

AUSTRALIAN & NSW COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONA) POLITICO-ECONOMIC RISK ANALYSIS

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Australia has had a run of mishaps which were handled badly at national and state levels. That history is summarised at the foot of this chapter.

The planning and management of economic recovery has to consider two important dimensions:

1. Recognising and repairing the scientific, economic, engineering, ethical and financial MISTAKES which still continue – the Charter of Budget Honesty needs to be implemented and value statements honoured (cf PM’s Anzac Day pronouncements)
2. Implementing well-designed, thoroughly consulted, science- and professional-based strategies which are matched against “NEEDS” as well as targets and Performance Indicators

Gattorna Chorn’s “critical issues analyses” focussed on an average of 5 in each context, they being things that if done well will produce success and if done badly will produce failure. They include here:

Critical Issue	Dimensions	Explanations
<p>1. Barriers to the improvement of national and regional productivity, employment and community sustainability</p> <p>NB quote at right shows a lack of economic logic e.g. \$100 billion program had no “near-term boost” or “pick up that aggregate demand” – beware of the stalking Berejikian</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separating Govt specification of needs and outcomes from professional project planning cf Grattan <i>Roads to Riches</i>, with community engagement and Parliamentary endorsement • Adherence to proper planning protocols in assessing all stimulus streams, large or small – there is no legitimacy now in transit and tollway schemes • Enforce Creative Reconstruction of Local Governance • Removing waste and inefficiency • Repairing iA’s methodology as contained in RG’s proposal to iA • Strengthening the NCCC in line with US precedent 	<p>Past poor practice is being repeated already, with Ministerial interference and journalistic naivete aplenty e.g. Shane Wright, <i>Infrastructure rebuild to form part of post-virus recovery plan</i> (SMH May 7 ’20)</p> <p>Treasurer Josh Frydenberg has pushed back the federal budget, expected to show a deficit of more than \$60 billion ...</p> <p>He and senior ministers are working on a pandemic economic recovery plan that will include policy reforms. (He) said infrastructure will have to be a major element of that plan, as it will provide a near-term boost to the jobs market.</p> <p>He said on top of the government's existing 10-year infrastructure program there would be strong demand for new projects to help employ people who may have lost their jobs in other sectors "[It] includes infrastructure spending, keeping that 10-year, \$100 billion pipeline [of works] going because we've got to pick up that aggregate demand that may have fallen in other areas," he said.</p> <p>Berejikian’s obsessions are all out of control, must be paused, adopt RG’s “overlay” – EDDINGTON BEDROCK</p>

- 2. Stop poor focus and repair SME closedowns through rapid and targetted subsidies & support vouchers**
- Remove focus from infrastructure
 - Drop 30/75% percentage thresholds in turnover
 - Provide bonuses for re-opening and re-staffing with departed employees
 - Ramp-up site testing and contact tracing in targetted zones such as tourism and inter-regional corridors
 - Institute vouchers for temporary personnel support, starting with childcare but including essential employees

- 3. Remove political prejudices from health science**
- Be aware of the ferocious nature of novel Corona as seen in rapid mutation and slowly-revealed symptoms in different age groups and genders
 - Ensure that existing professional research & advisory circles are resourced and allowed free expression
 - Make contingency planning part of every Budget cycle, cascaded down to Executive contracts
 - Remove reliance on tricks and focus on surveillance

- 4. Remove distortions in communications with communities**
- Political foci are on PR spin and smoke, not truth and meaning including iA
 - Media are too naïve in accepting obviously illogical processes, plans and policies
 - Community needs to be less confused – through open and honest communication as in NZ
 - Government needs to publish case studies e.g. Gaetjens on rorts, as lessons and signposts

The Government has targetted its consultations with and early schemes to bigger businesses. Existing frameworks are orientated to Hong Kong and other vested interests – remove that

It is time to recognise that revival will be based on cash spending by the vast number of re-employed managers and line workers, especially in SMEs

The reliance on BASs is inappropriate, see Report § “Options”.

Going on, it was inappropriate to set the start date for measuring loss of turnover at 1 March. That produced a delay in reporting of not less than 1 month. 780,000 jobs were lost in the three weeks to 1April. Payments should have been paid by 1 March, with post-adjustments.

Work back from the reality that the COVID-19 catastrophe was avoidable in terms of

- Emergency protocols including release onto the streets of infected travellers
- virus research
- antiviral and vaccine product development
- resourcing of hospitals
- implementing quality assurance in group establishments including nursing homes and hospitals
- stocking PPE to disaster-preparedness levels

The websites and Report detail

- Distortions and errors
- Failures to check facts
- Failures to offer corrections
- Bias towards politicians and neglect of ethical standards

Can politicians change their spots? This can only happen through renewed focus by independent journalists and bloggers and a more vigorous Parliamentary contest.

Political appointees have to be confined to accountable channels, with the reinstatement of professional skills and independence in the departments, agencies and affiliates

5. **Correct ethical and professional shortfalls**

- The PM's words on Anzac Day were meaningful but not to be seen in his and Frydenberg's ongoing behaviour
- Continuance of past cruel unfairness can have only one consequence which is harsh criticism

Expressions of mateship and patriotism must be consistent –
"The values that protected Australia throughout the past, still protect us to this day".
The lessons of the past are more meaningful than tokenistic – the Improvement and Post War Reconstruction generations achieved more than we could expect from our broken governance culture

IMMEDIATE HISTORY

1. Infrastructure stimulus in 2018 – no "Budget Repair"

- "\$100 billion over 10 years" was found to be over-stated and under-specified so badly as to lack credibility, iA complicit
- \$3.5 billion to a project that will not be built*, \$400 million for a rail link that will not add a single train
- \$100 million for a PR brochure associated with that* project
- Exclusion of strategic infrastructure including linking Inland Rail with NSW ports
- It was full of consultant studies which had no practical benefits e.g. 6 x "fast trains"
- Road congestion works were slow/deferred, with complaints by Vic Herald Sun
- NSW Premier Berejiklian has twice called for separation from the Commonwealth but is in so much trouble with haphazard projects, debt compulsions and poor engineering that she now calls on the Feds to save her

2. Bushfire crisis on eastern seaboard in 2019-20 – no "Budget Repair"

- Long-term reliance on an RFS model that does not work
- PM's refusal to listen to fire chiefs about equipment shortages and needs – they said by over a year
- Ignorance of the science: Deputy PM and PM attacked firefighters and farmers as "greenies" when they forgot that Australia has had three Ice Ages, the last only 16,000 years ago, ergo we have "continental warming" that has no bearing on carbon excesses (applies also to journalists)
- Failure to institute a long-term plan to engage indigenous landcare workers in reducing fire risks and protecting species

3. Sports and women's sporting facilities in 2018-19 – no "Budget Repair"

- Closed-door development of political amendments to the Sports Commission's community negotiations
- Denial of truth by PM, media short on analytical depth
- PM's appointment of his confidante Phil Gaetjens to do an in-house and unrevealed report which excused the PM's Office and blamed the ministerial by-stander
- Refusal to revise the politically-amended projects, instead offer to consider the excluded projects in the next Budget i.e. doubling-up-cum-waste

4. Novel corona virus (COVID-19) in 2020

- Govt knew of Wuhan – in January they were arranging flights out
- Govt lacked a clear understanding and message especially over schools and prospects of lifting restrictions
- Govt failed to look at US and UK equivalents and gave the impression they reacted to criticism re total quantum and second pensioner distribution *inter alia*

- Govt failed to act until March, only talking to Big Business, leading to ferocious job and SME losses but too-easy acceptance by all parties of an obviously poorly-planned sequence (Queensland acted in January which also should have been done in Canberra and Sydney)
 - Govt failed to consider delivery options and built-in even more delays
 - Govt said “scalable” but jumped in three stages without scalability, later admitting to its mistakes with a repair patch on 24 April – almost 2 months after the first Australian infection
 - Govt deferred Budget to escape forensic criticism, unnecessarily, and in breach of proper practice
 - Govt pushed an app that will be limited by up to 50% of victims being non-symptomatic and a high proportion not producing anti-bodies
 - Govt instituted a non-independent Coordination Commission but within the PMC department that had led items 1, 3 and 4, apparently ensuring no “Budget repair” of impediments to progress and repeats of capricious top-down directions
5. Political appointments and theft of Intellectual Property from 2008
- Baird appointed Phil Gaetjens to NSW Treasury in replacing “due diligence” as in Nick Greiner’s and the Commission of Audit’s 2012 reports – Greiner was ejected by Berejiklian in full populist politics mode while the Commission watered-down its final version
 - Berejiklian stacked NSW Transport’s top strata with trusties and produced PR-style “plans” which lacked logic and even consistency between editions, sacking people who did not comply with HMV
 - Head of Infrastructure Mike Mrdak said that if you want a good idea killed, send it to PMC, which is when PMC’s Stephen Kennedy – who had worked with Turnbull and Baird on the disastrous Western Sydney City Deal – replaced Mrdak and rejected “Budget repair”
 - NSW then Federal Governments coached journalists into mute acceptance of obviously-erroneous reports and processes
 - Treasury failed to force Transport to reduce the 60% of major projects which lack details in its Budget and Appropriations (noted by Greiner)
 - Governments sidelined experts and did not act on professional protocols, including reducing bushfire risks and failing to heed the inevitability of successive zoonoses – the COVID-19 catastrophe is regarded as having been avoidable had wiser heads been in charge of US and Australian Governments in particular
 - Baird in 2008 and Berejiklian, PMs Turnbull and Morrison and political appointees in Infrastructure, Treasury, Greater Sydney Commission and PMC stole this analyst’s Intellectual Property to a gross extent, refusing restitution, thus sabotaging their own credibility and political credence – continued through all stimulus stages.