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**AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF  
PARLIAMENT GROUP  
(Queensland Chapter)**

**FEDERAL ELECTION WRAP-UP**

**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**MONDAY, 15 AUGUST 2022**

**Brisbane**

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**Ms McCLUSKEY:** It is my very great pleasure to welcome you all tonight—a warm welcome on a cool evening. Thank you so much for making the time to come out to join us this evening. My name is Diana McCluskey. I am currently the chair of the ASPG, Queensland Chapter. It gives me great pleasure to see people here tonight. This is my first in-person event for a long time in this chamber, so it is wonderful to welcome you all here and I mean that most sincerely.

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal people, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to elders past and present. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose lands, winds and waters we all share.

First, there are some housekeeping points I would like to raise. If you have a mobile phone, would you please put that on silent so that we do not have any interruptions to tonight's proceedings. In the event of an emergency, which clearly we do not want to have but if we do, please follow the attendants and they will direct you as to where to go. If you require the restrooms, they are out the back door on the left-hand side.

My first great pleasure of the evening is to welcome our Deputy Speaker, Joe Kelly, to make some opening remarks to our event this evening. I will hand over to you. Thank you.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly):** Thank you very much for that lovely welcome. I would like to also add my acknowledgement to the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting tonight and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

On behalf of the Speaker, the Hon. Curtis Pitt, I would like to welcome you all to the Queensland parliament. As a close relative of the Pitts of this parliament and a very distant relative of those other Pitts of that other parliament from which this parliament is derived, the Speaker is a great supporter of this group and has a keen interest in parliamentary history, practice and the interplay between parliament, society and government at large.

The ASPG Queensland Chapter has always provided a great forum for the Queensland parliamentary community to discuss political developments. Thank you very much for organising this event tonight. Tonight's topic continues this offering with a panel discussion on the campaigns of the respective political parties at the 2022 federal election. That was a contest like no other in Australian political history. Since the formation of the two-party system in 1910, it was the election that was most impacted by minor parties and Independents that were not direct splits from existing major parties, although perhaps there is some debate to be had around that.

In preparing this welcome, I reflected on an excellent book I read recently—*The Enigmatic Mr Deakin* by Judith Brett. Deakin spanned a period of great change in parliamentary practice in colonial and post-colonial society. An immense intellect and an orator unparalleled, he was a man driven by deep values. His period in various parliaments spanned a time when parliaments moved from a period of being characterised by a very diverse membership with constant changes of alliances and changes of governments to one dominated by two major parties. Was this a reflection on how society had changed? Perhaps instead of the elites arguing amongst themselves, there were now new voices demanding a spot at the table and a society that divided pretty neatly into a couple of major groupings that represented those voices.

The post-Deakin world continued through to the beginnings of my political awareness and involvement. My tribe was very easy to find and essentially I was born into it—large family, Catholic, Irish, working class, trade union active, community participants and sports lovers. My tribe did not need the internet to be found. For me, mostly I could roll over in bed and there were four or five of them sharing a room with me. What is the tribe of my children who navigate a very different world and they are developing a very different world view? Whatever their tribe is it will likely change over time and it will be connected virtually and globally.

Perhaps the changes we are seeing in our federal parliament are another fundamental shift based on a changing society, or perhaps they are simply a reflection of changing campaign techniques and tactics. When I started my interest in politics and until quite recently, everyone read the paper and everyone

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watched the evening news. Well, that just does not happen anymore—and not just because you are coming to these sorts of events. The parties that could dominate those main sources of information had a huge advantage, but the ground has shifted and has become a little more equal.

So is it a changing society or is it a change in campaigning techniques? Perhaps it is something completely different. I will leave that to the many fine speakers and experts we have involved here tonight to continue that debate, but I thank you for your interest in this important topic and I know we will all learn a lot from tonight. Welcome to the Queensland parliament and please enjoy your evening and your stay here.

**Ms McCLUSKEY:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That was a terrific introduction. I am certainly going to get that book and follow that up myself. My great pleasure now is to introduce our emcee for this evening. Tonight we have Dr Mary Crawford AM, who will lead our discussions. Before becoming the federal member for Forde from 1987 to 1996, Mary was a teacher for 20 years. After leaving politics, Mary gained a PhD from QUT in 2008 for work on 'Gender and the Australian Parliament'. Mary has long been an active member of the ASPG and many other organisations. It is my great pleasure to hand over to Mary Crawford.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** Thank you, Diana. Good evening, everyone. I, too, acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. We are just waiting for a couple of members of tonight's panel to come, but I think that is a COVID, traffic and changes as well. I am going to introduce our panel as we have here. We have here Professor Paul Williams, who is a journalist and an associate professor of political science at Griffith University at the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research. He is widely published in this area and many of you may have read him at various times.

As well, we have Kate Flanders, who is secretary of the Australian Labor Party. She is a lawyer, originally from Mackay. She has worked in hospitals and universities, particularly Griffith University.

We also have with us Madura McCormack, who is a journalist. She is the federal political reporter at the *Courier-Mail*. She comes to us via the *Northern Territory News*, the *Townsville Bulletin* and Mackay's *Daily Mercury*. She has a wide range too.

We are also expecting Elizabeth Watson-Brown, who is the new Greens MP for Ryan. You know her. She is a well-known architect and prior to being an MP she was an adjunct professor of architecture at the University of Queensland. We are possibly expecting Lincoln Folo, who is the state director of the Liberal National Party in Queensland. Between COVID, events, traffic and other things, as you know, the situation changes from time to time.

What we are going to do is ask each of our speakers to speak for two or three minutes on what they believed were the key issues of the federal election. As we know, this was a federal election like no other. We had fires, floods, pandemics. People were locked in, locked out, locked down. More than half of the people voted before election day. The pundits were sort of right but not quite really. Queensland voted differently from anything anybody had expected, so what's new! Without further ado, I call on Professor Paul Williams to start the evening, to tell us what he thinks were some of the key issues in this year's federal election and how it went.

**Dr WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Mary, and welcome, everyone, to this evening. Thanks for the courteous invite to come along and speak tonight. It seems like in one respect it is just a few moments since we had the election, but so much has occurred, hasn't it? It also seems like an eon and that the Albanese government has really hit the ground running and so much has occurred. Breaking news today: there are new revelations about cabinet government under the old government. This is a moveable feast. Everything I say could be redundant by the end of tonight.

I was asked to think about what is probably the most interesting or funny or notable thing about the campaign itself or the result. Really there are many things I could mention. Obviously people are going to talk about the huge Teal vote and the huge Green vote. That is key. I think that the Liberals—and many other commentators have not picked up on this yet in the sense that this election was probably more meaningful for the Liberals than a lot of Liberals suspect. It might be something that many a Liberal, from Peter Dutton down, is yet to really confront.

The 2022 election has done to the Liberal base what the 1996 election did to Labor's base under Keating. It has not broken the entire base, but it has fractured off a fairly important component of it. Labor has never really recovered from the Western Sydney, blue-collar, fluoro-collar, aspirational upper-lower class or lower-middle class move to the Liberals. Those blue-collar, non-union voters, such as self-employed tradies, came back to the Labor Party temporarily with the enthusiasm of Kevin Rudd, but

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they quickly left with Julia Gillard and have stayed with the coalition since—at least in Queensland regions they did. The vote hardly moved for the Labor Party in regional Queensland. As we know, the LNP held all its seats in regional Queensland. That is an ongoing problem for Labor. Labor is still facing that existential crisis, not so much as it was in 2019 because they are in office. Labor is saying, ‘Don’t panic. We’ve proven you can win an election with 32 per cent primary vote,’ but I think that is a bit of a false economy. I think there is a longer term problem with a major party that is attracting 32 per cent of the primary vote.

The point is that the Liberals—this is a Liberal problem, not a coalition problem or a Nationals problem—have suffered the same fate. They have lost an important element of their base with upper-middle class, educated, white-collar voters—what we call post-material voters who really do not have to worry about rising prices of petrol. They can absorb interest rate rises on their \$1 million or \$2 million mortgages, but they have lost faith with the Liberal Party on things like the treatment of women in the workplace, particularly parliament, on climate change, on the future of coal and so on. Those voters are not going to come back. In the same way that Labor has lost a generation or more of the aspirational blue-collar, fluoro-collar class, the Liberal Party has lost a generation or more of the upper-middle class.

It did not really affect Brisbane as much because the Greens pinched the Teal’s—there was not really a Teal movement in Queensland, but the Greens did the Teal’s job in Brisbane, and Labor did the Teal’s job in Perth, but that is temporary. The Teals will surge. We are going to see Teals in Brisbane at the next state election. We are going to see Teals in Perth. The Teals is the movement of the future. It may even eclipse the Greens. That is a problem for both Labor and the Liberal Party. I think it is a problem that the Liberals have not addressed. That is one element.

Another element, if I drill down more specifically to a point in the campaign where my ears pricked—and I felt it in my bones—was when there was a sea change in the way that the electorate was responding to both Albanese and Morrison. Albanese was responding to what effectively was a gotcha question—and I will talk more about gotcha questions later if I am given the opportunity. He was responding to the question: ‘Are you going to support a 5.1 per cent increase in the basic wage for Australia’s lowest paid?’ I think a lot of people expected him to prevaricate but he said, ‘Of course I do.’ Of course that opened up the gap between himself and the government when Prime Minister Morrison said, ‘We can’t support it because it will lead to a wages-prices spiral.’

To me, when I heard that and when a lot of working Australians heard that, they heard a Prime Minister who was not on the side of working Australia. They did not really hear the economic argument about wage-price spirals that we saw in the seventies and eighties. What they heard was a Prime Minister who did not support the lowest paid. I really think that was a much underestimated turning point for the campaign and really boxed the Prime Minister in to an ideological position, coupled with his already pretty poor personal approval rates from ‘I don’t hold a hose, mate,’ all the way on. I think that was a real turning point. I do not want to steal anyone else’s thunder, so I will leave my opening remarks there.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** Thank you, Paul. There will be plenty of time for questions after everybody has had their say. I would like to welcome Elizabeth Watson-Brown, the new Greens member for Ryan and an architect by profession. Madura McCormack is our next speaker. Would you like to come forward?

**Ms McCORMACK:** Hello, everyone. It is awesome to be here. If I keep looking at my phone, it is because I am of the generation where my entire life is on this thing and all my notes are on it as well. It is very on brand for the local member to be stuck on Coro Drive!

For context, my name is Madura McCormack. I am the federal political reporter at the *Courier-Mail*. The campaign was 42 days long and I spent 25 of those days on the road—most of it with the Albanese camp, including the week when Jason Clare was the star of the show. Anyway, I have feelings! I spent the last week of the campaign with Scott Morrison and his camp. Yes, I was there on the night that he conceded.

You know how everything old is new again and how we are watching movies that are reminiscent of movies of old—which is why *Top Gun: Maverick* is the undisputed best movie of the year. During the campaign you have a lot of time flying in the air. I was reading a book by Peter Hartcher called *To the Bitter End*. It is about the fall of John Howard and the rise of Kevin Rudd. I just wanted to read some excerpts to you because it was just wild to my brain. It reads—

The Liberals had essentially given up on trying to make the Howard Government seem attractive or appealing—their campaign was designed to fuel doubts about Labor. The Liberals wanted to frighten voters into opting for the apparent security of the status quo, into voting for ‘the devil you know rather than the devil you don’t’.

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With so much growth for so long, the economy was running at near-full capacity. The country was running out of everything from workers to wharf space. Fuelled by the imbalance of demand over supply, inflation was starting to break out of the Reserve Bank's limit of 2 to 3 per cent.

This is one of my favourite parts—

Nothing Howard did in that election year was judged on its merits. Every decision came across to the public as a desperate ploy for re-election. Because his motives were in question, his policies were disregarded. Because voters suspected the why of Howard's politics, they gave no credence to the what of his policies. In Howard's seat of Bennelong, Labor's Maxine McKew reported that 'everything he did was too late and was greeted with great cynicism—on water, on climate change, on Aboriginal constitutional recognition'. The three biggest issues in the electorate were Work Choices, climate change and education, according to McKew, 'plus the general cost-of-living question'. But overhanging everything was the fact that each of these issues was seen as a symptom of Howard's leadership. The election had become a referendum on Howard himself.

I think that says a lot. By the way, that election was six weeks long, and that was because he wanted to leave the election until the last possible moment, hoping that, given enough time, he could somehow recover the lead. As he put it afterwards—'he' being Howard—'Because we weren't travelling all that well, I wasn't in a hurry to go [to the polls].'

We talk about how this election was unprecedented but, if we look back at history, I think there were points in that 2007 election which are still relevant today. There are things that I read in that book that we are still talking about now—the referendum on the voice and also, very unfortunately, climate change. Hopefully the climate wars are over, but we were talking about that at the time. It is appalling, to be honest. That was one of my main takeaways from being on the plane, flying from point to point, but also from reading that book thinking, 'Wow, I feel like we are just repeating these topics all over again.'

As we delve deeper today into the questions, life on the road on the campaign trail is very unsexy. It involves waking up at ridiculous hours—at 5 am or 6 am—and arriving at a place at 7 pm or 8 pm and somebody just handing you a hotel key saying, 'You will not be checking out tomorrow,' or 'You will be checking out tomorrow,' and somebody saying, 'Wear warm clothes,' or 'Wear clothes for hot weather'—and you are like, 'We're going to Cairns'—straightaway you know it. Or you are on a seven-hour flight to Perth which is frankly the worst. If they want to leave, that is fine. That book was my main takeaway from that. I look forward to your questions.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** Our next speaker is Kate Flanders.

**Ms FLANDERS:** Thank you, Mary. It is a real honour to be invited to speak to you all tonight. Just because Madura mentioned Jason Clare, I will tell this funny story. I was not the state secretary of the Labor Party until after the federal election. The wonderful Julie-Ann Campbell did a magnificent job steering Labor, but I was working in the party office during the campaign.

One Saturday morning I happened to be in the office and the reception phone rang. It was that week when Albo had COVID. A lady called Beryl called and she said, 'I have called every Labor Party office in the country and you're the only one that has answered.' I said, 'Okay, how can I help you?' She said, 'I just wanted to tell you that that Jason Clare is very handsome and you should put him on TV more.' I said, 'Thank you for that feedback. I'll send that through to CHQ.' That was one of my hilarious moments working in the Labor Party office during that week.

Certainly from our perspective—and I am sure many people here have thought this—I think the wealth inequality issue was key. I think cost of living is something that came up wherever you went in Queensland and whoever you talked to. That is a significant issue, and I think it will be something that will continue to be a big challenge for us in Australia as we see that big gap between people. The job of good government is to try to address that and to make sure that wherever you live and whoever you are you have access to decent services. I know that is something that our Labor government wants to address.

Something else that came through as a very strong theme—and I think Paul and Madura are exactly right—is that women particularly were furious with Morrison and really angry about the Christian Porter allegations and about a whole number of things. That came through as a very strong theme. Whenever I was doorknocking or calling voters, the women wanted to tell you how angry they were and that they might have traditionally voted for the Liberal National Party but they were not voting for them this time because they were really cranky. I think there is something there about not taking women for granted and I think the LNP have a big job to do around that.

I think climate was clearly an issue in the election and continues to be, but I think we are certainly trying to really progress the genuine agenda we have on climate. I am really confused by the LNP's approach to the climate vote in this most recent sitting. I think it is exactly as Paul said: it is a fracturing of

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their base. I think there are a lot of people who traditionally in the inner city might have voted for the LNP but did not this election over climate. We do seem to have a shared understanding as Australians that we want to address the climate issue.

I had a lot of conversations about climate in the electorate of Flynn where a lot of ordinary blue-collar workers who worked in traditional heavy industries are excited about the new hydrogen future. They are excited about the work our state Labor government is doing in that area and are looking to those jobs. They know a lot about it and are just waiting for the opportunity to step into that industry. It is not that blue-collar workers are committed to those industries they have always worked in. They just want to know they have a good, secure job that pays well in the region that they have always lived in, and that is something that I think we all need to consider.

I think generally voters in Australia were looking for a big change because they were sick of the incompetence. I think we all understand during a massive crisis like COVID that a lot of incumbent governments benefited from that for having shown leadership or competence on a public health agenda, but the thing is that Scott Morrison had absolutely abandoned the field on the vaccination program, on being able to provide efficient and safe public services for people, and state governments had to step up in an extraordinary way. I think Labor's brand on health is a lot better generally than the LNP's and I think that is borne out in our state government's track record here in Queensland. Similarly with the aged-care crisis: people did want to see that addressed in a genuine way and they wanted someone who was going to sit down and talk to the aged-care workforce in a meaningful way and address it. Aged care did not come up as much with as many voters, particularly younger people for whom it might not yet be an issue, but I think the closer you get to having parents or people you love in the aged-care sector or using it yourself or if you work with workers who work in the aged-care sector the more it becomes something.

I think that we Queenslanders sometimes vote with all sorts of feelings. In Longman there was a seven per cent free marijuana vote with no campaign, it seemed, locally. Terry Young held on, but there was certainly a protest going on somewhere and I do not know if that was some high-vis tradies or if that was some young people or if that was some older people who were just saying, 'I can't vote Liberal this time. I'm cranky on Bribie Island. I'm just going to vote for the free marijuana party.' It is an extraordinary change in how that primary vote worked. I think that we Queenslanders do like to be convinced on a full story and we are clever and we understand the preferential voting system. The Deputy Speaker commented earlier about a seat like Brisbane, for example, where the vote is split three ways, and how is it that voters in Queensland are effectively going to get the person who they want or the next best person for them elected into that seat and that is going to be really interesting in the future and what does that mean for Australian parliaments or for Queensland parliaments.

We have had Bob Katter a long time as our lone, crocodile hunting member for Kennedy. I have met Bob a number of times and he always has great stories, but he has not been joined by other people from not Labor or not the LNP for a long time. It is going to be interesting in the next few years as we see where Queenslanders go. I think the competence demonstrated by the Albanese government will be a key factor in that and I think people will see what a great federal Labor government can do. I think that is really important in terms of our messaging as Labor but also what we all want to see achieved.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** Thank you. I would now like to welcome the new member for Ryan, Elizabeth Watson-Brown.

**Ms WATSON-BROWN:** Thanks so much, Mary, and I am so sorry I was late. We will have to do something about the traffic snarls in Brisbane. I am the spokesperson for transport, infrastructure and sustainable cities so I am going to have to take it on a board a bit. You did ask for a funny anecdote, and I have taken you at your word. This is a little anecdote at the expense of the *Courier-Mail*—not you, Madura—about an interesting thing that happened during the coverage of the 2022 election. I thought it was kind of amusing and bemusing, and maybe you can explain it later, Madura. Throughout the final month of the campaign for some reason the *Courier-Mail* ran a relentless anti-Teal campaign, which was interesting, on front pages and in endless op-eds via the Sky News brains trust, Kenny, Credlin and Bolt et cetera. We were warned repeatedly never to trust and never to vote for the Teal independents, which was a pretty interesting thing because there actually weren't any in Queensland. It reached saturation coverage.

I often use my 97-year-old mother-in-law as a bit of a cipher or an interpreter for these things. She has been a lifelong *Courier Mail* reader, very faithful. She timidly asked me just before the election, 'What exactly is a Teal?' I said, 'They don't actually exist in Queensland', but that was not influencing the paper's kind of reasonably hysterical coverage of that Teal threat. We in the Greens had been bracing ourselves

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for a bit of a savage belting from Des Houghton and Gleeson for a whole month, but it was only on Friday, 20 May, the last day of the campaign, that the penny finally seemed to drop at Bowen Hills that we were in the show and we belatedly received the expected last minute bollocking. The night of Saturday, 21 May was a lot of fun for us obviously. It was a pretty interesting time. I would like to thank the *Courier-Mail* for their role in our success to a degree, but I am happy to make up for that tonight. That was my little amusing or bemusing anecdote.

In terms of the campaign that we ran, and I think you are going to ask more detailed questions about it, there was definitely in the seat of Ryan an absolutely palpable appetite for change. You mentioned that there was a real desire to get rid of the Morrison government. We ran a very long campaign that was all about listening and understanding people and their needs. There was definitely a lot of traction for me being a woman. I think that made a lot of difference. There has not necessarily been a very big Labor vote in Ryan before so we were able to say to people, 'Well, if you really are interested in getting rid of the Morrison government—which did seem to be a very strong desire of people—the way to do it in Ryan is to vote Greens.' We offered a very comprehensive set of policies. The campaign was very long, and I will talk a bit more about the mechanics of it later, but we had the opportunity to cover every precinct in Ryan—and it is a bloody huge electorate I am here to tell you—and we made a point of going everywhere and really listening to people and the underpinning idea definitely was this strong appetite for change. People were feeling disenfranchised, abandoned. There was very much an anti-politics generally feeling out there, I felt. It was so interesting that then people were able to see us as an alternative to traditional politics. I think there has been a lot of disappointment around that over time. We were able to fill that void in Ryan and offer an alternative.

I think something has actually been cracked open this time. We know in the federal government that about a third of people voted for Labor, about a third voted for Liberal and about a third voted for the crossbench. It is a pretty interesting graphic representation when you are in the chamber, as I was just three weeks ago when I was sworn in, seeing quite a different complexion within that chamber and the obvious three-way balance that is there. I think it is a representation of the change in people's ideas about what they want from politics and the sort of representation they want and that is certainly something I am interested in continuing with.

As I said, the 47th Parliament does look very different. It has quite a different complexion. There are far more women. I am happy sitting with my three Greens colleagues in that section with a whole lot of mature and intelligent women around me—and Bob Katter in front of me—and some other pretty interesting independents. I have not sat in that place before, but I feel that the tenor of it has changed and I feel that the type of discussion and debate—we are yet to see really good debate—might actually be adjusted given the kind of different complexion of the parliament. It will be interesting to watch the next few years and see whether that does have a palpable influence on how we operate in parliament. Thank you.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** I am now going to ask each speaker to make a comment on what role the media had in the election campaign, how you responded to it, what you think it tried to do. We have heard a little bit about it, but what kind of positions do you think it played and so on/ Paul, would you like to start?

**Dr WILLIAMS:** Again I will keep my comments brief because I do not want to steal Madura's thunder. Ostensibly, superficially I do not think there were too many differences between 2022 and 2019 or previous elections, but if you drill down I think there were some critical ones. As I mentioned before, I think this was the election where the gotcha question came into its own. It almost became farcical, didn't it? It became a sport among some of the leading journalists. That obviously came home to roost in the first week of the campaign when Anthony Albanese could not answer the cash rate and unemployment rate questions which, again, I assumed at the time would have, like most things in a campaign, a 24-hour news cycle life and by the next day we would be talking about other things. No, we were talking about it for a good week. Maybe it was only his absence with COVID that cleared the air and brought a front bench forward, which I think in itself was very fortuitous for the campaign because voters love to see the team.

Again I do not want to get off track, but this was also part of Scott Morrison's problem. I think I wrote a column a few weeks ago that the Liberal Party allowed Scott Morrison to presidentialise the party, as we have seen with revelations today about cabinet governance. The Liberal Party is to blame as much as Scott Morrison in allowing him to take over the party. It worked in 2019. They ran a presidential campaign because Labor's counterpart, Bill Shorten, was unelectable. To presidentialise the campaign worked very much in Liberal's favour. My argument is if you put all your re-election eggs into the leadership basket and you drop the basket or the eggs go off you have got nothing to sell. That is the core problem: they had nothing to sell at this election except some old, stale eggs left over from 2019.

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Ostensibly, superficially there weren't too many differences, but the gotcha question did come into its own and I am super glad that Adam Bandt drew a line under it very quickly a few days later by saying, 'Google it, mate.' I think it was a very brave journalist who wanted to ask a silly gotcha question again. That does not mean there is no room for gotcha questions. Some gotcha questions need to be asked. I wear half a journalist hat and I wear half a political scientist hat—I am neither fish nor fowl—so I am very sympathetic to the gotcha question if it is properly asked, do not get me wrong, but there is such a thing as an asinine gotcha question as well.

Another point to make is that voters often complain—and political parties often complain—because political parties and their spin doctors assiduously try to build the agenda for journalists. Even though I am a small-time journalist part-time, my email box is bombarded with media releases all the time and I am sure, Madura, yours would be a thousand times bigger. I do not even have time to read them all. We are bombarded all the time. Everyone wants to build our internal agenda: you should be writing about this and you should write it this way and if you don't you are hopeless. If we don't do it we usually get an angry phone call the next day, 'Why didn't you run my story?' There is a disconnect. The parties and voters will often complain about the media for not connecting with what the voters want. Of course, what the voters want is a very malleable context, isn't it, because 17 million people cast a vote so there are 17 million things that people want in this country. There was a really interesting *Guardian* poll that came out in the last week of the campaign which is the first I have ever seen of this type of poll where they not only worked out voters' salience—salience is the cognitive relevance that voters assign to certain issues, a hierarchical ranking in their mind—but they also correlated it to the number of media mentions of each issue. It was a really interesting set of statistics they came up with. The media got the first one right. It is very pleasing. In that sense the media is doing the job.

As you can guess, the No. 1 issue was cost of living. We might look at the rise of the Teals and say, 'Surely it was climate change.' It was in eastern northern Sydney. It was in inner Melbourne. It was in inner Brisbane, but when you water that down with regional Australia climate change went from No. 1 to No. 4. So the No. 1 issue among voters, according to the *Guardian* poll, was cost of living and the issue that was reported the most in Australian news media during the campaign was cost of living. However, they did not get No. 2 right. Does anyone want to have a venture as to what No. 2 might be? Aged care was No. 2, which I think would surprise a lot of people, but, again, as Kate said, it is just not old people who care about aged care; it is middle-aged people who have elderly parents. An aged-care problem is a community problem, not an elderly problem. That was No. 2 and yet it ranked 14th in media priorities. It was the 14th most reported, so that was fairly disparate. Interestingly, the coalition tried to make this about foreign policy as well. Voters ranked that No. 8. Again, I do not want to steal what Madura and Kate have to say, suffice to say that it is a bit of a mixed bag. The gotcha question was very lamentable, and I think we will not see that again for some time—I think journalists have learnt their lesson—and at the same time the media did get something right.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** Thank you, Paul. We will now hear from Madura.

**Ms McCORMACK:** I absolutely knew this question was going to come up: what role did the media have to play? I think first of all anyone who wants to argue in 2022 that what the newspapers run on their front page has a material impact on the outcome of an election is giving us way too much credit, because the fact of the matter is that it is a medium that is not as well read as it used to be and a lot of it happens now on social media. The focus of what Paul said was the gotcha questions, and it might come as a surprise to no-one that I disagree with that overarching view that the media smelt or tasted blood in the water with Albo and decided to go for the jugular. That was not in any way my experience on the campaign and, as I mentioned, I spent most of that time with Albo's camp. However, the day I got on that evening he tested positive. Thank you, Albo!

There are a few things. The first day of the campaign he was asked that wage question which kind of set the pace for the rest of the time. He was asked on that day as well if it was his expectation that leaders do not have to be across the kinds of details that directly impact voters' lives. We were not asking him random statistics that day; we were asking him, 'What is the unemployment rate? What is the cash rate?'—something that has not changed since 2020. The journalists when asking this question mentioned the fact that Scott Morrison was asked about how much a loaf of bread cost and how much a litre of petrol cost and he could not answer those questions and people gave him a lot of stick for it. Mr Albanese replied, 'I'm happy to engage with you. It's up to people to ask whatever questions they want.' Amongst the journalists that I speak to we agreed that he had ample opportunity to run the, 'Just Google it, mate,' argument, but he did not.



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To sit here and also say that the media were completely well behaved and we were wonderful human beings would also be a lie. Were there parts of that campaign where journalists behaved badly and perhaps were not up to the standard that the public require? I would say yes, of course; if not, we would not be having this discussion in the first place. However, I do not think we should be tarnished with that brush completely. Throughout the campaign I wrote a lot of notes on my phone because it is an extension of my body. Looking through those, a lot of the questions that I asked—and we always bounce it off each other—were pretty much 100 per cent on policy.

If I can go on a bit of a tangent, I just want to shed a bit of light on what happens during a campaign because I think there is perhaps an idea of what goes on when that is not really what it is. On a typical day we are packing our bags at five o'clock in the morning and running to the bus and making sure that we are on time, because if not we will be left behind. A running joke in the Labor side was that Albo kept saying, 'No-one left behind,' but he would absolutely leave journalists behind. On one day there were, like, five journalists left behind; it was quite funny. We get on the bus and we are all sleepy eyed and exhausted—we have not had a coffee yet—and we get a briefing from whoever is handling us that day that says, 'We're going to a picfac,' so we are going to a place to take some photos, 'and these are the people that are going to be there and then you'll have a press conference at 10 am.' So we all know that we are now aiming for a 10 am press conference.

All right, so we are reading the newspapers for anything that has an exclusive that we are not across or whatever and then if there is no announcement of the day or a policy question that we really want to ask we bounce it off between each other—'What are you guys looking for or what do you think is interesting? What should we go on today?' The question is: what should we go on today? The reason we do this is not because of some conspiracy. It is not because we are like, 'What can we bash Albo with today?' It is more that we have come here to ask questions of the leaders and to shed light on certain things, but there is no point in seven people asking seven different things because then we are just going to get fobbed off, so we kind of need to make sure that that person, that person and that person is asking the questions. So when I ask the question and somebody bats it away, the next person comes in with a different framing of that question or comes in and says, 'But you said this that time,' and that way you build a picture of what their position is.

I will use a Scott Morrison example, because I think there is also this idea that we were lighter on Scott Morrison than we were on Albo, which is incorrect. I deeply feel that that is incorrect. Is Scott Morrison viewed to be better at handling the media? Absolutely, but not as in that is a strength; that is a problem for us and we had to workshop between ourselves to the minute grain making sure that our questions were watertight—airtight—because he had such a talent for pulling at a loose thread and completely unravelling your question. 'I reject the premise of your question,' was just his favourite phrase and we could not risk that. If you watched the press conferences where he was being hammered on the Solomon Islands—we were just like Solomons, Solomons, Solomons—in my notes where I am keeping track of the questions it was like superhousing policy, something else about cost of living, Solomons, Solomons, Solomons, Solomons, says there is no leak out of cabinet, intelligence, Solomons, Solomons and stuff like that and staying in bulldozer, whatever that meant; I cannot remember. He was hammered as well on his very concerning comments about transgender children, on whether Alan Tudge was going to be in his cabinet should they be re-elected, that kind of stuff. He was absolutely hammered on that as well.

So, yes, we would kind of bounce off each other what we were going to ask, and some days that worked. For example, on the day after he said, 'Absolutely I would support a 5.1 per cent wage increase,' the next day we were like, 'We need to understand: does he mean that when they put in that submission that they're going to say 5.1 per cent? Does that mean that he wants minimum wage rises to be tacked to inflation always? What does he mean? We need to understand what he means by that, or did he misspeak? Let's give him a chance to see if he wants to walk that back.' They never walk anything back. He was ready. He had that \$1 coin as a prop and he stood his ground and we just kept asking about that.

Then there were other days such as when we were in Darwin—I remember it quite hazily—where we were all so exhausted that we were saying, 'I don't even know what we're going to ask about today.' We would just ask some random question. You might ask a random pet question. Whenever we were in the Territory or I was annoyed at something, I would ask about Territory rights, because I used to work in Darwin and I feel very strongly about that debate. I asked that of Scott Morrison, I think in Tasmania for some reason. He was like, 'No, we're not going to have that debate,' and I was like, 'I'm going to launch at you right now!'

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That is kind of what happens and then you get back into the bus and you file. I file on my phone and send off emails and you work on your laptop and the bus is moving. You are trying to file your story before you are on the next plane and sometimes you are filing while you are on the plane and landing and just hitting 'send', and then you rinse and repeat for days and days and days and days on end. There are pros and cons to that. One of the cons is that you definitely have your blinkers on and you do not know what is happening. I did not know that the voters of Ryan were very involved with wanting to change. I had no vibe of that. I will say right now that I had no vibe of that because you do not get to speak to people on the ground ever at these picfacs. It is so managed. No-one has coffee with 25 journos and cameras around them and have a happy chat. That does not exist. It is just wild.

On the other hand you do not have an opportunity to be so close to the leaders if you are not on that bus and the intimate moments that you spend with them, and I am not saying having beers with Albo because carbs are the devil! It is kind of just like seeing him and how his demeanour is on that day and if he is happy and all that kind of stuff. There are points in the campaign where you look at someone and you read them and you say, 'I think you're feeling a little bit positive. I think there's a shift or there's a change,' and it is trying to find moments where you can have those intimate conversations. That is kind of like an overarching view of the day.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** Thank you. Kate?

**Ms FLANDERS:** I was once a junior cadet for the Mackay *Daily Mercury*—it was a very exciting moment in my life—but I think—

**Dr CRAWFORD** (Inaudible).

**Ms FLANDERS:** Yes, but I think I am a lot older than Madura though. The interesting thing for us at Queensland Labor is when you go to Victoria there is basically one media market, as there is in Adelaide and Perth, whereas in Queensland we have six. What is interesting and a bit sad is that we have found that in Central Queensland there is one TV camera and they are only operating a certain few hours during the day. For the candidates from Flynn, for example, you had to make sure that if you wanted to get a press conference done and, say, Barnaby Joyce had flown in, then our candidate had to go to Rockhampton, so he had to drive out of his electorate an hour up the highway to get on the TV news, or we had to send packages. So we would have to find some person and say, 'Matt Burnett, we're going to just interview you,' because we had rung the journalist and said, 'We'll send you this gritty iPhone footage,'—that thankfully is a lot better now—and maybe they would run some of that on the news, or maybe they would not. I think it is really sad to see the decline in our regional papers and even the loss of our Quest papers locally. That has really meant that the central pack dominates, so there is not so much of that local approach often and sometimes we even found just trying to get a local story up about a local issue was hard, whether it was in Cairns or Townsville or in the Torres Strait. You could get it on the radio, which was great, but it is hard.

That is an interesting media impact for Queensland. We used to have such diverse media voices or people who would run stories on local issues in the bulletin or the local newspapers. Without that campaigns and candidates are having to try to find new ways to cut through. From the party perspective, it is almost seen that if you have cut through as a local candidate it is probably because you have done something really bad. It is bad news for you if you are on the front page because it otherwise should just be the prime ministerial candidate or the leader, like Adam. For Elizabeth it would have been interesting, I think.

**Ms WATSON-BROWN:** I am starting to feel a curious sympathy for you journalists. I am getting an inside view of the gruelling nature of the campaign from your point of view. It is certainly very intense and exhausting from the point of view of a candidate. My observation—and I now understand a little bit more, thank you, about why this happens—is that we certainly did not get much media coverage. In a way we made up for that by this amazing outreach in our campaign. We knocked on more than 40,000 doors right across the electorate and we listened to people. I was out there and I had many of those meaningful conversations. It is about that kind of coverage and that personal connection as a counter point to not having media coverage. I understand why now. I understand how very difficult it is.

What we did was publish in the local bulletin—the western suburbs bulletin and papers like that. That was amazing. We sent letters to people. We actually communicated directly with people. The social media side of things was incredibly powerful for us. I think that is definitely the way most young people get their news and have that connection now.

In a way it was the paucity, now that I think about it, of coverage from the major newspapers that made it possible for us to fill that void in other ways and inspired us to get out there and communicate

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directly. Then we could communicate in our own language and have it not just interpreted through the newspapers. Now that I think about it—even though I felt a little bitter at the time—I feel that it was quite liberating for us. I think we in the Greens have done those sorts of connections incredibly well. We sent letters and newsletters. The reason we could do that—we were operating on a shoestring—was we fundraised very well, which was great. We used the fundraised money to employ a campaign team. That gave us the outreach and traction on the ground so we did not have to rely on other media.

The one thing about the way media reporting has happened traditionally in Australia is that it is binary—obviously because of the history of Australian politics—combative, warlike and blood sport kind of reporting of politics which is anathema to me. I think the fact that we were offering what seemed like a good alternative to that traditional kind of bellicose way of enacting politics was quite a relief for a lot of people. Maybe, then again, the fact that we were not necessarily covered much in the traditional newspapers gave us the opportunity to send our message out in our own way, in our own language and personally directly with people. Certainly in Ryan that was incredibly appreciated.

The fact that I was there was appreciated. It was a long campaign for me. It was a very long and broad campaign for me. I was preselected in February so we had a year and a half in order to get out into the community and get to know people. I think the fact that I was a deeply embedded community member already was very powerful in terms of me being able to reflect the voters of Ryan back to them and to truly listen and then to have these real conversations about what people's real needs were. It was about talking to people about their material requirements in life and always being able to draw a line between what their concerns were and what the Greens' policies were around those sorts of things.

Climate change was one thing, but it was definitely also, as you said, aged care, education and equity of access to health care. It was our policy for having both dental and mental health cover in Medicare. All of these things are direct lived experiences for people. Then the floods came along and again people were living climate change. Every time people had a deep experience like that we were able to listen, understand and draw a connection between what they were going through at the moment and their challenges and what the Greens were proposing in terms of policy. In the end, now that I think about it tonight, I think it was a liberation for us not to necessarily be filtered through the standard news media all the time.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** We will have one last round. You might like to make a comment on the key issues, the tactics used and what you think may happen from here. Paul, you have already told us some of the things that you think the future will bring. I just have to tell you about the font of all information, the local hairdresser, who happens to be one of the few straight hairdressers, a young man around 40, who told me that aged care was the key issue. I said to him, 'Why would you be worried about aged care?' He said, 'I have parents and I think it is shocking that a country as rich as Australia cannot look after its old people.' There you go! You can comment on what you think in the end were the key issues, the tactics used and where to from here.

**Dr WILLIAMS:** It really was a scattergun approach, I suppose. We did cover a lot of issues during the election. The media reflected some of them but not others. I do not think there is any doubt that Australia did move centre left if you look at both the swings to Labor in Western Australia and to the Greens and Teals elsewhere.

A takeaway is that this was a rejection of Morrison and the coalition or Morrison and the Liberal Party. The National vote and representation held up. If you had to simplify this election for a grade 12 history class or a grade 12 social science class, you would simplify it this way and say that this was a rejection of Scott Morrison and the Liberal Party rather than a loving embrace of the Liberal Party because Labor suffered primary swings against them as well. The only places that Labor recorded positive primary swings were in WA, which we all saw coming as a result of the state election, and the ACT, which is no surprise. Even in Victoria—the jewel in Labor's crown—there was a swing against Labor. Labor in Queensland, which had so much low-hanging fruit, actually went backwards in seat representation and primary vote. The only place where the Liberals got a primary swing to them was Tasmania.

There was no loving embrace of either major party. Going forward, the future is in the hands of the crossbenchers. This has been a long time cooking, hasn't it? It started with the Democrats in the late 1970s. Then the Greens came into their own in the late 1980s and 1990s and One Nation in the 1990s, which I will talk about in a moment, and the fracturing of the populist right, which is a good segue to talk about where to for the populist right. I think that they have peaked and are on the decline. It is for a different reason to what is happening in the United States.

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There was something very specific about the UAP and One Nation campaigns. I think One Nation, the UAP and the LDP, for that matter, more or less had a unity ticket of libertarianism. I do not think they are libertarians. I think they are right wing anarchists. They are not really libertarians. Sometimes they are described as classical Liberals. They are not classical Liberals; they are anarchists.

This has been a long time cooking, as I said. We will leave LDP out altogether because they were coming from such a low base and they were never a serious threat for the sixth Senate spot. I think PHON and UAP were fighting a campaign that would have been relevant 10 years ago. I think they are out of date. I think 2022 has taught us that Australia, even working class Australia, is not terribly interested in culture wars anymore. You saw that with—I think everyone agrees it was; there is was no admission that this was the case, but it appears to be the case—the Morrison camp and the captain's pick of the transphobic candidates in Sydney and the belief: 'We are going to lose eastern Sydney, but we are going to pick up a swag of seats in western Sydney and on the fringes of Sydney and Melbourne.' There was one poll that showed that for every vote that they were going to win out of a fear of trans women competing in women's sports they were going to lose two votes. It clearly cost them.

I think it shows that the electorate is not interested in cultures wars—whether it be trans issues, gay issues, Aboriginal issues, asylum seekers. In the mid-2000s—the first decade of the 21st century—that probably would have had a lot of traction, but I think the electorate has moved on. I really think that we are beyond culture wars.

Pauline Hanson's One Nation's problem is that they no longer talk about economics. When One Nation came onto the scene in the late 1990s half their rhetoric was around race, ethnicity and multiculturalism and the other half was around the economic protection of blue-collar jobs. A lot of people assumed that people in regional Queensland who flocked to One Nation must have been a bunch of racist. Talking to a lot of these people, they do not care about race. They wanted the blue-collar jobs for their kids. They wanted their kids to leave school at grade 10 in regional Queensland and get a well-paid factory job. Those jobs no longer exist. Because Pauline Hanson's One Nation no longer talks about economic policy and it is all about culture wars, they have lost that traction. The UAP did the same thing.

UAP put all its election hopes in an advertising budget. They are very good at advertising, but they are not very good at public relations. The Australian electorate is savvy enough that it rejects advertising. We now know that advertising is a very blunt instrument for attracting vote. Voters are more savvy about PR and spin. Scott Morrison kicking the footy with kids did not work in 2022 because we have seen it all before. As Elizabeth said, the only thing that does not grow old is pressing the flesh—doorknocking. When a politician or candidate shakes hands with someone and they leave a favourable impression it is very hard to alter that favourable impression. Doorknocking and pressing the flesh will always stay the same.

PHON and UAP were fighting an election of 10 years ago. In the short- to medium-term and possibly long-term the populist right is in decline. I think this will be Pauline Hanson's last term. She will be in her 70s by the time her next term expires. Malcolm Roberts will not get his seat back in three years time. I am pretty convinced of that. When she does retire, the party will disappear with her because she is 98 per cent of the party. She is written into the constitution. Not only have we seen a change in the landscape on the centre left among the crossbenchers; we are about to see a change on the cross benches of the far right. I will leave it there.

**Ms McCORMACK:** I will split this into two parts—where I think the future is when it comes to the coverage of politics in the media and what we can expect to see in the parliament federally. I have a few thoughts on that. In terms of the media, Libby is right; the Greens did not get very much coverage at all in the *Courier-Mail*. I have to say that it was not for want of trying.

I wrote a few stories on the Greens but they always ran quite small. I really enjoyed getting calls from Greens HQ because they were brutally honest. They would say, 'We have this policy,' and I would say, 'That is amazing'. 'It is coming out tomorrow. We are going to send it to you.' I would ask what it was on. They were like, 'It is on seniors.' I would be like, 'That's amazing. What is it going to cost?' '\$5 billion', and I would ask, 'How are you going pay for it?' 'Basically, we are going to shake down a few billionaires and all the coins will fall out of their pockets and then we will drop the mic and leave.' They would say, 'Here is exactly how the policy will work. Here is the press release. Here is the parliamentary budget costings. We will talk to you soon.' I would say, 'Good on you.' They would be the most comprehensive when it came to releasing those kinds of things, which is awesome.

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Getting back to the main point, the moment the election was won and the Green slide happened, Bowen Hills was like 'Oh, no.' We realised that we needed to cover the Greens a lot more and there was a voracious appetite. Every day for a week it was: what do we have on the Greens—anything on the Greens. We would just keep writing about that.

Maybe I am naive and too optimistic, but I think perhaps the conversation will be more nuanced going forward. Journalism is not a very well-paid job. A lot of journalists are leaving because you earn more money elsewhere—in the Premier's office primarily. You are left with journalists who are around my age—late 20s, early 30s. We bring a different view—unfortunately a lot less institutional knowledge—and a different flavour to it. I hope that maybe we can push a conversation that is a lot more nuanced but, again, I might be too naive.

In terms of where federal politics is heading, it is an interesting one. I agree with Paul. I think it might be Pauline Hanson's last term. I was in parliament recently for the first fortnight and Pauline—sorry, Senator Hanson—looked quite crestfallen. We should remember that this is the first time in a long time that her vote has not mattered in the Senate. She does not have any allies. The coalition can no longer help her. Her purpose there is now dwindling, which is why I think you will see her go very hard on the Voice to Parliament, which is a very scary thing because we know what sort of damage can be done on that end.

Also on the Voice to Parliament, I would just note that the conversation there is very positive. I note this is in *Hansard* and this is going to be recorded, but the editorial line from the *Courier-Mail* so far has been 'Yes' to the Voice. We are always open to the debate, but I think and I hope that we can expect pretty civil conversations on that one. In terms of Pauline Hanson's last term—I would not be surprised—it will die with her. The Liberals will have to think about how they rebuild the moderate faction. How they do that is beyond me. Maybe at the next election the Teals might lose one or two, but I think the Prime Minister and Labor will be very smart about this in making sure that they appease the Teals so that the Teals look like they are doing a good job—not that they were not going to do a good job on their own—and they stay there because then that prevents the Liberals from getting the numbers and you can stay in power for longer.

It would not be folly to say that this will be a two-term Labor government at least. I would not be surprised if it is longer than that, but then again a week is a long time in politics and I could be completely wrong in three years. In the immediate future we need to think about by-elections because there are people there who will not last this year. Scott Morrison? It is just a matter of time. What about in the Upper House? I think there are senators who might throw in the towel. Marise Payne I think potentially is on that list. Who then comes in in her spot? Will it be Dave Sharma? Who knows? But definitely some by-elections in our future; otherwise, more fun times.

**Ms FLANDERS:** Just tracking back, Labor's primary vote did go up in Queensland this federal election, Paul, compared to 2019.

**Dr WILLIAMS:** Yes. Seat allocation didn't.

**Ms FLANDERS:** No, we went back a seat but our primary vote lifted. I just wanted to clarify that.

**Dr WILLIAMS:** Point eight of a per cent.

**Ms FLANDERS:** Yes, but still it went up. We count it. The other thing is I think while your point about 'there was not a culture war' may be fair, there was an undercurrent about vaccines. I think this is something that we all need to be conscious of, because I think of the caravan of people who went to Canberra who felt they were being forced to have vaccinations for COVID. There is an undercurrent here that should not be ignored, which is similar to the US QAnon undercurrent around people who felt of the major parties that that part of the COVID response was like a pox on both your houses because you were both pro-vaccination. I think that is where some of that minor party vote came from in places like Caboolture. Maybe that was part of the free marijuana vote in some of those places, because I do think there are people outside the system who feel neglected by government or not seen and that that therefore reflects in a major party vote. I think that can be corrected by a good federal Labor government, actually. That is the kind of confidence that an Albanese Labor government with competent ministers who know what they are doing and who deeply care about all Australians will demonstrate and I think will deliver, but they have a big mess to clean up. I think they are being very honest about that as well. That is the big road ahead.

In reading Pauline Hanson's email to constituents today, I am very frightened about her approach on the Voice to Parliament and how she is deriding anyone who is pro the Voice to Parliament. She is saying, 'They are just going to label us as racist.' If you are not even prepared to engage in the debate, how are Brisbane

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you respectfully engaging with First Nations Australians and this generous invitation, as our Prime Minister keeps saying, around the Uluru statement? She calls it currently a 'colour-blind constitution' whereas I think First Nations Australia would say, 'No, it has been a history of dispossession and racism that we need to correct.' I fear that this is going to be a pivotal moment in Australia that could be really harmful, a bit like the marriage equality ballot—not referendum. Many of my dear friends and family who are gay, lesbian, bi or transgender felt that very keenly and it was very damaging to their mental health. I am concerned about how we make sure we support First Nations Australia through this next process so people do not feel that it is negative and damaging.

The Prime Minister is certainly setting a tone of being earnest and considered when saying, 'I want to be on the side here of saying, "We have an opportunity to do the right thing; we need to take that opportunity right now."' We are very excited about that. Certainly, Labor will obviously try and win more votes in Queensland full stop. I do not think a second-term Albanese Labor government has a path to victory that does not include more seats in Queensland—whether that is the Flynn's of the world, Bonner, Dickson or wherever else—because I do think by-elections will happen. Who knows if Warren Entsch will stay the full term. There are lots of opportunities around to say, 'Well, what does it look like?' I certainly think from a Queensland Labor perspective we know that we could not win a second federal government without winning more seats in Queensland. We need to talk to the electorate very seriously about what it means to have a good federal Labor government and that they need to vote Labor if they want to keep that good, competent government in.

**Dr CRAWFORD:** I was just going to say that history is on your side, Kate, because Queensland swings after an election both ways, which is why we usually have fewer Queensland ministers in federal governments because we are one term behind. Elizabeth, the last word?

**Ms WATSON-BROWN:** The last word? That is always good, isn't it? I actually do think we are seeing the beginning of the end of the two-party system in Australia. I am going to put that out there now. I am not the only one. A very senior Labor person said that to me in Parliament House recently. This person said, 'I knew you were going to win, Elizabeth.' I thought, 'That is interesting. I didn't know I was going to win so I am glad you had some inside knowledge!' I agree with Paul—people are not interested in the culture wars. People are not interested in the word 'war' so even the description of the climate 'debate' which should be a climate 'challenge' being described as a 'war' just puts people off, you know.

It has been interesting watching the Albanese Labor government walking on eggshells the first two sitting weeks of parliament and how all of the negotiations were happening with us and the Teals around that. They are pretty interesting and nuanced kind of relationships being built there which I think are very healthy. I think that we can navigate a future of more collaboration and respect. I think that that is what the electorate actually wants. They do not want this kind of binary, argumentative, blood sport kind of thing which is the way it has operated. It is the way Parliament House is physically set up. As an architect, I am really interested in that. What of the history of the actual design of a space that makes it this kind of two-way competition and this call, response and fighting that happens. It is very interesting now that the horseshoe end of it is much bigger. I have been watching and observing the behaviours inside the House. People are looking at us more, you know? That is something that Adam Bandt mentioned as well.

We are going to be brought into the conversation and will be directly addressed because we are needed. That is certainly the case with the Greens in the Senate in terms of the balance of power. There are going to be a lot more nuanced and complex—and I think this is healthy—negotiations that are going to happen going forward. I honestly do see a future for much more. Look, I have not been a politician before. I have not even been observing politics for a very long time. Here I am as an ordinary citizen suddenly in this space. It seems to me that that is what the electorate—the Australian people—want, and it is a bit reflected in the way the vote went in this last election.

I do honestly believe that there is space for a much more nuanced and negotiating future. I honestly think it is what the electorate needs. I am witnessing not Liberals—they are just yelling across the chamber all of the time with absolutely nothing to add to the debate. I am sorry, but that is my observation. I will not be sorry: to me it is like the 'bellowing of the dying dinosaurs'—that is a quote from Michael Moore. That is what it seems like to me. If you cannot offer anything to the debate, all you do is yell. That is honestly what has been happening in the chamber—and that is quite shocking to me—but I do think over time we have the opportunity for a lot more negotiation and debate. That has to be healthy for our democratic future.

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**Dr CRAWFORD:** Thank you. I know we said we were going to have some questions, but I think the clock is ticking very quickly. Is our wonderful panel going to be able to stay? There you are. You will be able to pigeonhole them and ask any questions. I think we have had a very interesting discussion. The whole issue around what actually happens during elections, work, campaigning and so on, hopefully, maybe this year it has put to bed that politicians do no work, it is an easy breeze and you sail along. Well, I think we all know that that is not true at all. Can I ask you to thank Paul Williams, Elizabeth Watson-Brown, Kate Flanders and Madura McCormack for this fantastic event. I would like to thank them particularly for being honest and for being so open with us. In politics, hopefully that is more of what we need—no closed doors, everything open, integrity, accountability, transparency. As they say, drinks are now served. Thank you.