

The Divider Is the Message

The installation of perspex dividers in government customer service centres may appear trivial at first glance—just another post-pandemic safety measure. But for many, these barriers have come to symbolise something more disturbing: the growing detachment and authoritarian posture of modern governments. These clear walls are not just about germs; they're about hierarchy, about enforcing psychological distance between the rulers and the ruled. Citizens increasingly feel alienated, talked down to, processed rather than served—leading to outrage and confusion at how impersonal and unaccountable their governments have become.

This stands in stark contrast to the image of John F. Kennedy, arguably the last widely beloved U.S. president, who rode openly in a convertible through Dallas in 1963. Far from being naïve, Kennedy's visibility represented a leadership that aimed to be accessible and courageous in the face of real danger—not from the public, but from within the government apparatus itself. Many now believe JFK was assassinated not by a lone gunman, but by factions within his own government—most notably the CIA—for attempting to dismantle the Federal Reserve and challenge the military-industrial complex. That image—of an open president struck down for defying entrenched power—exposes the truth: the greatest threat to democratic ideals may come from within the very institutions that claim to protect them.

Seen through this lens, the perspex isn't about safety at all. It's a quiet confession: that modern governments no longer serve the people, but seek to shield themselves from them—both literally and ideologically.

This institutional disconnect is perhaps most visible in the realm of banking and finance. Modern banks, enabled by governments, have been given licence to create credit out of thin air and lend it at interest—effectively charging people for money that didn't previously exist. This system has fuelled runaway debt and a housing market so inflated that home ownership is now out of reach for much of the population. It's no accident that the same governments who claim to support citizens also underwrite this exploitative system—one that thrives on perpetual indebtedness.

Consider the sale of the Commonwealth Bank: once a public institution whose profits funded hospitals, schools, and infrastructure, it was sold off for just \$2 a share. Today, it's worth over \$175 a share, not including decades of dividends extracted from everyday Australians. Meanwhile, governments borrow at interest from the very banks they once owned—feeding a system where the public pays twice: once through taxes, and again through mortgage interest. This is the consequence of handing immense power to unaccountable institutions.

Just like the perspex divider, the banking system now operates behind a clear but impenetrable wall. You can see the power, but you can't touch it. You can speak, but you're not heard. And while governments pretend to serve, they quietly protect and perpetuate the very structures that keep us disempowered, indebted, and voiceless.