture and revolutionary culture. A microcosm of China's story.

WANQIAN'S CENTENNIAL BAMBOO SUGARCANE

Less than two kilometres away and a little upriver is Wanqian village. Wanqian's story is quite remarkable, since it is both the home of a rare species of sugarcane known as centennial bamboo sugarcane (*bainianzhe*) and a good example of the new collective economy in the countryside.

Bamboo sugarcane's history has waxed and waned for more than two millennia. As one of six types of sugarcane worldwide, this one is known as *Saccharum sinensis*, has only 12.3 per cent of sucrose and a large number of elements and minerals that are quite good for you.

Yes, you read that correctly: this “red sugar” – is apparently good for your health. Studies have shown that the villagers live longer than elsewhere and have no dementia, Alzheimer's, or cancer even in their 80s and 90s. The sugar cane's long underground roots live for hundreds of years due to unique properties and a distinctive tilling method. The current original crop was planted in 1727.

In the past, this type of sugarcane was grown across southern China and supplied 90 per cent of China's sugar needs. Northern Fujian was at the time the economic, political, cultural, and philosophical centre of the whole of Fujian province and a major centre in southern China. How things change! After the “century of humiliation” (1840-1949), this part of China became very poor and bamboo sugarcane became forgotten and almost extinct. Surviving only in Wanqian village due to local customs, rediscovered by chance in this remote corner in the late 1950s.

THE NEW COLLECTIVE ECONOMY

This brings us to the new collective economy and poverty alleviation. Due to its remoteness, Wanqian had become one of the poorest villages in the poorest county (Songxi) in the whole of Fujian province. It was known as the “Three-Without Village”: without a road to get to the village, without a bridge to cross the river, and without the means to become prosperous. What was to be done?

In 2012, the secretary of the Party Branch proposed “using what we have and no-one else has” – bamboo sugarcane. A cooperative was established based on the collective model of “Party branch+cooperative+farmer households,” with the 700 or so farmers all joining the cooperative. They set to work, expanded the growing area, promoted the unique qualities of the “red sugar,” and by 2019 Wanqian was the first village in the county to throw off absolute poverty.

At the time of writing, this collective economy approach includes scientific research stations, state-owned enterprises, government



Centennial Bamboo Sugarcane Rum.

platforms, and pharmaceutical projects to identify and test new medicinal drugs.

How is this a new type of collective economy? It is more than simply the cooperatives, which number in the hundreds of thousands across China's rural areas. With grassroots Party branches and committees at the vanguard, these farmer cooperative are also linked with enterprises (public and non-public), universities and research institutions, social groups, young talent stations, government platforms, and more.

This way of doing things provides vital links not only in rural areas but also in terms of urban-rural integration. This approach had already proven successful in the project from 2012 to 2021 to eradicate absolute poverty in the remaining 832 poor counties across China and is now being expanded during the new phase of rural revitalisation.

A reader may wonder how this new approach relates to the old-style and highly centralised collectivisation of the 1950s. That approach worked 70 or so years ago, when China was one of the poorest countries in the world. Now the economic situation is completely different and it would not do to use old approaches in a new context. In this light, I like to speak of a qualitatively new collective economy, or collectivisation, which suits the economic and social situation.

Some figures tell the story. About 20 years ago the average income in the whole of Songxi county was 4,887 yuan (about AU\$1,000)

per year, with 23 per cent of farmers living below 3,000 yuan per year (AU\$620). By 2025, the Wanqian cooperative had experienced a more than 500 per cent increase from 20 years ago. Clearly, this qualitatively new collective economy is working.

PHILOSOPHICAL RUM

Let me conclude on a different note, which concerns what I call “philosophical rum.” Some years ago, China Agricultural University and Songxi county collaborated on a project to develop a distinctive drink from this bamboo sugarcane. The result was Centennial Bamboo Sugarcane Rum, a drink that is found nowhere else in China or in the world.

The first batches are emerging from their oak barrels and are being vigorously promoted across China. At the same time, a pharmaceutical research team (led by Luo Cheng) has identified a nutrient in the cane that mitigates the effect of alcohol. Take two tablets before drinking and you will feel fine in the morning.

After testing this combination on a couple of occasions, I can attest that it works. But why philosophical or indeed dialectical rum? From one source two products emerge, one a lovely alcoholic drink and the other a medicine that mitigates the effects. This is clearly a case of “things that oppose each other also complement one another” – in short Marxist dialectics. ★

A cooperative was established based on the collective model of ‘Party branch+cooperative+farmer households’

Marxist perspective

Death of a Salesman

Graham Holton

Seen as a 20th Century classic, Arthur Miller's 1949 play *Death of a Salesman* has been a compulsory text in Australian schools for generations.

This modern tragedy is a powerful critique of the 'American Dream' and capitalism in general. The tragedy of Willy Loman can be seen through Marxist concepts of class, commodity relations, alienation, exploitation and ideology. Willy, the salesman of the title, identifies his personal worth with his exchange-value in the marketplace, believing being well liked and commercially successful is a guarantee to economic security. What Willy will not admit is that he is a wage-dependent salesman whose livelihood depends upon selling his labour and personality to a capitalist employer.

Willy refuses to see himself as belonging to the working class, despite the insecurities of paying a mortgage and car repairs. His employer, Howard, treats him as a commodity, sacking him without benefits after thirty-four years of service. Willy appeals to loyalty and history, whereas Howard evaluates him by his economic usefulness.

In the end Willy acknowledges he is a disposable commodity; his success is measured through commodities he owns. He evaluates himself by his commercial success, and his sons are judged by their economic potential. His life is evaluated through the mortgage on the house, and his life insurance of \$20,000. Willy commits suicide unable to separate his value as a human being from his value within the capitalist marketplace.

The play is very relevant today, as individuals are still valued for what they are worth to the system. Under capitalism human labour is commodified, Will Loman's economic value, as well as his value as a human being is determined by how much he can sell. Once his sales fall, his social value collapses. The capitalist relationship is impersonal according to the logic of profit.

The FBI kept files on Arthur Miller because of his connections with the Communist Party USA and left-wing groups. Even so, Miller's critique of Willy falls short of a Marxist solution: there is no class solidarity, workers' political consciousness, or a call to transform the economic system. Willy suffers individually while conflicts within his family tear at

his dream. For all his boasting of having lots of business friends, none go to his funeral. Miller criticises the system without any collective working-class action.

The economic system defines Willy's identity, exemplifying Marx's concept of alienation. He is alienated from his labour as he must sell to survive rather than for meaningful productive activity. Willy's obsession with commercial success prevents genuine relationships with his wife and children. He measures himself according to the values of the marketplace.

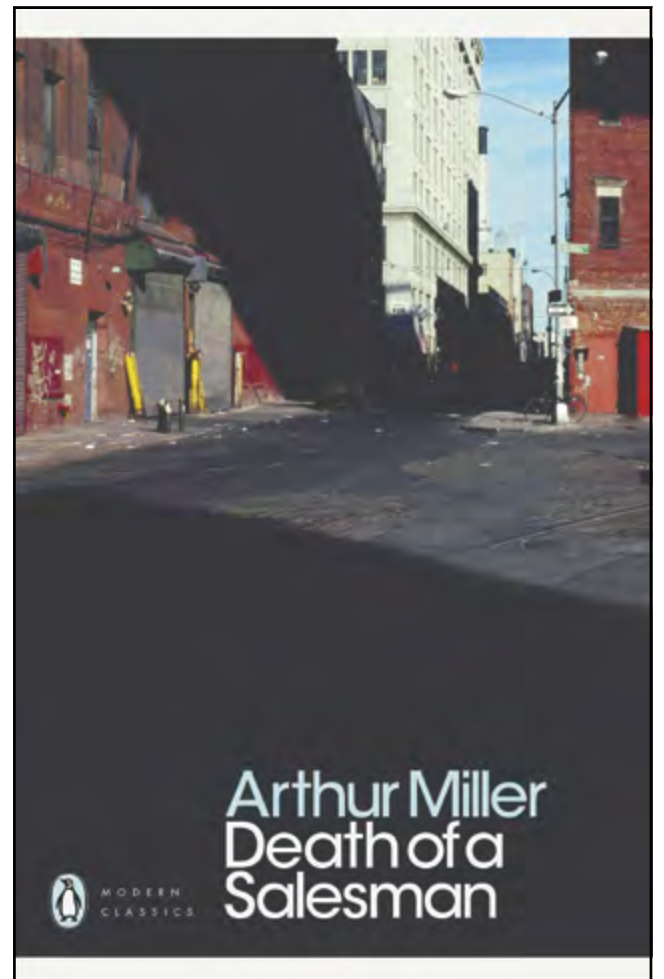
The play's most important Marxist dimension is its attack on the American Dream. Willy believes his popularity and ambition will make him wealthy. It does not. This very modern US assumption appears natural and fair in a capitalist society. It foreshadows the 'toxic positivity' that characterises the US today. US President Donald Trump was raised on the teachings of 'The Power of Positive Thinking.'

In the play, Willy does not blame capitalism, believing in the American Dream up to his death. Failure is shifted from the economic structure to himself.

Only in death does Willy have monetary value, which his wife, Linda, receives as a life insurance payment. Here lies the cruellest irony. Willy's economic objective is achieved only when he is no longer alive to enjoy it. Willy's suicide is his ultimate commodification with his death having greater economic value than his life. His life insurance policy is the final commodity that he sells by suicide, producing his economic value through his death. Willy has internalised capitalism so completely that even this becomes an economic transaction.

Miller's tragedy asks what kind of society produces a person who evaluates his entire existence according to commercial success? Willy is a social product. His tragedy is expressed as a contradiction within American capitalism facing an economic downturn after the end of World War II. Americans believing in 'the dream' faced limited opportunity with a disproportionate distribution of economic power and financial security.

The play is a good reminder of the cost the dominant US ideology takes on human life. Going on 80 (like Trump), *Death of a Salesman* is still well worth a read or a viewing. ★



Film Review:

Fidel Up Close

Reviewer: J H

I was lucky enough to be able to attend the screening of this documentary *Fidel Up Close* hosted by the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society.

Before the start of the screening Her Excellency Mrs Gilma Moreira Limo gave a speech describing the documentary's contemporary relevance.

"This year, as we commemorate Fidel's centenary, we remember the life of a man whose vision, courage, and profound sense of justice decisively shaped contemporary history. Fidel was, above all, an unwavering defender of human dignity, the sovereignty of peoples, and solidarity as a universal ethical principle. His leadership transcended Cuba's borders and became a source of inspiration for millions of people around the world who strive for a more just international order.

"Remembering Fidel today has particular relevance. Cuba is facing an especially adverse context, marked by intensified sanctions, unprecedented economic pressures, and challenges that affect the daily lives of [the Cuban] people. In the midst of these difficulties, Fidel's ideas, his confidence in the resilience of the Cuban people, his conviction that justice is always possible, and his certainty that international solidarity is a transformative force continue to guide and inspire Cuba.

"For this reason, this documentary is not simply an exercise in remembrance. It

is also an invitation to take a closer look at a leader whose consistency, humanity, and ability to analyse continue to be relevant to understanding the challenges facing the world today."

The documentary follows Fidel Castro's life from his childhood in Fincas las Manacas, through the revolution, and along the process of building the Cuba we know today.

Whilst the broader narrative of the documentary will be familiar for those that have read Fidel's autobiography *My Life*, the documentary features interviews from those close to Fidel giving a greater sense of his incredible presence and dedication.

One example of this dedication comes from when Fidel was studying law at the University of Havana whilst also being involved in student activism. Fidel interrupted a university event to stand up on stage and read out the names of key members of the gangs in the university that were in the pocket of the dictator Batista.

Fidel's legacy is the legacy of the revolution, of the people around the world who received vital medical attention from Cuban doctors. The people across Cuba who can read from his literacy campaign. A country that, even in the face of constant aggression from the biggest empire the world has known, has fought against the longest blockade in history, and stands as a beacon for the whole world to show that a better world is possible.

Viva Fidel! Viva Cuba! ★



News quiz

1. What percentage of Lebanon is Israel occupying? 12% 6% or 18%
2. Animals Australia is calling for an investigation into which Australian state?
3. Which large company's plane has overshot a runway, killing five people?
4. What kind of fruit, stuck to a wall, was auctioned for \$6m US? Kiwi Fruit? Grape? Banana?
5. Which British town lends its name to the title of a popular spy drama?
6. Jamaica has formally asked the UK for what?
7. What are European countries moving out of the US?
8. Who is enforcing a "blockade-for-blockade" policy in the Middle East?
9. Which European monument has had protests over treatment of female employees?
10. Which union is targeted by Victorian Premier Ben Carroll's association laws?

Answers on page 13

Fidel was an unwavering defender of human dignity

Cuba reforms banking

Graham Holton

Cuba's recent 176 reform measures allow private banks, private currency exchanges, foreign-currency accounts, direct foreign trade, digital foreign-exchange markets, state enterprises to become shareholding companies, and increased foreign investment.

Entities specialising in microcredits will assist Cuba's fledgling businesses. Private banks and non-banking financial institutions will operate under the supervision of the Central Bank of Cuba.

The reforms do not eliminate the legal and commercial risks created by US sanctions, but they will make investment easier. A major question is whether this new banking and financial architecture can encourage enough investment opportunities outside the US-dominated financial system.

To do this, Cuba will restructure investments through channels that avoid US jurisdiction, or minimise exposure to US financial systems. The reforms formalise remittances

through authorised private channels, creating state and private non-banking financial institutions to manage financial flows and currency exchange operations.

The government foresees successive devaluations of the Cuban peso to bridge the gap between various existing exchange rates. State enterprises unable to adapt to the new exchange conditions might face liquidation.

The Trump administration has already expanded sanctions targeting Cuban financial institutions and warned non-US banks that dealings with designated Cuban entities would jeopardise their access to US markets. Several Cuban financial entities have already been sanctioned.

Cuba's reforms allow private banks and new financial institutions to potentially create alternative financing routes to US banking. One way to get around these sanctions is by Cuba deepening its integration with non-Western payment networks, such as the Chinese financial infrastructure. While the extent of such integration remains unclear, the reforms explicitly mention financial

technologies (fintech) and virtual-asset regulation.

A major vulnerability for Cuba has been reliance on US dollars. The reforms expand foreign-currency accounts, dollar deposits, withdrawals, and new exchange mechanisms. Investors may increasingly transact in Euros, Yuan, Rubles, or other currencies rather than dollars.

Future investors include Chinese state and private firms, Russian companies, Canadian mining and resource firms, Spanish tourism groups, Cuban diaspora investors, the Gulf states, and small regional investors with little US exposure.

Firms can establish subsidiaries in countries that maintain normal commercial relations with Cuba, and use banks with limited exposure to the US financial system. Such arrangements still face risks if US secondary sanctions apply. Large multinational corporations that depend heavily on US banking and capital markets will remain cautious until there is greater clarity on sanctions risk.

One notable reform allows greater

participation by Cubans abroad. Cuban-Americans and expats in Europe and Latin America can now invest through family businesses, property development, banking ventures, and small-to-medium enterprises.

At present profit repatriation is complex and the reform package has not explicitly established a new comprehensive legal framework to deal with it. Profit repatriation will depend on Cuba's success in accessing foreign exchange and creating reliable international banking channels.

Financial reforms are part of a broader package that includes modifications in state-owned enterprises, foreign investment, the tax system, pricing policy, foreign trade, and the role of non-state economic actors. The government insists these measures do not alter the core of its socialist model, but are necessary to survive the harsh oil blockade and brutal sanctions implemented by the Trump administration. ★

Marxist classic review:

Marxism and the National Question by Joseph Stalin

Reviewer: HF

Stalin's 1913 text about nations in relation to Marxism is an important theoretical text, which often flies under the radar compared to other classic Marxist works.

In this book, Stalin defines a nation as *a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture*. The text goes into detail on the nuances of nationality within communist movements, as well as the mistakes of the worker's movement in regard to nationality.

The original context of this work refers to Europe primarily, and Stalin's critique may sometimes appear obscure and pedantic. He's writing to other communists of the era, but the insights still prove themselves correct and vital for us to understand today.

Notably, there have been Marxist developments and innovations regarding nations since the book was written, especially from Stalin himself after the experience of leading the USSR. In Russia, the Bolsheviks did not seek to simply replicate reactionary Tsarist Russian nationalism and apply it to socialism. They completely redefined what nationality meant for the Soviet people.

Socialism is a continuous learning process built on the dialectical unity of theory and practice, and the developments in theory due to socialist practice must be understood and learned from. As such this book is best understood when studied collectively with other Marxists.

The Australian context of national identity isn't mentioned, but observant readers should be able to take these ideas and see how they fit into our situation. Australia's national identity has a rich history among the different cultures of this continent, but it has also been defined by settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and imperialism.

Furthermore, Australia's national identity is in a constant stage of development, and the deteriorating condition of capitalism means that reactionary forces have attached themselves to national identity while many socialists are still in the process of working out an answer.

To this end, the final chapter of Stalin's text offers a clarifying answer to the solution of the national question through fighting for socialism. However, any solution to the national question in our context will not come from the exclusive genius of individual Marxists, it will come through the practice of building socialism for the Australian conditions. That is our task. ★



Film Reviews

Leviticus

Reviewer: MD

This unnerving and seriously creepy queer coming-of-age supernatural horror is an impressive debut feature by Australian writer-director Adrian Chiarella.

There is a lot to unpack in his gripping and refreshing thriller set in a conservative, industrial, Christian community in rural Australia in which two closeted teenagers Naim (Joe Bird, *Talk To Me*) and Ryan (Stacy Clausen, *True Spirit*) are subjected to a harrowing exorcism ritual after they are outed as gay. This unleashes a violent and evil entity which takes the form of the person

the boys desire the most in each other. The film keeps you on tenterhooks as you don't know who is real or not. It is a simple but brilliant plot device.

Leviticus explores the psychological terror of conversion therapy and religious trauma, while the demonic presence is a metaphor for homophobia and guilt. Bird and Clausen give astounding performances that are both tender and terrifying as the two lads and their demonic doubles.

Frightening and thought-provoking, Leviticus will haunt you long after it has finished.

The Death of Robin Hood

Reviewer: MD

Forget any previous conception of Robin Hood and his merry men for this isn't Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, or Men in Tights. This is the most brutal and bleakest depiction of the infamous outlaw. Frankly, it is the most interesting interpretation yet.

The film, set in 1247, is written and directed by Michael Sarnoski, director of *Pig*. It centres on the end of Robin's (Hugh Jackman) life and his impending death. This Robin Hood is a vicious killer who is flawed and haunted by his former role as a larger-than-life hero. But there is nothing heroic

about this morally corrupt man who admits he enjoyed robbing and killing. Seriously injured in a battle, he seeks help and haven at a priory run by Sister Brigid (a phenomenal Jodie Comer) who, unaware of his true identity, offers him the chance of salvation.

Shot in Northern Ireland, the austere and unforgiving landscape reflects the character's brutality and ruthlessness. Jackman delivers a performance reminiscent of Logan in an incredibly powerful drama that has a visceral and timeless feel to it. His scenes with Comer are intense and electrifying as she holds her own beautifully. This is worth seeing.

Morning Star ★

US approves anti-socialist red-baiting resolution

Mark Gruenberg, with
John Wojcik and CJ Atkins

It is normal in the leadup to US elections for lawmakers to put up for vote a variety of so-called “messaging bills,” allowing them to stake out positions on issues in the public eye. As the mid-term elections rapidly approach, the US Republican finds itself in trouble on the messaging front because it has done nothing to address the major concerns of voters.

Facing that situation, they have resorted to the time-tested tactic of red-baiting. On 1 September Republicans put forward a resolution condemning socialism to deflect attention from the fact that they are absent when it comes to dealing with the affordability crisis crushing Americans right now.

But the resolution was not just a message – it was a trap, and its lead advocate, Representative Jeff Crank did not hide it.

“I keep hearing people like [Minority Leader] Hakeem Jeffries and others in the Congress saying that they oppose the DSA [Democratic Socialists of America],” Crank told reporters ahead of the vote. “Let’s see if they’re willing to vote for a resolution that would oppose them.”

Republicans sharpened the snare by folding their long-sought SAVE Act voter ID

legislation into the same resolution, so that any Democrat who voted for the socialism condemnation would also be on record backing the GOP’s voter-suppression bill – and any who voted no could be branded soft on socialism, whatever their actual reason for opposing it.

The non-binding resolution attacked the DSA by name, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani without naming him, and linked the Democrats in general to socialism and communism while pitching the GOP’s voter repression bill as a remedy.

Crank described the resolution as “providing for the condemnation and denouncement of socialism in all its forms, and for other purposes.”

The House approved it on a 220-192 vote, with eight Democrats joining all 211 voting Republicans and a GOP-leaning independent for it. All the “no” votes were Democrats, though two also voted “present.”

“The DSA is a threat to the American values that make our nation great. This evening’s vote shows who stands for freedom, and others who stand with socialism,” Crank declared.

“Socialism is one of the most destructive ideologies in world history, and the DSA have permeated elections across the country and have co-opted much of the Democratic Party,” Crank later when explaining the supposed need for his red-baiting resolution.

“Freedom-loving citizens across the country know socialism is the first step to communism, and every communist regime has brought only oppression, murder, and starvation,” said Crank, whose political party is literally trying to starve people in Cuba.

Crank justified attaching the SAVE Act to the resolution because DSA wants, he charged to “allow noncitizens and incarcerated criminals to vote in American elections.”

Most Democrats refused to play along with the trap. Instead, they pointed out the GOP was spending its floor time on a non-binding messaging exercise rather than tackling the affordability crisis and blasted the resolution’s built-in endorsement of the GOP’s voter-suppression SAVE Act, which the House had approved on a party-line vote earlier this year.

A handful of centrist Democrats tried a different tack, attempting to find a way to still join in on attacking socialism while not signing up for the assault on voting rights. The day before the floor vote, Reps. Josh Gottheimer of New Jersey, Hillary Scholten of Michigan, Jared Moskowitz of Florida, and Tom Suozzi of New York introduced their own resolution condemning the DSA, stripped of Crank’s SAVE Act language, which Gottheimer called a “poison pill.”

The Republican-controlled House Rules Committee blocked the Democrats’ amendment from getting a vote, sending Crank’s

original combined resolution to the floor intact.

Other Democrats chose to challenge the resolution head-on. Rep. Brad Schneider, D-Ill., dismissed the GOP’s framing outright: “They can put lipstick on a pig, it’s still their voter suppression bill.” Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., a member of the Painters union, labelled the resolution “stupid.” Rep. Tlaib declared, “I say as a member of DSA: Tax the rich.”

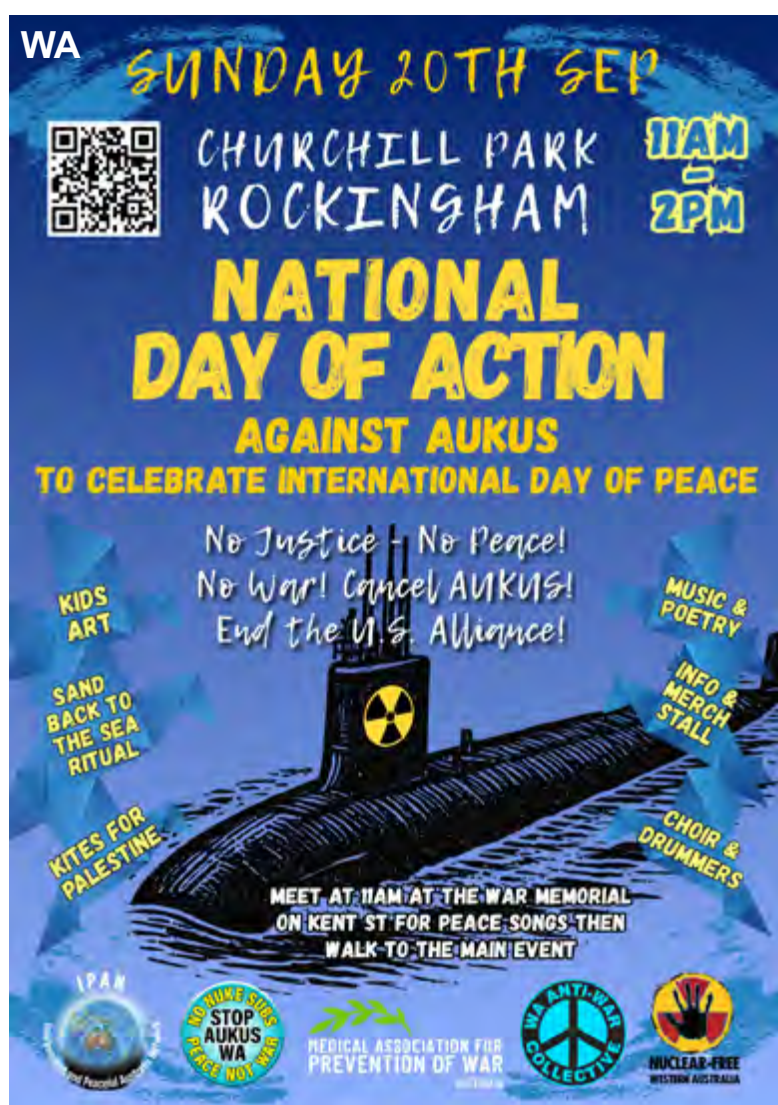
Rep. Delia Ramirez, D-Ill., had some of the most-pointed criticism.

“As long as they and their bosses profit from the policies of racism, colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, white supremacy, and patriarchy, they don’t care if you are sick, starving, deported, detained, or even dead,” she said of the Republican Party and MAGA.

Observers outside of Congress also saw the resolution for what it was. “This is red meat for the GOP base,” said Joe Sims, co-chair of the Communist Party USA. “They’re trying to motivate their base to turn out in November. But try as they might, the US people aren’t buying their red-baiting.” Sims also had a warning for the Republicans behind the maneuver. “Watch out MAGA, we’ll remember in November. Your time is coming.”

People’s World (edited for space) ✨

try as they might the US people aren’t buying their red baiting



West Bank: UN warns of forcible displacement refugee camps

Israeli security forces forcibly displaced the entire population of three Palestine refugee camps in the occupied West Bank in January and February last year – and continue to prevent their return, in violation of international law, according to a new report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The report said military, police and other forces deployed during Israel’s Operation Iron Wall offensive killed civilians, destroyed hundreds of homes, damaged roads and other infrastructure, cut off water and electricity, and blocked humanitarian access to the Jenin, Nur Shams and Tulkarem refugee camps.

Israeli forces went door to door ordering residents to leave.

Some displaced Palestinians told OHCHR that Israeli officers said there would be no more refugee camps and that they should “all go to Jordan.”

WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION

By October 2025, 52 per cent of structures in Jenin refugee camp, 48 per cent in Nur Shams and 36 per cent in Tulkarem had been destroyed or damaged.

The report said the large-scale, long-term and systematic displacement of over 33,000 Palestinians from the camps during the operation raises serious concerns of the crime against humanity of forcible transfer.

Israeli forces used airstrikes, armoured bulldozers, and controlled detonations to render entire camps

uninhabitable in the absence of imperative military necessity – actions it said also raise concerns of collective punishment and ethnic cleansing.

Some 102 Palestinians, including 21 children, were killed during the period covered by the report – 46 per cent of all killings by Israeli forces in the West Bank over that period.

Among them were Sondos Shalabi, who was eight months pregnant and was shot dead as she tried to drive away from Nur Shams camp, and ten-year-old Saddam Hussein Rajab, who was shot in the stomach in Tulkarem as he waited for his father to walk to the mosque with him.

UN human rights chief Volker Türk said the way the operation was conducted suggested its aim was to expel as many Palestinians as possible and make way for more illegal Israeli settlements.

He called on Israel to end what he described as its 59-year occupation of Palestinian territory and to comply with the International Court of Justice’s finding, more than two years ago, that it must end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible.

On 23 February 2025, Israel’s Defence Minister ordered the military to remain in the three camps and said displaced Palestinians would not be allowed to return.

The UN’s Palestine refugee relief agency, UNRWA, says around 33,362 people remain displaced as of July this year.

United Nations ✨

UAE ruler confronted over Sudan

Peter Farmer

A video posted online on 6 September shows the United Arab Emirates Prime Minister being confronted over his country's role in the war in Sudan.

Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum and his entourage were shopping in the affluent Mayfair area of central London, when a Sudanese man was recorded shouting at them.

The man was recorded shouting "Emiratis and UAE, they're killing Sudanese people," and "UAE is killing people in my country. Stop killing my people."

One man, who appears to be Emirati and part of Maktoum's entourage, then racially abused the Sudanese man, calling him a "Black bitch" and other terms.

London's Met Police released a statement saying that "We are aware of a video circulating online appearing to show an individual shouting a racial slur. Officers will review the footage to assess whether any offences have been committed."

According to *Middle Eastern Eye* there is now widespread evidence supporting the claim that the

UAE supports Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which have been accused by the UN and US of committing genocide during the war in Sudan. The United Arab Emirates continues to deny its involvement.

United Nations experts, human rights groups and reporting from *Middle East Eye* has documented arms transfers to the RSF facilitated by networks based in Libya, Chad and the breakaway region of Somaliland.

Western nations including the UK have been accused of failing to publicly oppose Emirati involvement in the Sudan war, which began in April 2023 and has led to a colossal ongoing humanitarian catastrophe.

RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, owns property in Dubai through a network of shell companies. Figures close to the Emirati leadership and analysts sympathetic to the UAE have recently seemed to tacitly acknowledge the support provided over many years to the RSF and its leader.

A former adviser to the Emirati leader, Hussain Abdul-Hussain, has admitted the UAE's involvement while defensively accusing Turkey, Egypt, Uganda, Ethiopia and Chad of "intervention in Sudan." ★

Venezuelans slam US oil deal

For months, Venezuelans had braced for consequences following the United States' abduction of President Nicolas Maduro in January.

Those consequences came when the US President announced Washington had secured majority control over a large portion of Venezuela's oil reserves.

Little has changed domestically since Maduro was kidnapped. His successor, interim President Delcy Rodriguez, remains in office, while poverty and blackouts persist, and no election has been scheduled.

Venezuela's oil reserves, among the largest in the world, were nationalised under the leadership of Hugo Chavez, for whom state control of petroleum was a defining principle. Rodriguez's move to cede much of that control to Washington represents a sharp break from that legacy.

Opposition to the agreement has emerged from nearly every corner of Venezuela's fractured political landscape.

Exiled economist Ricardo Hausmann argues that "an illegitimate

interim government with an illegitimate hydrocarbons law has no legitimacy to strike this unconstitutional deal," warning it "will be a fiasco for all involved." Fellow economist Francisco Rodriguez called on the National Assembly to reject what he stressed is a "predatory deal" that hands over the country's oil wealth "at gunpoint."

The New York Times also spoke with Carlos Arenas, a 24-year-old university student in Caracas, who said he could accept some loss of control over the country's oil if it meaningfully improved living standards, but that this did not appear to be the outcome. "Unfortunately, it doesn't look like there will be a political change in Venezuela anytime soon," he told the paper, adding that Trump "seems very comfortable with Delcy."

Acting President Delcy Rodriguez has described the arrangement as a 25-year bilateral energy framework covering 17 strategic oilfields, aimed at lifting production above 1.5 million barrels a day, with eight additional greenfield blocks to follow. Current output sits at

roughly 1.25 million barrels daily, well below capacity, a shortfall attributed to years of sanctions-induced underinvestment and ageing infrastructure.

However, Trump has said Washington obtained majority control of more than 65 billion barrels of Venezuela's proven reserves, about a fifth of the country's total nearly matching total US reserves, through a partnership with a private operator.

Analysts describe it as a joint venture granting Washington 55 percent of output through a mix of equity and guaranteed at-cost crude access, with the private-side operator reportedly linked to Venezuelan businessman Alejandro Betancourt Lopez, though this affiliation has not been officially confirmed.

Accounts of the deal's duration also diverge. Rodriguez has called it a 25-year lease, while separate reporting attributed to US officials places the concession at 100 years, a gap Caracas has not addressed publicly.

Al Mayadeen ★



Global Briefs

KENYA: One of India's major chemical company, Tata Chemicals, has been ordered to leave Kenya after Harare accused it of failing to generate enough benefits for the country. President William Ruto told the company to "pack up and leave," saying it had been exporting soda and ash instead of processing the mineral locally to make glass and chemicals.

SOUTH KOREA: South Korea is considering a possible military deployment in the Strait of Hormuz after weeks of pressure from US President Donald Trump. South Korea seems to want a limited support mission rather than direct participation in an attack on Iran, thus trying to please the US and avoid a serious confrontation.

NIGER: Niger has blamed France for inciting an attack on a key military airbase by mutinous soldiers. Clashes at the airbase in the capital erupted during an attempted mutiny against the government that has ruled Niger since 2023. "The operation, with its international ramifications, was instigated and sustained by a vast network of collusion headed by the French regime of Mr Macron," said the government spokesperson. "Treacherous and renegade elements, to whom promises of great things were made, were tasked with carrying out unfulfilled ambitions of Macron and his cronies in our country," he said, claiming that such undermining manoeuvres will always fail. France was Niger's former colonial power. Relations between the two countries have deteriorated over Niger's seizure of uranium assets from French nuclear firm Orano. France has denied its participation in the mutiny.

JAPAN: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has urged Russia to remove a newly erected monument dedicated to the Soviet victory over militarist Japan and the end of WW2 in the Russian city of Khabarovsk. The monument depicts a Russian soldier smashing a Japanese border marker bearing the imperial chrysanthemum crest with the butt of his rifle. The monument's border marker was modelled on one erected by imperial Japan on the island of Sakhalin in response to the demand Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that "if Tokyo treats Japanese history with contempt, this affliction should not be allowed to spread to others."

RUSSIA: Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have opened the first road bridge across their shared border. The kilometre-long bridge spans the Tumen River and is named after Soviet officer Yakov Novichenko who was credited with saving Kim Il-sung, the country's founding leader, from an assassination attempt by a pro-South Korean group. Russian Prime Minister Mishustin said that "The expansion of cross-border transport infrastructure will provide a powerful impetus for the future development of trade, economic, scientific, technological, and cultural cooperation."

JAMAICA: Jamaica is about to petition King Charles III for a legal assessment of Britain's responsibility for slavery and whether it owes reparations for its enduring consequences. A Jamaican delegation is in London to present their petition and this initiative represents a significant step in Jamaica's long-running push to establish whether Britain bears a legal responsibility to compensate the Caribbean nation for centuries of enslavement and the structural inequalities that followed.

US: US President Trump keeps on playing with geographic names. This time he decided to rename the state of New Mexico as New America. "Many people suggested changing the name of New Mexico, one of the great vote cheating states of all time, to New America. So much more prestigious and beautiful for the people of that potentially incredible state," he wrote. As one commentator pointed out – "Every other day he is renaming things to distract from the fact that his presidency has done nothing except make himself richer, the people poorer, and the country worse off."



Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

4:15pm till 5:00pm
Thursday 17 September

USA Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney

Call 0418 270 885

Amazon's 'legal setback'

On 4 August, the British Columbia Labour Relations Board issued a decision ordering Amazon Canada Fulfillment Services and Unifor Local 114 to determine their first collective agreement through binding arbitration.

This decision was made after numerous legal disputes throughout the certification and negotiation process. An independent mediator determined that Amazon procedurally delayed negotiations and created an artificial impasse during their first-contract negotiations with Unifor Local 114.

The Board certified the union to represent approximately 800 workers at the Amazon YVR2 warehouse in Delta, BC on 10 July 2025. The YVR2 Fulfillment Centre is the only certified unionised Amazon location in Canada, achieving this historic outcome after a lengthy and contentious organising campaign resulting in an order for remedial certification.

The parties have yet to negotiate their first collective agreement on the heels of a certification drive marked by Amazon's misconduct.

In 2025 the Board found that Amazon engaged in a "lengthy and pervasive

anti-union campaign" during the organising campaign and certification drive. Amazon deployed a "specialised field team which increased managerial presence and who conducted one-on-one meetings," displayed anti-union messaging, and engaged in other improper actions and violations of the provincial labour code.

Most severely, the Board reviewed evidence that Amazon's "list padding" sought to artificially inflate the number of employees in the bargaining unit and undermine the union's organising drive.

In another earlier decision, the Board determined that Amazon violated the statutory freeze provisions of the labour code by not performing a wage review for bargaining unit members at YVR2 and applying it across all sites of its business. The Board ordered Amazon to provide the union members with pay increases arising from their typical wage review process.

It was in the throes of this frustrated litigious history that Unifor served notice to bargain the first collective agreement in October 2025. Negotiations ran up to February 2026, when a mediator was appointed and joined the bargaining sessions until March 2026. Mediation broke down on

7 May when "the mediator advised the parties that he could not issue recommendations to conclude a first collective agreement that he believed would likely be accepted by both parties."

The Board's 4 August decision outlines the proposals in dispute when the parties reached impasse:

First, Amazon sought to introduce a union security proposal reminiscent of US-style right-to-work legislation. Amazon wanted union membership to be voluntary instead of a condition of employment, which any union in Canada would wholly and reasonably reject.

This "open shop" clause was described by the Board as "a clause exceedingly few unions in the province would be willing to accept, and it is credible that the union, in the context of this dispute and in light of Amazon's past conduct, has perceived it as inflammatory and designed to further undermine its reputation with the bargaining unit."

Second, Amazon proposed productivity and attendance management proposals that would maintain the "status quo" on all policies across the unionised warehouse and other distribution centres. Effectively, Amazon sought to restrict the right of the union to

challenge the reasonableness of current and future policies. As the mediator put it, these proposals were "over and above what would typically be contained in a management rights clause."

Finally, while seeking the "status quo" in policy applications, Amazon stated that it would not agree to a proposal by the union for wage rates and a me-too clause on wage increases other warehouses and distribution centres receive. The 4 August decision identified that the mediator found "on the one hand the employer wants the union to agree to provisions that are driven by what occurs in other centres; but on the other hand, it is not prepared to take the same approach with wage rates."

Unifor called the decision "another legal setback" for Amazon's anti-union conduct.

Unifor Western Regional Director Gavin McGarrigle said "Amazon's behaviour has been so bad because it knows what we know: unions build worker power. Amazon sees unions as an existential threat to ruthless and unsustainable workplace management."

People's Voice ✖

New US sanctions on Cuba slammed as 'collective punishment'

Havana has slammed new US sanctions against Cuba as "collective punishment."

The fresh sanctions against Cuba targeted the country's Oil Industry Supply Import Company, known as Abapet, along with former president Raul Castro's grandson Fidel Ernesto Castro.

Abapet is responsible for importing special equipment and spare parts needed to sustain Cuba's crumbling power grid.

Brett Erickson, a sanctions expert and managing principal at consulting firm Obsidian Risk Advisors said, "The Trump administration seems to have no seriousness to accept any change from Cuba other than a toppling of the regime."

Erickson anticipated that Cuba's government would try to circumvent the sanctions "because they have to."

"They'll get creative in how they try to procure these maintenance parts," he said, warning it would be a costlier alternative, which in turn would raise inflation and further hurt Cuba's economy.

Erickson added that he expects the US to keep

targeting smaller and smaller state companies to try and push them "into a death spiral."

The US State Department made the announcement just hours after Cuban officials held a press conference to share more details on the historic economic reforms approved in June.

Cuba's Foreign Affairs Minister Bruno Rodriguez took to social media to slam the latest sanctions.

He said, "Collective punishment is a crime. So, too, is inflicting suffering on an entire population through measures coldly calculated to trigger a humanitarian crisis."

"Enough with the abuse. Put an end to the blockade once and for all and allow Cuba to live in peace."

Eugenio Martinez Enriquez, Cuba's ambassador in Mexico, called Secretary Rubio "a liar without scruples."

"We will not forget his crimes," he wrote on social media.

Meanwhile, Secretary Rubio asserted on social media that he and President Trump "are unwavering in our commitment that Cuba will be free."

Morning Star ✖



Boorloo (Perth) rally against the criminal blockade on Cuba, 2001.

'We will never give up': Chinese spokesperson on Gyirong disaster

726 personnel, 24 engineering vehicles, 60 sets of specialised equipment, as well as more than 20 helicopter and drone sorties.

As of 3 September, that's what the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) had deployed to support rescue and relief operations following a mudslide disaster in Gyirong County in Southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region, according to Jiang Bin, a Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson.

The troops have carried out personnel search and rescue, road clearance, transportation and

delivery, as well as medical and epidemic-prevention work, Jiang said when responding to a question on the military's participation in the disaster relief efforts.

They have cleared more than 13,900 cubic metres of mudslide debris, airlifted 77 rescuers and 1.23 tons of equipment and supplies to the core disaster-hit area, and provided medical services to more than 900 local residents and rescue personnel, Jiang said.

The mudslide from Nepal recently struck Gyirong County, causing major casualties and leaving people missing. Following the

disaster, the PLA and the People's Armed Police Force immediately activated emergency response mechanisms and made all-out efforts to support local rescue and relief operations, according to Jiang.

Jiang said the armed forces remain on the front line of the rescue operation, racing against time to search for those still missing and minimise casualties to the greatest extent possible.

"As long as there is a glimmer of hope, we will never give up," Jiang said.

Global Times ✖



www.cpa.org.au

Israel trained Kurdish fighters to attack Iran

Israeli occupation authorities trained thousands of Kurdish fighters as part of a plan aimed at overthrowing the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, before Washington instructed Tel Aviv not to proceed with the operation, Israeli Channel 13 has reported.

According to the Israeli broadcaster, the plan formed part of a broader initiative known as “Project Garden,” which it described as a costly global influence operation established after 7 October and managed from outside the headquarters of the Mossad.

Channel 13 said the Israeli occupation had prepared a plan to destabilise and ultimately topple the Iranian government through a ground intervention involving Kurdish fighters.

“As part of the preparations, thousands of Kurdish fighters arrived in Israel, where they were trained for operational scenarios,” the report said.

However, the operation was reportedly halted shortly after the outbreak of the latest war against Iran.

Channel 13 revealed that “three days after the start of the latest war against Iran, a message came from the United States saying: ‘Do not implement the plan.’”

US BACKING FOR SEPARATISTS

The report comes amid repeated statements by US President Donald Trump concerning US support for Kurdish and other separatist groups operating along Iran’s borders, including references to providing them with weapons.

Iran has long accused foreign powers, particularly the United States and “Israel,” of supporting separatist and armed groups seeking to destabilise the country from its border regions.

Against this backdrop, the Iranian Armed Forces carried out preemptive operations targeting Kurdish separatist groups that Tehran said were preparing to launch a ground offensive against the Islamic Republic.

Al Mayadeen 🇺🇸

‘Spy tractor’ worries ‘unfounded and illogical’

A UK group, Coalition on Secure Technology (CST) has been claiming that “China could use tractors and other internet-linked agricultural machinery to spy on British farmers.” Chinese experts have rejected the allegations as baseless.

The remarks came after British media outlet *The Telegraph* reported that the CST, led by Graeme Downie, a British Labour MP, claimed that Chinese chips were now commonplace in farm machinery, including GPS-guided tractors, agricultural drones, and automated irrigation systems.

“By hacking into agricultural equipment, groups linked to China could spy on the output of British

farms and gain intelligence about UK food security,” the report claimed.

Jian Junbo, director of the Centre for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University’s Institute of International Studies, told the *Global Times* that the CST’s groundless accusation of “spy” over tractors reflects a lack of confidence on the part of certain British politicians.

“Anything they do not understand – or anything whose technology has outpaced their own – is automatically met with suspicion and construed in the worst possible light,” Jian said.

Most modern internet-enabled devices use cellular internet-of-things modules (CIMs), around 70 per cent of which are

manufactured in China, according to *The Telegraph*.

“The CST’s accusation is entirely unfounded and illogical. Its report cites not a single case, not one identified device and not one piece of data – its central claims rest entirely on the conditional ‘could’ and ‘if,’” Zhang Jian, a vice president of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, told the *Global Times*.

Certainly a look at the CST website shows Downie complaining about Chinese made CIMs in the British parliament without explaining how or why China would want to spy on British farmers.

Global Times 🇺🇸



Agnostic (technology)

Agnostic literally means you don’t know something. In a religious context, an agnostic person either isn’t sure if there’s a god or believes that it’s not possible to know. Of course you can be agnostic about other things. Most of us are agnostic about the result of this year’s AFL grand final.

For weaselly purposes, using ‘agnostic’ implies that you’re an intelligent person who is impartial. It’s a useful word for people who hate renewable energy, like fossil fuels, and want (or pretend to want) nuclear energy for Australia. If they just said “we don’t know what sort of energy we need,” they sound clueless. If they say “we’re agnostic about energy sources,” it sounds like they’re deep and thoughtful on the topic.

Reset

Everyone knows the ‘turn it off and turn it on again’ trick with computers and other machines. It often works. Resetting something sounds active and effective.

New Victorian Premier Ben Carroll has said he wants a reset in Labor’s relationship with the business lobby. With a bonus weasel word, he said he was open to “common sense” amendments to any legislation business might not like.

Alas for Carroll, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s idea of a ‘reset’ is ‘do what we want now.’ Chief Executive Sally Curtain has complained because Carroll decided to go ahead with WFH legislation that has some good features for workers (see *Guardian* #2201 ‘Work-from-home worth legislating?’).

Curtain also complained that Carroll’s ‘do the occasional good thing for workers’ policies are turning Victoria into an “island,” which will make driving to Sydney difficult.

Progress (real)

This term is one of many that sound like positive action, but are weaselly because hard to pin down. Progress towards what? Real in what way?

Poor Richard Marles. All our Defence Minister wants to do is whatever the US desires, but the US keeps changing its mind. First AUKUS was nuclear-powered submarines, then it was second-hand ones, now it’s “morphing into an arrangement where the US has a base in Australia, as opposed to Australia having its own capabilities,” as Laura Tingle says.

Each time it changes, Marles has to contort himself to pretend that everything is proceeding as planned.

That’s why he’s saying Australia is making “real progress in relation to AUKUS.” Australia has given the UK and the US billions of dollars we’ll never get back, and we’ve agreed to become an even bigger military base for a foreign country. It’s motion alright, but not what most people would call “progress.”

Dealing with

Minister for Resources Madeleine King has never met a unit of carbon she didn’t want to put in the atmosphere, especially if it makes a large Labor Party donor happy. King was recently photographed smiling like a happy clam in a hard hat, turning the tap of one of the largest fossil fuel reservoirs on earth.

Some spoilsport asked about criticisms she was backing a “carbon bomb.” King’s answer was a word salad, but included the claim that Labor is “dealing with climate change.”

Strictly speaking, this is true. Labor is dealing with climate change by taking credit for rooftop solar, encouraging renewables, and by okaying absolutely every new fossil fuel project that comes their way. It’s a bit like dealing with driving by pressing hard on the accelerator and lightly on the brake.

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CPA submission to the AUKUS Public Inquiry – Part One

The Communist Party of Australia welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the AUKUS Public Inquiry.

The Communist Party of Australia is a voluntary union of people who support and actively work for the interests of the working class in Australia. We are concerned that public interest, workers' rights, and environmental sustainability are being ignored by government. The Communist Party of Australia has worked diligently to have the AUKUS agreement torn up since its inception on 15 September 2021.

The AUKUS pact takes Australia into a more binding arrangement to be a vassal of the US and to a lesser degree tightens the old colonial arrangement with the UK. This is counter to the growth of Australia as an independent country which looks after its people and reaches out positively to its neighbours in the region.

We should be aware that our geography as a country on an island diminishes the risks of invasion because supplying an invasion force from overseas is extremely difficult.

INTRODUCTION

Some years ago, the US put out two key documents about its position in the world, one called 'Joint Vision 2020' and the second 'Project for a new American Century.' The Joint Vision document introduced the term 'full spectrum dominance' which basically stated that the US will dominate underwater, on surface water, land, air, and space domains. This document was a product of the US Defence Department. The 'Project' document was laid out by a very influential think tank made up of conservatives who later became known as 'neocons.'

The neocons are still very important in Washington and they are regarded as the faction that wants to use the US military to establish and maintain the US empire. The plans for the domination by the US of countries by military force if necessary has been the force that has fostered 'the forever wars' that have been our curse since 2000. These documents spelled out the bellicose and hegemonic

activities that the US intended to carry out.

China has just released (June 2026) a document called 'More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions' which contrast markedly with the above US documents. China has put forward proposals to strengthen the UN and for all to follow International Law. This 37-page document is a statement of China's role in the world at present.

In one small section called 'The law of the jungle seriously undermines the International rule of law' the document states that "unilateralism and hegemonism cause only grave harm, openly trampling upon international law and the basic norms governing international relations." China has laid out its position which is in striking comparison to the US's approach.

We can list the recent actions of the US that stand at variance with its frequent retreat to the 'international rules-based order' which it applies when it suits and ignores when convenient. The US has destroyed international law and seldom pays any attention to it. This is the entity to which we are pledging our allegiance to for nuclear powered submarines, and as part of the process we are handing over our country as a base for nuclear armed and powered submarines in US and UK interests.

We in our turn argue that Australia should have the same foreign policy towards China and the US namely 'work with where we can, disagree with if we must.'

In our brief we have organised our submission in the following ways:

1. Cost, Jobs & Fiscal Impact and where our security really comes from
2. AUKUS and the submarine weapon in our geographical region
3. Warfare changes – Iran vs Israel/USA
4. Environment and Nuclear
5. AUKUS's impact on our lives

1. Cost, Jobs & Fiscal Impact and where our security really comes from. Australia and Australians need security. Where does security within a society come from? If

Australia has a society that houses people, that values the work they do, gives them secure well-paying jobs, has families whose medical and educational needs are covered – that is where security comes from. The notion that security comes from bigger and better weapons is false.

Militarisation especially around AUKUS pillars 1 and 2 distorts our national priorities and contrary to stated objectives fuels global instability, undermines international law, harms the environment, and diverts investment from public services and social infrastructure.

Scrapping AUKUS could be used for a reallocation of resources towards building resilience and security in ways that genuinely protect people's lives.

Security measured in meaningful ways through access to health-care, education, climate justice, and economic stability is a superior indicator of a government's interest in safeguarding the wellbeing of citizens than the capacity to inflict mass destruction.

Today we are faced by other more pressing existential threats that can't be counteracted by weaponry. Climate change tipping points are being passed at a rapid rate, pandemics, cyber threats, and growing economic inequality are all defining challenges of the 21st century.

Redirecting military spending towards tackling these crises can only strengthen our security.

AUKUS is being sold to the people as a jobs program, but only an estimated 20,000 jobs over three decades will be created, and when broken down each job is estimated to cost around \$18 million.

The bulk of the jobs created will be largely locked into highly specialised defence supply chains.

Modelling of the employment impacts of government spending in the US and continental Europe indicates that public spending on solar, wind, environmental protection, and education create more jobs than military contracts. Military expenditure is economically inefficient, environmentally destructive, and socially regressive, offering limited job creation while stifling a more sustainable and just



Stop AUKUS-WA protest August, 2022.

economy. The job creation needed is well-paid, secure, unionised and socially useful jobs.

Richard Marles repeatedly delivers the very false narrative that someone may attack "our sea lanes," using it as justification for purchasing nuclear powered submarines. We need to redefine what is the threat and if it can be addressed by increasing military spending.

If we stand back and take that apart: over recent decades Australia's major trading fleet has shrunk to around 15 major commercial vessels operating nationally and internationally. The trade in goods to and from Australia relies on maritime transport, yet only around 1% of that trade is delivered by local Australian flagged and crewed ships. This lack of a substantial sovereign merchant fleet creates significant vulnerability in our supply chain and poses a greater threat during natural disasters such as the shortages experienced in pharmaceuticals during COVID, during regional conflicts or global shipping disruptions. Much needs to be done and money needs to be spent to ensure there is local manufacturing of essentials.

If the Australian government is really interested in our security, building an Australian controlled fleet, upgraded commercial ports and restored coastal shipping would strengthen national resilience far more than buying nuclear

submarines whose main role is to plug Australia deeper into other people's wars. Investment is needed in public services, port infrastructure, manufacturing and clean energy. Instead, the government is in the process of siphoning off resources owned in common by the people that are needed in health, welfare, housing, and education.

Our government is in the process of cutting NDIS, Age Care, and tertiary education and at the same time paying lip service to the lack of housing with inadequate solutions that cannot address the problems.

Faced with many intractable problems the massive diversion of resources towards submarines makes Australians very insecure and the backlash is being seen against mainstream parties and politics. Scrapping AUKUS and redirecting AUKUS monies could create tens of thousands of unionised jobs across the country in work that actually meets social needs. The billions devoted to 'Australia's defence' is in fact being diverted to US defence.

In the 21st century as we fast surpass tipping points the greatest cooperation will be needed to address climate catastrophe scenarios. We must progress toward a strategy rooted in human security and common security.

This will not be possible through militarisation of which AUKUS is a part, and instead requires diplomacy. ✱

A society that houses people, that values the work they do – that is where security comes from



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