



ANNUAL REVIEW 2020

PréCIS

Centre for Independent Studies

THE CENTRE FOR
INDEPENDENT
STUDIES

PréCIS Editor


Sue Windybank

PréCIS Publisher

Tom Switzer

PréCIS Designer

Ryan Acosta

A pair of glasses with thin, dark frames is positioned diagonally across the frame. The background is a solid, bright yellow. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image, partially obscuring the left lens and the bridge of the glasses.

We must make the building of a free society once more an intellectual adventure, a deed of courage... Unless we can make the philosophic foundations of a free society once more a living intellectual issue, and its implementation a task which challenges the ingenuity and imagination of our liveliest minds, the prospects of freedom are indeed dark. But if we can regain that belief in the power of ideas which was the mark of liberalism at its best, the battle is not lost.

— Friedrich Hayek

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Goals and Aims

Vision

The Centre for Independent Studies is Australia's indispensable voice providing independent research and policy solutions enabling the pursuit of happiness and the opportunity to live a prosperous life with less government interference.

Mission

- ➔ Promote evidence-based policy
- ➔ Advance free choice
- ➔ Progress individual liberty
- ➔ Defend cultural freedom
- ➔ Foster the open exchange of ideas

Our Independence

CIS is a not-for-profit think tank with tax-deductible status. As a politically non-partisan organisation for more than 40 years, we are proud to be Australia's independent voice in public policy research.

Crucial to our independence is that CIS does not accept government funding, nor undertake commissioned research. Our funding comes solely from members, donors, business and foundations.

CIS promotes evidence-based policy, which advances free choice, individual liberty, defends cultural freedom and the open exchange of ideas.

From the Executive Director

In 2020, Australia faced several crises: health (COVID-19 pandemic), economic (a virus-induced recession), cultural (relentless attacks on Western civilisation) and strategic (an assertive China and an erratic America). The Centre for Independent Studies has been well placed to address three out of four of these challenges.

Start with the economic crisis. This year we experienced the highest unemployment since the early 1990s, the largest budget deficit since World War Two and the sharpest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Given the extraordinary circumstances, and since relief in a crisis is a proper role for government, it was understandable that the size and scope of the state increased dramatically.

However, as our Research head Simon Cowan and the Economics team (see pages 6–7) have made clear this year, there should be no ideological validation from the radical emergency measures designed to save lives. After all, the pandemic recession is the result of government policies to stem the spread the virus. It has had nothing to do with the productivity-enhancing economic reforms of the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s that helped spur almost 30 years of unbroken growth with low inflation, low unemployment and, according to the Productivity Commission, no great widening in inequality. Nor was it the result of a shrinking state: for more than a decade, government spending on health and education as a percentage of GDP has increased.

One of our intellectual heroes, Milton Friedman, used to say that nothing is so permanent as a temporary government program. As a result, we've been adamant that the massive expansion of the state in response to the COVID-19 shock should represent a temporary state of affairs.

Once the pandemic passes, it will be the right thing for responsible leaders to do everything to ensure a true return to normal. That includes the liberation of what John



Maynard Keynes called the economy's 'animal spirits' — that is, the passions and competitive instincts that are essential to economic growth. A reform agenda that slashes costly regulations that impede job creation, modernises our enterprise bargaining workplace system to drive wages through productivity gains, and uses the tax system to encourage entrepreneurship among younger Australians.

As unfashionable as it is to say, nations can't tax themselves back to full employment. Jobs and growth are not created by state paternalistic power, but by private enterprises free to invest and innovate by being taxed and regulated less. This has been the central message of CIS for more than four decades; and it remains our mission in 2020 and beyond.

Then there is the cultural crisis. In the past year, a relentless campaign of ideological conformity has swept across the Western world. Statues and monuments are being ripped down or defaced. In Britain and the US, many universities are

censoring speakers and suppressing controversial views. At the same time, both nations have witnessed the rise of what is termed cancel culture: when left-wing activists blacklist people because of what they sincerely feel and believe, or focus on imposing the 'woke' values of a noisy, self-advertising minority on a very different past.

Protecting freedom of speech is a serious challenge that faces genuine free thinkers in coming years. As Peter Kurti and our Culture team make clear (see pages 10–11), we need to ensure the cancel-culture movement that has infected US and British institutions does not threaten Australian public discourse. The exclusion of views that challenge the consensus can only hurt the activists for the reason John Stuart Mill elaborated in his famous 1859 essay *On Liberty*: "He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that."

As for foreign policy, in 2020 diplomatic tensions between Canberra and Beijing escalated, but this deteriorating relationship reflects a broader geopolitical trend. As Alan Dupont, one of Australia's leading security experts, detailed in an important CIS paper, the US-China standoff over trade, technology and strategy has precipitated a new Cold War, with likely economic and trade consequences for Australia.

How Canberra responds to the intensifying security and economic competition between China and the US will define our place in the world in coming decades. It will remain an important topic of study and debate at CIS.

Finally, we could not make substantial progress in the battle of ideas without the wonderful support from our members across Australia and New Zealand. During COVID, we could not host normal events, but thanks to technology and our excellent Events team, we've still been able to host several thought-provoking panel discussions that on at least one occasion have attracted YouTube views as high as nearly half a million. Thanks to our supporters, CIS will continue to try to make Australia a freer, better and more prosperous place.

Tom Switzer


25 publications 


24 events 

6,855 email subscribers 

2,105,863 YouTube views 

527,715.77 YouTube Hours watched 

37,199,215 social media and website impressions 

44,017 social media followers 

Economics

It's amazing how much things have changed in just one year. In 2019 we were talking about budget surpluses, decades of economic growth and whether the good times would last forever. Now, in the midst of a global pandemic, dealing with a major recession, and facing the long climb out of a trillion dollars of government debt, it's clear just how important good economic policy really is in a crisis.

Prior to the pandemic reaching our shores, CIS Senior Fellow **Robert Carling** made a submission to the government's Retirement Income Review Consultation Paper in January. CIS has been active in this policy space for some time, so it was good to feed into this process.

For almost 15 years, Robert has also been active in warning of the economic downsides of stamp duties on land transfers, and the merits of swapping to a comprehensive, low rate, land tax. With November's announcement from the NSW Treasurer that such a switch is now under consideration, Robert may at last receive satisfaction from his long policy journey.

In February, Robert attended the forum on the NSW Review of Federal Financial Relations, having earlier made a submission. The Review's recommendations were released in June, and were among the topics raised when CIS Research Director **Simon Cowan** interviewed NSW Treasurer **Dominic Perrottet** that same month.

From Pandemic to Prosperity

The exploding COVID-19 pandemic in March saw the CIS economics team swing rapidly into action. Existing research plans were put to one side and it was full steam ahead on a new project: From Pandemic to Prosperity.

The project aimed to promote sound economic policies not only to help manage the impact of the virus and the ensuing lockdowns, but also to get Australia back on the road to economic growth. With the announcement in the middle of the year that we had officially entered into recession, it was clear that the scale of the challenge was immense.



Robert Carling discusses Budget 2020 for *On Liberty* (Episode 28)

The core of the response was simple. As Robert put it in his July POLICY Paper, *The Economic Challenge of COVID-19*:

Emergency support measures, fiscal stimulus and increased government borrowing have their limits and at most can only help in the short-term. The emphasis of economic policy will need to transition to structural reforms such as industrial relations, deregulation and tax reform.

Robert kicked off the project in May with his POLICY Paper, *State Finances After the Pandemic*. But CIS couldn't tackle these challenges on our own, and we called on a number of contributors and supporters to put their shoulder to the wheel for the project.

The first was Professor of Economics at Griffith University, **Tony Makin**. Makin's June POLICY Paper, *A Fiscal Vaccine for COVID-19*, addressed the alarming rise in government spending in response to the pandemic, and the flawed resumption of Keynesian demand stimulus practices by governments. His strong critique found favour in some leading newspapers (though not in others!).

Makin teamed up with two longtime CIS friends for the next publication, Emeritus Professor at ANU **Jeff Bennett** and former CIS economist **Michael Potter**. Their July POLICY Paper, *Lower Company Tax to Resuscitate the Economy*, made the important point that private sector investment and confidence was key to the recovery, and that the government couldn't tax and spend its way back to growth.

Robert Carling also joined forces with CIS friend **Terrence O'Brien** for their paper *Policies Against Covid-19: Reflections*



Chief Economist Peter Tulip

on the way in and the way out. This critiqued the government's rationale for some of the rushed decision-making during the pandemic and the failure to consider the potential costs of such heavy-handed intervention.

We then turned to the fraught issue of industrial relations with economist and commentator **Judith Sloan**. Judith's Analysis Paper, *Industrial Relations in a Post-COVID World*, addressed the continuing sclerosis in the IR area and made the key point that flexibility was crucial both in handling the effects of the pandemic and in generating investment coming out of it.

These themes strongly resonated in **Gene Tunny** and **Ben Scott's** September Analysis Paper, *Rationalising Regulation: Helping the economy recover from the corona crisis*. Addressing the massive build-up of regulations in recent years and its negative effect on productivity, Tunny and Scott delivered a series of practical deregulation proposals.

But CIS's deregulation push did not stop there. Later that month, CIS Executive Director **Tom Switzer** interviewed bestselling author of *The Rational Optimist*, **Matt Ridley**, about his new book, *How Innovation Works*, and why our future prosperity depends on freedom to innovate. Ridley followed up this terrific webcast with an Occasional Paper, *Innovation in Australia*, that charted some of the fantastic inventions developed right here and their impact on the world.

In late October, UTS Professor **Warren Hogan** published his Analysis Paper on the limits of monetary stimulus. *The End of Monetary Policy?* looked at the Reserve Bank's effectiveness in the lead-up to the crisis and subsequently, as well as the challenge faced by central banks around the world in a climate of low inflation and even lower interest rates.



Clockwise from left: Simon Cowan, Danielle Wood, Stephen Kirchner and Emma Dawson debate Budget 2020

Other news

It was not all about the pandemic this year, however. In late July, Simon hosted a CIS webinar between NSW Senator **Andrew Bragg** and the McKell Institute's **James Pawluk** on *How to Fix Super*, a topic that has been a big focus for CIS in recent years.

Simon also moderated a CIS panel on this year's delayed budget in October. Billed as the *Most Consequential Budget of our Generation*, a 'battle of the think tanks' ensued featuring the Grattan Institute's Chief Executive **Danielle Wood**, Per Capita's Executive Director **Emma Dawson**, and former CIS economist and current Program Director of Trade and Investment at the US Studies Centre, **Stephen Kirchner**.

CIS was thrilled to announce that **Peter Tulip** joined us in August as Chief Economist. Peter comes from the Reserve Bank where his research papers often made front-page news. Before that he worked for the US Federal Reserve and the OECD.

Peter is a leading Australian expert on one of the most challenging issues facing us — housing affordability — and in early December, he published a POLICY Paper called *Planning Restrictions Harm Housing Affordability*. He has also made many media appearances discussing monetary policy, arguing that the RBA needs to be both more transparent and more assertive in exercising monetary policy.

Peter's work will be a key focus for CIS in 2021.

Education

The CIS education team continues to solidify its place as respected experts, influencing policy and media commentary across a range of priority areas.



Glenn Fahey

2020 has seen roles shift across the CIS education team.

Glenn Fahey remains Research Fellow while **Dr Fiona Mueller** and **Blaise Joseph** continue as Adjunct Scholars, with Blaise pursuing a PhD in Educational Leadership at New York University.

CIS work has focused attention on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education policy this year. **Glenn Fahey** and **Blaise Joseph** co-authored two publications as part of the CIS Pandemic to Prosperity project: *Pain Without Gain: Why school closures are bad policy* (May) and *Parents' Perspectives on Home-based Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic* (September). These papers and related commentary have helped influence debate over the educational impact of school closures and the priorities of the education system.

CIS research on students' learning loss was thrice reported on the front page of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as being covered across all News Corp newspapers. Blaise was interviewed on ABC TV about the implications for disadvantaged students, whilst Glenn discussed the research in a panel discussion on school improvement at the National Catholic Education Commission's bi-annual symposium with school leaders.

CIS research on parents' experiences with home-based learning was covered prominently in News Corp papers and across

education specialist media, including a major feature in the *Australian Teacher Magazine*. Glenn also discussed the findings in an expert panel discussion for the 'Western Victoria Matters' conversation series, highlighting the rural-urban divide in home-based learning.

Our work continues to draw attention to other key education policy issues. **Glenn Fahey** published a major Research Report in early December arguing that school funding should be linked to education outcomes. The report, *Dollars and Sense: Time for smart reform of Australian school funding*, received widespread media coverage including an editorial in the *Australian Financial Review*. Glenn also penned several op-eds on the topic throughout the year for the major mastheads, and appeared on Channel Nine News to discuss the use of financial incentives.

CIS keeps voicing the need for rigorous education standards and student assessment. Blaise made a submission to the NSW government's NAPLAN review in March, and published op-eds on NAPLAN in the *Australian Financial Review* and *Sydney Morning Herald* as well as appearing on Channel Seven's Sunrise. Glenn has written on education standards and testing for *The Australian*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Mail*. CIS also contributed its expertise on these issues to a parliamentary inquiry into the NSW curriculum review.



Glenn Fahey interviews Peter Achterstraat for *On Liberty Extra* (episode 25)

Influencing policy and practice

CIS remains committed to efforts to build teachers' capacity, with Blaise appearing on Credlin's Sky News program to discuss the assessment of trainee teachers. CIS has long made the case that more flexible employment for teachers is key to improving education outcomes and boosting competition in the teaching workforce. This year, the NSW government joined Victoria, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania in introducing the Teach for Australia program, providing more flexible on-the-job training for those transitioning to teaching.

For two decades, CIS research on literacy has demonstrated the educational benefits of phonics instruction in learning to read and debunked the claims of its ideological opponents. We are pleased that several jurisdictions, along with many schools and parents, have welcomed various phonics screening assessments. There is now early evidence that the use of the phonics check in South Australia is lifting the literacy levels of year 1 students. And we are delighted with the NSW Education Minister's November announcement that from 2021 phonics will be compulsory for every year 1 pupil across the state.

We hope to further leverage our research to influence policy and practice in the years to come.



Blaise Joseph on Channel Seven's Sunrise

Engagement and events

CIS keeps building on its outsized influence in its engagement with stakeholders in the education sector. **Fiona Mueller** again participated in an expert panel on students' university readiness at this year's *AFR* Higher Education Summit. **Glenn Fahey** participated in an Australian National University-Centre for Policy Development Policy Dialogue on Education, whilst Senior Fellow **Scott Prasser** provided evidence to a review into the national education policy architecture.

CIS events moved online this year because of COVID-19 restrictions.

In September, we hosted a wide-ranging discussion on the topic *Do schools need a transformation?* with leading figures in Australian education — **Pasi Sahlberg** and **Greg Ashman** — in a well-attended webinar moderated by *Sydney Morning Herald* Education Editor, **Jordan Baker**. **Glenn Fahey** also interviewed NSW Productivity Commissioner, **Peter Achterstraat**, on education reforms to boost productivity for *On Liberty Extra* (see page 21).

CIS is excited that 2021 will see the continuation of its successful *Overcoming the Odds* series, with a specific focus on how successful majority Indigenous schools are overcoming educational disadvantage. It is expected that this will provide renewed interest in how schools, communities and policymakers can better address Indigenous education and truly 'close the gap'.

Culture, Prosperity & Civil Society

The Culture, Prosperity & Civil Society program was established in mid-2018 to ensure CIS engages fully in the key cultural issues and questions of the day. It aims to articulate, defend and promote the principles and institutions that underpin Australia's secular liberal democracy.

The CP&CS team this year has been made up of **Monica Wilkie**, **Robert Forsyth**, **Lukas Opacic** (until March) and **Peter Kurti**.

2020 began normally enough. **Peter Kurti** delivered a lecture on religious freedom to the Christopher Dawson Centre for Cultural Studies in Hobart, which was subsequently published as an Occasional Paper called *Rights, Morals, Dignity: Why defending religious freedom matters*. **Robert Forsyth** continued finalising *Forgotten Freedom No More: Protecting Religious Liberty in Australia: Analysis and Perspectives*, a collection of essays co-edited with Peter Kurti and published by Connor Court.

And then the coronavirus pandemic struck. As the country went into lockdown and national and state borders closed, the team sprang into action to monitor and analyse the impacts of the pandemic on civil society and community well-being as part of CIS's Pandemic to Prosperity project (see page 6).

Throughout the project, Policy Analyst **Monica Wilkie** conducted research and contributed regular commentary about the mental health impacts of coronavirus and the lockdowns as well as government responses to the pandemic. This work culminated in a major Analysis Paper in December — *Victims of Failure: How the COVID-19 policy response let down Australians* — that picked up where **Salvatore Babones's** paper *The Twelve Week Window* left off (see page 27). Monica also



Robert Forsyth interviews John Howard for the podcast *Liberalism in Question*

worked with CIS intern **Joanne Tran** on a social media initiative called *Never Needed*, which highlighted regulations — removed during COVID-19 — that were holding business back.

In mid-July Monica launched a new series of CIS webinars in which she interviews prominent public intellectuals. First up were two leading critics of woke and cancel culture — and past CIS guests — writer **Lionel Shriver** and *Spiked* editor **Brendan O'Neill**. The YouTube video has since attracted over 90,000 views. That same month, Monica turned to past CIS guest **Dave Rubin**, of the Rubin Report fame, for his take on cancel culture, free thought, liberalism, and the US presidential election. And in October, Monica spoke with prolific writer and another past CIS guest, **Frank Furedi**, about how government responses to COVID-19 have led to another pandemic — fear.

Monica is now working with Events Director Max Hawke-Weaver to prepare for next year's *Liberty & Society* conference (see page 17) and will continue to develop the capacity of CIS to engage younger people.

Meanwhile **Robert Forsyth** began developing a new series of podcasts called *Liberalism in Question*. The series aims to explore the nature, value and future of liberalism, and began going to air in early December. Guests — who have been both sympathetic to and critical of liberalism — include *Quillette* founder Claire Lehmann, former prime minister John Howard, Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation CEO Simon Haines, leading economist Ian Harper, Liberal MP Tim Wilson, and former Sydney University Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence.



Monica Wilkie talks to Lionel Shriver. . .



. . . and Brendan O'Neill about woke culture and free speech

Program Director and Senior Research Fellow, **Peter Kurti**, authored two Analysis Papers in 2020. The first, *Civil Society After COVID: On re-building a virtuous civic culture*, was published as part of the Pandemic to Prosperity project in mid-June. Released during the first lockdown, the paper — which was well-received — examined the capacity of government to strike an appropriate balance between individual liberty and community, and emphasised the essential contribution of a healthy civic culture to restoring national prosperity.

Peter's second Analysis Paper, *Cancelled!: How ideological cleansing threatens Australia*, was released in mid-August amidst the most recent manifestations of 'cancel culture'. The paper attracted considerable attention — including a commendation from the *Daily Telegraph* — and warned of the threats posed by cancel culture to social cohesion. Peter's paper followed the July release of a CIS Occasional Paper, aptly titled *Moral Terrorism*, that provided a UK perspective on cancel culture from British historian and columnist **Simon Heffer**.

2020 also saw the release of two external publications. In late September, Connor Court published **Peter Kurti**'s most recent book, *Sacred & Profane: Faith and Belief in a Secular Society*, a collection of essays drawing on research reports published over the past two years. Peter also co-edited with James Allan another Connor Court volume of essays entitled *Keeping Australia Right*, a sequel to the 2016 *Making Australia Right*.



Peter Kurti discusses cancel culture for *On Liberty* (episode 21)

Peter and Monica made numerous media appearances throughout the year and also contributed opinion pieces to *The Spectator Australia*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Australian*.

In 2021, the CP&CS program will shift focus to examine the capacity of the changing family to contribute to civil society, and will also look more closely at issues like domestic violence.

Indigenous Affairs

In order to begin solving the issues facing Australia's most marginalised citizens, CIS believes that the narrative must change — it must become based on facts, not popular opinion or political correctness.

2020 began with the perennial calls to 'change the date' in the lead-up to Australia Day on 26 January. Although these calls were somewhat muted this year because of the focus on the summer's terrible bushfires, advocates continue to privilege symbolism over action and opinion over facts.

As Program Director **Jacinta Nampijinpa Price** argued in two powerful op-eds in the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Australian*, the 'change the date' debate distracts from urgent issues of real importance such as the traditional cultural drivers that contribute to the epidemic of family violence and sexual abuse in some Indigenous communities.

Instead of changing the date, CIS is committed to changing the debate. This was the topic of a lively and well-attended CIS panel that same month, with Sky News's **Chris Kenny** moderating an important discussion between Jacinta, **Nyunggai Warren Mundine** and **Dr Anthony Dillon**.

In early February, Jacinta penned another op-ed for *The Australian* in response to a critical reply to her January piece. The critique claimed she had effectively called for Indigenous law and culture to be abandoned. Whilst acknowledging the importance of culture, she countered that all cultures change and so too should the "tradition of domination, violence, rape and assault" that "continues to harm and kill Indigenous women and kids."



Anthony Dillon, Jacinta Price, Warren Mundine and Chris Kenny discuss changing the debate

That same month, Jacinta also tackled the contentious High Court 'aliens' decision in a *Canberra Times* op-ed with CIS Research Director **Simon Cowan**. They re-iterated CIS Senior Research Fellow **Peter Kurti**'s concerns in his own op-ed for the *Daily Telegraph* that the ruling effectively creates separate rights and special benefits for Indigenous Australians, unequal to those of other Australians.

By March, the COVID-19 pandemic had begun to explode, and many Indigenous people in regional areas returned to their communities for their own protection. Jacinta provided a unique insight into life under lockdown in these remote communities in an April episode of the weekly CIS webcast *On Liberty* (see page 21).

The pandemic also saw longstanding racial tensions in the United States re-ignite with the police murder of George Floyd, resulting in violent protests and looting. Local Black Lives Matter advocates followed suit, organising large anti-racism protests over Indigenous deaths in custody.

But as Jacinta pointed out in op-eds in the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Spectator* in June, importing the American narrative about systemic racism ignores the facts: "Aboriginal Australians are far more likely to die at the hands of other Aboriginal Australians than at the hands of white people or in police custody." This violence, in turn, drives the high rates of incarceration for Aboriginal Australians.



Jacinta Price talks about life under lockdown in remote communities (On Liberty episode 5)

In July, CIS released a major Analysis Paper by **Nyunggai Warren Mundine** on the Closing the Gap initiative as part of CIS's Pandemic to Prosperity project (see page 6). Entitled *It's the Economy, Stupid*, he argued that the initiative has lost its focus on economic participation — the only way to close the gap. Key areas of economic participation are having a job and setting up a business. Warren followed up with an op-ed in *The Australian* arguing that Closing the Gap needed to get back to basics, and expounded on this theme in conversation with Jacinta in an August *On Liberty Extra* episode that was the second most-watched of the series in 2020.

Meanwhile Jacinta tackled the Gap's new incarceration targets in a *Daily Telegraph* op-ed, arguing that setting targets to reduce imprisonment is not meaningful without commensurate targets to reduce the high levels of violence against women and children in some Indigenous communities.



Jacinta Price and Warren Mundine discuss the Closing the Gap targets (On Liberty Extra episode 17)

As the year began to wind down, Jacinta— who was elected deputy mayor of Alice Springs in October — turned her attention to the trials of cashless debit cards (CDCs) in select Indigenous communities. CDCs are intended to prevent taxpayer-funded welfare payments for purchase of the necessities of life being spent instead on drugs, alcohol and gambling. In an op-ed for *The Spectator*, she argued there are early signs the trials appear to be working, although more research is needed.

Cashless welfare will be a focus of CIS work in early 2021, alongside a forthcoming paper on the drivers of Indigenous suicide. CIS will also continue to identify pathways out of the vicious cycle of violence in some Indigenous communities as well as advocating for policies that support Indigenous enterprise and economic development.

China and Free Societies

Established in 2019, this program aims to raise awareness of the growing challenges an increasingly powerful and aggressive People's Republic of China (PRC) poses to a free and democratic Australia.

Last August, US Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo** told Australians “you can sell your soul for a pile of soybeans, or you can protect your people.” That landmark speech was hosted by CIS’s new China and Free Societies program, and as 2020 dawned the program was playing a significant role in driving Australia’s China debate.

Then came the coronavirus. CIS was the first major Australian think tank to face the COVID crisis head-on. On 19 February, Adjunct Scholar **Salvatore Babones** authored a detailed Analysis Paper on ‘Australia’s Export Exposure to China’s Coronavirus Epidemic’ across 18 major industry groups. The next day, Salvatore hosted a packed panel debate over Beijing’s handling of ‘The Next Pandemic’ featuring Scholar-in-Residence **Doug Badow** (see page 16), the Lowy Institute’s **Natasha Kassam**, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) analyst **Vicky Xu**, and our own **Sue Windybank**. Before the month was done, Salvatore had two op-eds in *The Australian* and one in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on how complacency in the Australia-China relationship exposed the country and its economy to the emerging pandemic.

Virus or no virus, other China challenges remained. In May, leading strategic analyst **Alan Dupont** authored a major CIS Analysis Paper on the global struggle between China and the United States under the title *Mitigating the New Cold War: Managing US-China Trade, Tech and Geopolitical Conflict*. CIS published online a series of commissioned responses on the implications for Australia from leading analysts **John Lee**, **Richard McGregor**, **Peter Jennings** and **Rowan Callick** as well as our own **Sue Windybank** and **Salvatore Babones**. CIS executive director **Tom Switzer** also interviewed Alan on our YouTube channel.



Salvatore Babones at the panel discussion on *The Next Pandemic*

Also in May, as COVID -19 raised tensions between the United States and China, **Tom Switzer** moderated a debate over the question ‘Has China Won?’ between two of the world’s leading international relations thinkers — and past CIS guests — **John Mearsheimer** and **Kishore Mahbubani**. The YouTube video of this debate has since been viewed over 340,000 times, and counting.

Deteriorating Australia-China relations led to another highly-watched debate in early August — again moderated by Tom — between former prime minister **Tony Abbott** and former foreign minister **Bob Carr**, who went head-to-head over the question ‘How to Handle China?’.

Tom also authored several op-eds for *The Australian* and the *Australian Financial Review* reminding us that security ultimately trumps prosperity. He reiterated that message in a September op-ed in *The Australian* with the title ‘The Good Times with China Are Over. Get Used to It’. That same month, former senior cabinet minister **Richard Alston** published an Occasional Paper entitled *Australia, the United States and China in a Post-Covid World*, in which he argued that how Australia manages technology and innovation will help us manage US-China relations in the next decade.

As the year progressed **Salvatore Babones** devoted several episodes of CIS’s weekly live-stream webcast *On Liberty* (see page 21) to China, interviewing **Dr Chin Jin** on the prospects for democracy, **Professor Elizabeth Larus** on the Taiwan question, and **Dr David Kelly** on whether China’s rise is now unstoppable. Salvatore also hosted a Zoom panel in October on the future of Hong Kong with business leaders **Simon Littlewood** and **Daniel Del Re**.



John Mearsheimer and Kishore Mahbubani debate 'Has China won?', with Tom Switzer moderating

Meanwhile Salvatore's August 2019 CIS paper about Australian universities and their extraordinary dependence on Chinese students continued to reverberate, with a November 2020 discussion paper from the Business Council of Australia's Asia Taskforce citing it 25 times.

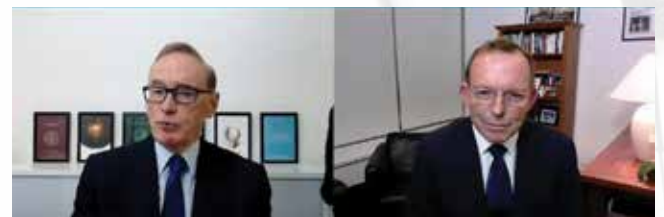
In early November, **Rowan Callick** authored a timely Occasional Paper, *The Elite Embrace*, in which he explained how the Chinese Communist Party attempts to capture Australian elites through flattery, self-interest and — most importantly — commercial promises and threats. He told us that Australia must "build resilience" to successfully manage its China relations. Rowan followed up with an op-ed in *The Australian*, and the paper was cited as a "must-read" by the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington.

Later that month, we released **Salvatore Babones's** final CIS report for the year. *A House Divided: The AFRB and China's Subnational Diplomacy in Australia* exposed the PRC's attempts to undermine the Commonwealth by luring Dan Andrews' Victoria into its Belt and Road Initiative. Salvatore confirmed Rowan's conclusion that the main threat posed by the PRC is the corruption of Australia's own institutions.

With support from members and contributors, CIS will continue to lead efforts to strengthen Australia's democratic institutions and build a more resilient economy and society. In the battle between China and free societies, CIS is proud to be on the frontline working to keep Australia free.



Alan Dupont and Tom Switzer talk about *Mitigating the New Cold War*



Bob Carr and Tony Abbott debate 'how to handle China'

Scholar-in-Residence

The 2020 CIS Max Hartwell Scholar-in-Residence was Doug Bandow, former special assistant to US President Ronald Reagan and a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute in Washington.

Doug Bandow specialises in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan and was editor of the political magazine *Inquiry*. He writes regularly for leading publications such as *Fortune* magazine, *National Interest*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Times*. Bandow speaks frequently at academic conferences, on college campuses, and to business groups, and has been a regular commentator across all the major US television networks.

Throughout the month of February, Doug worked as a scholar for CIS, speaking at several key events and forums, and sharing his expertise and knowledge of American foreign policy and domestic politics.

On 4 February, in the immediate aftermath of the Iowa Democratic caucuses, Doug joined our panel of seasoned experts featuring Chief Executive of the US Chamber of Commerce, **April Palmerlee**, Senior Fellow at the United States Studies Centre, **Stephen Loosley**, and Sydney University lecturer in US politics, **Gorana Grgic**, to survey the state of American politics in 2020. Entitled *US Election Watch: Trump Vs the Democrats*, we asked what an ideologically-leftist Democrats victory of the White House and both houses of Congress might mean for America and the world.

During Doug's residence, the ramifications of the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China, were developing rapidly. On 19 February, CIS invited China experts **Vicky Xu**, an analyst with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, and **Natasha Kassam** from the Lowy Institute, to join Doug and our own **Salvatore Babones** and **Sue Windybank** to discuss the topic *The Next Pandemic: China's Coronavirus*. At the time, the coronavirus



Doug Bandow gives a lunchtime address on Pax Americana

had infected little more than 65,000 people and killed close to 1,700 globally. The Australian government put in place strict immigration bans and the World Health Organisation declared a global emergency. The panel debated Beijing's handling of the crisis as well as the economic and geopolitical implications of the pandemic.

Later that month, Doug appeared in conversation with CIS Executive Director **Tom Switzer** to discuss the topic *The End of Pax Americana?*. Doug has long argued that US global leadership and interventionism abroad undermines the cause of small government at home. Before a packed lunchtime audience, he made the case for a more discriminating and restrained US foreign policy, with fewer entangling alliances and an end to the 'forever wars'.

In addition to CIS-led events, Doug was a keynote speaker for the Affinity Intercultural Foundation, and was interviewed by former Australian diplomat Richard Broinowski on the US role in balancing China to maintain peace and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region.

Doug was a guest on ABC Radio National's *Between the Lines* with **Tom Switzer**. He also published several articles and opinion pieces during his residency at CIS, writing for *The American Conservative*, *The American Spectator* and *National Interest Online*.

Our 2021 Scholar-in-Residence is yet to be finalised. Due to the ongoing impact of the global pandemic, we will be announcing a domestic speaker in due course.

Liberty & Society Student Program

CIS recognises the importance of exposing, challenging and supporting young people who have an interest in exploring the foundations of a free society.

Liberty & Society (L&S) is a unique conference program for undergraduates, recent graduates and postgraduates. The goal of L&S is to create an intellectual environment where ideas and opinions about what makes a free society can be discussed, argued and learned.

2020 marked the 25th anniversary of L&S. However, owing to border closures and lockdowns, this year's conference was cancelled. As restrictions eased, our Event Director and L&S Co-ordinator, Max-Hawke Weaver, began working with Policy Analyst Monica Wilkie — a L&S graduate herself — to firm up the program for 2021.

L&S provides a rare forum for young people who may be questioning consensus views on social, political and economic issues. The live-in weekend conference explores the world from a classical liberal perspective. Students attend sessions and discussions on economics, political thought, and law over the weekend, interspersed with arguments about foreign policy, education and social policy.

The conference is a great opportunity to meet, debate and network with other like-minded people from across Australia and New Zealand. We encourage real debate on topics such as

“A crash course in classical liberal philosophy with discussion groups aimed at giving students a way of testing and challenging their own personal ideas about freedom and the individual.”
— 2019 L&S participant

individual freedom, private property, limited government, and free trade. L&S has supported thousands of students over the years, including the likes of Josh Frydenberg, Kelly O'Dwyer and Simon Bridges.

L&S conferences are open to university students over the age of 18 who live in Australia, New Zealand or the South Pacific. CIS conducts a rigorous application and selection process prior to accepting applicants. Scholarships cover all meals, accommodation and conference fees. Interstate and international students may also apply for additional scholarship funds for flights and transfers to the conference.

Scholarships are made possible through the generous support of the contributors to CIS. These individuals, companies and foundations believe in the importance of encouraging young people to have a clear understanding and appreciation of the foundations of a free and open society.

The next Liberty & Society conference is scheduled to take place in Sydney on the weekend of 19-21 March 2021. However, uncertainty due to COVID-19 may alter dates or timing with little notice.





1. Anthony Dillon, Jacinta Price, Warren Mundine and Chris Kenny
2. Bjorn Lomborg
3. George Will
4. Dominic Perrottet
5. Tom Switzer and PJ O'Rourke
6. Salvatore Babones, Natasha Kassam and Vicky Xu
7. Andrew Stone, Paul Kelly and Tony Abbott
8. Gladys Berejiklian
9. Matt Ridley
10. Tom Switzer, April Palmerlee, Doug Bandow, Gorana Grgic and Stephen Loosley

Event Highlights

In 2020 we witnessed a global health and economic crisis, experienced significant change in our daily lives, and kept connected online. Our program of events and digital content has reflected these changes, providing a forum to engage, inform and generate support for the Centre.

CIS successfully held a number of live events with sold-out audiences in January and February, hosting domestic and international guests. Then, in March, as Australia went into lockdown and borders closed, we took the tough decision to pause our live event schedule and pivot to online formats.

The year began with a packed panel event in the lead-up to Australia Day on 26 January. Sky News's **Chris Kenny** moderated an important discussion between **Jacinta Nampijinpa Price**, **Nyunggai Warren Mundine AO** and **Dr Anthony Dillon** on how the symbolism behind calls to 'change the date' has distracted and deferred attention from the real issues that Indigenous Australians face.

In February, we flew **Bjorn Lomborg**, president of the Copenhagen Consensus Centre and author of *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, to Sydney for a series of lectures that turned out to be our last live events. Bjorn argued that while action should be taken on climate change, we could easily waste trillions of dollars on bad policy and end up making the world worse off.

The decision in March to cancel all planned events and reduce our liabilities had a significant impact on our usual programming, with flagship events such as our *Annual John Bonython Lecture and Gala Dinner*, *Consilium* conference and *Liberty & Society Student Conference* unable to proceed. However, from crisis comes opportunity, with CIS shifting to digital forums including live webinars, live-streams, pre-recorded interviews and podcasts that enabled us to stay engaged with our audience in new and innovative ways.

Our first live webinar in May was a huge success. At a time when COVID-19 had greatly increased US-Sino tensions, CIS Executive Director **Tom Switzer** hosted two of the world's leading foreign policy intellectuals, **John Mearsheimer** and **Kishore Mahbubani**, who debated the topic 'Has China Won?'. The YouTube video of this debate has since attracted over 340,000 views.

A month later, Pulitzer Prize award-winning columnist for the *Washington Post* **George F. Will** — whose trip to Australia to deliver our annual *John Bonython Lecture* on capitalism in crisis was cancelled — joined **Tom Switzer** for a live webinar to discuss instead 'America in Crisis'. At the time, protests over the police murder of George Floyd had turned violent, highlighting the country's deep divisions ahead of the November presidential election. The YouTube video of this interview has notched up over 440,000 views, our second highest rating ever.

As the US elections drew nearer, Tom also moderated a lively discussion in the wake of the first presidential debate, with political satirist and author **P.J. O'Rourke** and former newspaper publisher **Conrad Black** going head-to-head over which presidential candidate they preferred — Trump or Biden — and why.

Meanwhile, controversy over cancel culture and the 'woke' movement continued to rage. In July CIS analyst **Monica Wilkie** hosted a highly-watched discussion with **Lionel Shriver** and **Brendan O'Neill**, both past guests at CIS and leading critics of 'woke' culture. Monica also interviewed **Dave Rubin**, of Rubin Report fame, to get his take on the threats cancel culture poses to liberal societies.

The pandemic's impact on education systems in Australia and elsewhere saw many students learning from home. In August, CIS researcher **Glenn Fahey** hosted leading education experts **Pasi Sahlberg** and **Greg Ashman** for a panel discussion — moderated by **Jordan Baker** — on whether we now have to rethink teaching, curriculum and assessment for the 21st century.

A full listing of all events and productions appears on page 22. Further details can be found at cis.org.au/events or on our social media and YouTube channels.



Salvatore Babones

Episode 11: COVID and role of government



Lindsay Shepherd



Peter Kurti

Episode 1: Morality of COVID response



Sanushka Seomangal

Episode 35: Building Australia's Relationships



Claire Lehmann

Episode 20: How the pandemic has accelerated trends



Sophie York

Episode 30: Is religion cherished?



Alexander Downer

Episode 2: Managing the aftermath of coronavirus



Jennifer Buckingham

Episode 12: Update on literacy



Oliver Hartwich

Episode 18: New Zealand - recovery worse than disease?



Janet Albrechtsen

Episode 16: Saving the marketplace for ideas



April Palmerlee

Episode 8: The importance of US-Australia relations



Dr Chin Jin

Episode 22: Prospects for democracy in China



Andrew Norton

Episode 19: Should we increase university places?



Emilie Dye

Episode 33: Superannuation has failed



Matt Trau

Episode 10: Lessons from the pandemic



Jacinta Nampijinpa Price

Episode 17: Closing the gap

On Liberty

Our new weekly webinar has boosted CIS's digital reach and profile, attracting a loyal and growing following online.

In April 2020 CIS launched *On Liberty*, a weekly live-stream webinar hosted by Adjunct Scholar **Salvatore Babones** and aptly titled *On Liberty* after John Stuart Mill's philosophical essay of the same name.

Our aim was clear: to engage our supporters and members as they worked from home, to showcase our research by providing a forum where people could participate in discussions and ask questions of CIS researchers, to offer commentary on current affairs, and to market CIS to potential new members.

On Liberty initially focused on content assessing the impacts and ramifications of the global COVID-19 pandemic. On conclusion of Season One in July, we pivoted and adjusted Season Two with the aim of covering a wider range of topics.

On Liberty has enjoyed great success in 2020, having delivered two seasons and 36 episodes reaching thousands of live viewers and many thousands more through our videos on the CIS YouTube channel and audio podcasts.

Taking out top spot in the rankings was **Lindsay Shepherd** in June. An Investigative Journalism Fellow with *True North News* in Canada, Lindsay spoke about her experience covering the anti-lockdown protests in Canada and how individuals should be given the freedom to assess their own risk rather than governments shutting down countries, borders and economies.

Taking second place was an *On Liberty Extra* episode in August featuring Indigenous Affairs program director, **Jacinta Nampijinpa Price**, in conversation with **Nyunggai Warren Mundine**. Coming off the back of the government's

Closing the Gap announcement of new additional targets, the pair discussed how unrealistic these targets were and how the initiative had lost its focus on Indigenous economic participation — the only way to truly 'close the gap'.

In third place was an episode dubbed 'Are you woke, Australia?'. As cancel culture spread throughout 2020 in spite of the dire economic and public health crises sparked by the pandemic, CIS researcher **Peter Kurti** — who had appeared in our pilot episode back in April on the morality of Australia's response to COVID-19 — returned in September to discuss the sinister dangers of cancel culture and the threat to social cohesion.

A special thanks to our all our guests in order of appearance:

Season One: Peter Kurti, Alexander Downer, Monica Wilkie, James MacBrayer, Jacinta Price, Judith Sloan, Blaise Joseph, April Palmerlee, Rob Forsyth, Matt Trau, Lindsay Shepherd, Jennifer Buckingham, James Allan, Scott Prasser and Glenn Fahey.

Season Two: Janet Albrechtsen, Warren Mundine, Oliver Hartwich, Andrew Norton, Claire Lehmann, Chin Jin, Greg Lindsay, Gene Tunny, Peter Achterstraat, John Anderson, Carlos D'Abbrera, Simon Cowan, Robert Carling, Elizabeth Larus, Sophie York, Tom Switzer, James Morrow, Emilie Dye, David Kelly, Sanushka Seomangal, and Gad Saad.

***On Liberty* will continue in 2021 with host Salvatore Babones and executive producer Max Hawke-Weaver.**

Events at a Glance

JANUARY

Changing the Debate

Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, Nyunggai Warren Mundine,
Anthony Dillon, Chris Kenny

Panel • 23 January

US Election Watch: Trump vs the Democrats

Doug Bandow, April Palmerlee, Stephen Loosely,
Gorana Grgic, Tom Switzer

Panel • 4 February

CIS Members Lunch with Bjorn Lomborg (Sydney)

Bjorn Lomborg

Lunch • 11 February

The End of Pax Americana?

Doug Bandow, Tom Switzer

Lunch • 25 February

Alan Dupont: Mitigating the New Cold War

Alan Dupont, Tom Switzer

Interview • 25 May

Dominic Perrottet: NSW After the Pandemic

Dominic Perrottet, Simon Cowan

Interview • 15 June

We Must Defend Freedom of Speech

Lionel Shriver, Brendan O'Neill, Monica Wilkie

Webinar • 16 July

How to Fix Super?

Simon Cowan, Andrew Bragg, James Pawluk

Webinar • 31 July

Education Post-Covid: Do Schools Need a Transformation?

Pasi Sahlberg, Greg Ashman, Jordan Baker, Glenn Fahey

Webinar • 11 August

#Debates2020 Democrats & Republicans:

PJ O'Rourke vs Conrad Black

PJ O'Rourke, Conrad Black, Tom Switzer

Webinar • 1 October

The Fear Epidemic

Frank Furedi, Monica Wilkie

Interview • 13 October

Lunch with Incoming Consul General Nick Greiner

Nick Greiner, Tom Switzer

Lunch • 23 November

DECEMBER

Restoring Hope: Practical Policies to Revitalise the Australian Economy

Tony Abbott, Paul Kelly, Andrew Stone, Tom Switzer

Book Launch • 28 January

Bjorn Lomborg: The Skeptical Environmentalism (Sydney)

Bjorn Lomborg, Tom Switzer

Lecture • 11 February

The Next Pandemic: China's Coronavirus

Salvatore Babones, Doug Bandow, Natasha Kassam,
Vicky Xu, Sue Windybank

Panel • 19 February

Has China Won?: Mahbubani vs Mearsheimer

Kishore Mahbubani, John Mearsheimer, Tom Switzer

Webinar • 7 May

America in Crisis?

George F. Will, Tom Switzer

Webinar • 5 June

Gladys Berejiklian: NSW After the Pandemic

Gladys Berejiklian, Tom Switzer

Interview • 1 July

Free Thought is Burning

Dave Rubin, Monica Wilkie

Webinar • 28 July

Australia and Sino-US relations:

Tony Abbott vs Bob Carr

Tony Abbott, Bob Carr, Tom Switzer

Webinar • 6 August

We Need Freedom to Innovate

Matt Ridley, Tom Switzer

Interview • 27 September

Australia's 2020 Federal Budget: The Most Consequential Budget of Our Generation

Simon Cowan, Emma Dawson, Stephen Kirchner, Danielle
Wood

Webinar • 7 October

Does Hong Kong Have a Future?

Salvatore Babones, Daniel Del Re, Simon Littlewood

Webinar • 14 October

2020 CIS Nanny State Awards

Steven Schwartz

Web presentation • 8 December

Digital Reach

Social media and the turbocharged adoption of new technologies has led to a record year for CIS, surpassing records for engagement, reach and impressions. Our message, research and digital content has been syndicated, read, watched, downloaded and listened to by a wider audience than ever before.

CIS conducted a thorough audit of its platforms and channels in the wake of COVID-19 restrictions, developing a comprehensive plan to capitalise on the shift to online formats. We have overhauled our social media branding, rejuvenated our YouTube and podcasting channels, and conducted extensive research into the data and analytics behind our platforms and website. This has enabled us to deliver engaging and timely content to our various audiences.

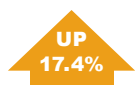
Twitter



On Twitter we have had a longstanding presence with a steady following. This year new followers were up 11.77% while impressions increased by 3.77%.

Our top posts all featured prominent events guests including **Claire Lehmann**, **Bjorn Lomborg**, **Lionel Shriver** and **Brendan O'Neill**.

LinkedIn



We have a growing audience, which tends to comprise corporate and political profiles looking for articles and news. This year saw follower growth of 17.4%, with impressions up 7.93%.

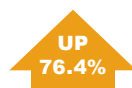
Indigenous Affairs program director **Jacinta Price** featured in each of our top three posts.

Facebook



Our Facebook page has a primarily Australian following, and is the platform of choice for people to follow us, learn about us, and communicate with us. We have had steady growth and impact without using paid ads. Over the year, our follower base increased by 11.4%, although impressions decreased by 18%. CIS articles on virtue signalling, curtailment of liberties, and Indigenous mortality were among our top performing posts.

YouTube



While not quite the same as social media platforms, YouTube has been one of our biggest success stories for 2020. Our channel holds over 500 videos and is home to our weekly segment *On Liberty* (see page 21). This year we attracted 2.1 million viewers, amounting to over 500,000 hours viewed, with subscribers up 76.9%.

Our top three performing videos in terms of views were:

1. *Trump and America in Crisis* with **George Will** – 420k
2. *Has China Won?* with **John Mearsheimer** & **Kishore Mahbubani** – 340k
3. *We Must Defend Freedom of Speech* with **Lionel Shriver** & **Brendan O'Neill** – 91k

Podcasts



Another success story has been our efforts to deliver content in audio forms via podcasts, giving people the option to engage with us on the go. With relative ease we have built up an audience, regularly reaching over 2,250 monthly users and increasing listens by 71% on 2019.

Our top three performing podcasts were:

1. *The End Of Pax Americana?* with 2020 Scholar-in-Residence **Doug Bandow**
2. *Has China Won?* featuring **John Mearsheimer** and **Kishore Mahbubani**
3. **Claire Lehmann** on *How the Pandemic Has Accelerated Trends* (*On Liberty* episode 20)



The Canberra Times

NOVEMBER 22 2020 - 4:30AM

It's time to go to bat for market forces

Simon Cowan



There's no call for pink batts version 2020

Robert Carling

Nov 4, 2020 - 4:10pm

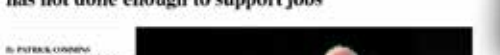
The remarkable thing about the December quarterly national accounts is that despite all the focus on particular areas of weakness in the economy during 2020, it managed to end up with growth of 0.5 per cent or 0.6 per cent each quarter for an annual total of 2.2 per cent.

Perhaps there is a lesson in this, which is that the financial sector has been



Paul Keating says the RBA's 'incremental' approach has not done enough to support jobs

By PETER CARLING



Former prime minister Paul Keating, who only recently left the Centre for Independent Studies as its chief economist, said Mr "right to complain about the RBA's inaction".

"It is also correct that this is a long-term problem with the culture of Mr Paul Keating."

It's the most vulnerable kids who've been hurt

BLAISE JOSEPH

School closures have forced vulnerable children to leave their homes and families, and the impact on their education and social development is likely to be long-lasting.

NAPLAN put to test

GLENN FAHEY

The one-off abandonment of NAPLAN this year may be an enduring blow to school accountability.

The literacy and numeracy tests – normally conducted in mid-May – were scrapped amid uncertainty about whether schools would be open across the country and partly in response to concerns over disruption to regular teaching and learning.

Now, Queensland's education unions have urged teachers against preparing pupils for next year's exams – a unilateral decision that risks undermining the tests' credibility.

This year's ill-considered decision to scrap the tests, policymakers must confront the bigger problem: Halting this year's testing has strengthened the hand of those who have long opposed standardised assessment and undermined the tests' credibility.

wrought by the pandemic. The imperative to leverage NAPLAN as a learning diagnostic couldn't be more apt given what students have encountered this year.

That does not mean NAPLAN is perfect. Nobody denies that NAPLAN could be better. It could be held at a more appropriate time of the school year (and potentially in different year groups); it could be a more rigorous assessment and one varied according to students' capabilities; its content could be better aligned with curriculum; and it could be used for a wider range of purposes.

VINDICATED: LONE EXPERT WHO SAW TODAY'S BELLICOSE CHINA

The world was warned this trouble was coming but the West didn't understand

TOM SWITZER

Rarely in history has an academic been as intellectually vindicated as John Mearsheimer. Two decades ago, his bold thesis was that great-power rivalry was not over. Like many prophets, Mearsheimer was ignored. But he accurately foresaw the intense Sino-American security

Mearsheimer's warning has come to pass: we starry-eyed proponents of engagement have been mugged by reality. How often do you hear talk about growing tensions between China and not just the US and Australia but many other parts of the world? In a new Centre for Independent Studies paper, one of Australia's leading security experts, Alan Dupont, says the US-China standoff over trade, technology and strategy has precipitated a new cold war.

Many people blame China's

Doctor Woke

Monica Williams



It is a common I believe the time I

substantive choices that they are making the language of a different era.

An aggregate attendance rate of 70 per cent could mean half are attending 90 per cent of the time, the other half only 50 per cent, or all students are attending 70 per cent of the time. In the first situation, half are getting an effective education. In the second situation, half are not.

There's no employment gap for indigenous and non-indigenous Australians educated at the same levels. But research shows a child doesn't receive an effective education if their school attendance falls below 90 per cent.

The Indigenous Business Sector Strategy, which included an Indigenous Entrepreneurship Fund to provide or unlock capital and business training for indigenous businesses, particularly for wholly owned indigenous businesses that struggle to access mainstream finance (as in regular construction).

The IBSS was ambitious and innovative. Nothing like this had been seen in indigenous policy. We expected it would have to be refined as it developed. What we didn't expect was the momentum of the IBSS falling away as it had done in the past 12 months.

The IBSS ceased on June 30 last year, having provided less than half the originally allocated funding pool to only 18 indigenous businesses. The IBSS remains on the NIAA website but I've noticed

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PLAT WHITE MAGAZINE WORLD FEATURES BOOKS SPECTATOR.CO.UK

How identity politics diminishes women

Monica Williams



Keating finds his inner Keynes

Tom Switzer

Is it time to ditch the staples betels and return to big government? The truth is we have never felt it, writes Tom Switzer.

Tom Switzer, Columnist

One essence of Australia's much-changed economic policy debate is that Paul Keating – architect of the market reforms that helped create our regional society and its modern prosperity – now champions big government.



Amid this pestilence, listen to Easter's revolutionary message

Robert Forster

In the year of the coronavirus, the dangerous meaning of Christ's strange and unexpected death and resurrection calls the bluff of our shallow secular society.

Robert Forster, Former Anglican Bishop of South Sydney

Easter and the coronavirus have at least one thing in common. Both are us

My people need an economy, Mundine warns

PAIGE TAYLOR

Indigenous policy must get back to economic fundamentals, with a focus on school attendance, jobs and creating the right environment.

Warren Mundine argues in an essay that the pandemic crisis is an opportunity for the Morrison government to take the radical action that has been too hard in the past, including regional economic development, welfare reform, and targeted and deliberate action to

Studies on Wednesday, calls for a particular effort to help indigenous people build their own job-creating businesses in remote and regional areas. "I am not aware of any race, community or group of people who have pulled themselves out of poverty without an

In the far north Queensland community of Yarrabish, 70-year-old Perry Neal owns a bakery that employs an indigenous manager, supervisor and two apprentices. He also grows vanilla beans and is exploring export markets. Like Mr Mundine, he sees an

Our schools already let too many children down before this year of disruption. Where to from here?

Fiona Whelan



Media and Communications

The Centre for Independent Studies has a longstanding reputation for developing rigorously researched and insightful policy ideas, and promoting them to the public through events and the media.

In 2020, CIS published more than 200 op-eds, and (with syndication) was cited in more than 4,700 news stories across networks, while researchers were heard and seen in 2,500 radio broadcasts and 60 TV shows, with an overall 7% rise in media.

Research is developed on the foundation of CIS's principles and message, and is the main focus for the media and communications work in broadcasting policy proposals and helping raise the CIS profile.

Research promotion in 2020 focused on a total of 25 publications, including 1 Research Report, 12 Analysis Papers, 6 POLICY Papers and 5 Occasional Papers as well as 3 Submissions to government.

In addition to media coverage, CIS is continually exploring ways to increase its use of direct and electronic communications, including further growing its social media profile (see page 23), and improving and enhancing its digital newsletters and video and multimedia production.

4,700
news stories

200
op-eds

2,500
radio broadcasts

60
tv shows



Publications

Our rigorous research publications form a crucial part of the foundation of CIS's public profile and endeavour to promulgate policy proposals. During 2020, CIS published 1 Research Report, 12 Analysis Papers, 6 POLICY Papers and 5 Occasional Papers.

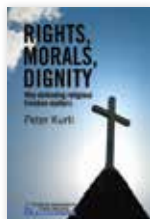
A full list of our publications appears below.

Occasional Papers 2020

Rights, Morals, Dignity: Why defending religious freedom matters

Peter Kurti

Calls for protections of rights are often made without much reflection on what it is exactly that needs protecting. This paper argues that behind any claim about rights lies a moral claim, and that this claim is essentially about human dignity.



Innovation in Australia

Matt Ridley

In this paper, Ridley charts how with 0.3% of the world population, Australia has probably contributed a lot more than 0.3% of the innovations the world needs and uses, from electronic pacemakers and aircraft black boxes to pink cricket balls.



Moral Terrorism

Simon Heffer

This paper gives a UK perspective on the rise of 'cancel culture', arguing that a vocal but zealous minority is using the power of social media in particular to eradicate offensive words, images and opinions from the public square by terrorising people into silence.



The Elite Embrace

Rowan Callick

This paper explains how the Chinese Communist Party courts foreign elites, arguing that many Australian corporate, university, state and local government elites are effectively captured by such courting whilst the general public becomes ever more critical of the party-state.



Australia, the United States and China in a Post-Covid World

Richard Alston

Australia confronts a trifecta of crises: a pandemic, a recession, and a radically changed strategic outlook as competition intensifies between China and the US. This paper argues that Canberra can still ride two horses at the same time, but must adapt quickly.



Australia's Export Exposure to China's Coronavirus Epidemic

Salvatore Babones

This paper estimates the impact of the coronavirus epidemic across 18 major industry groups at between \$8 billion and \$12 billion in lost revenues, mainly because of Australian educational institutions' extraordinary dependence on Chinese students.



Mitigating the New Cold War: Managing US-China trade, tech and geopolitical conflict

Alan Dupont

The US and China are wrestling for strategic advantage in an increasingly bitter global contest that has led to a new Cold War. With a view to preventing or mitigating worst-case outcomes, Dupont presents nine recommendations to improve the relationship.



State Finances After the Pandemic

Robert Carling

The impact of the pandemic will add to expenses and sap major sources of revenue, reinforcing the rising trend of debt. To counter this, Carling calls for stronger expenditure restraint, rescheduling of large projects, privatisation, and other policy reform.



Pain Without Gain: Why school closures are bad policy

Blaise Joseph and Glenn Fahey

This paper finds that while there was little health benefit from school closures during the pandemic, there were substantial economic and educational costs particularly for disadvantaged students.



The 12-Week Window: The coronavirus crisis Australia didn't have to have

Salvatore Babones

This paper lays out a detailed weekly timeline of the crucial first twelve weeks of the coronavirus crisis, which were a window of opportunity for fighting the virus at the border instead of in the community.



A Fiscal Vaccine for COVID-19

Tony Makin

In this evaluation of the budget response to the pandemic, Makin critiques the alarming rise in government spending and flawed resumption of Keynesian demand stimulus before flagging reforms to reduce the size of government and enable long-term growth.



Civil Society After COVID: On rebuilding a virtuous civic culture

Peter Kurti

In addition to economic recovery, this paper argues that the equally crucial work of civic repair is needed for the social transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic, and depends on an appropriate balance between individual freedom and community well-being.



Lower Company Tax to Resuscitate the Economy

Jeff Bennett, Michael Potter and Tony Makin

This paper makes the case for private sector investment and confidence as the keys to economic recovery after the pandemic, and argues that government cannot tax and spend its way back to growth.



The Economic Challenge of Covid-19

Robert Carling

Fiscal stimulus and government borrowing can only help in the short-term. This paper argues for a shift to structural reforms in industrial relations, deregulation and tax reform to enable economic recovery and ensure long-term growth.



It's the Economy, Stupid: Economic participation only way to close the gap

Nyunggai Warren Mundine

The gap exists because too many Indigenous people do not participate in the real economy. This paper argues that governments can leverage the COVID crisis to move people from welfare to economic participation and use local workforces for local jobs.



Policies Against Covid-19: Reflections on the way in and the way out

Terrence O'Brien and Robert Carling

This paper warns that policy responses to COVID-19 are unsustainably costly to jobs and living standards, and that prescriptive and arbitrary government restrictions have crowded out voluntary measures that could have achieved benefits at lower cost.



Industrial Relations in a Post-Covid World

Judith Sloan

This paper addresses the continuing sclerosis in industrial relations, and argues that flexibility is crucial in both handling the effects of the pandemic and generating investment coming out of it.



Cancelled!: How ideological cleansing threatens Australia

Peter Kurti

Cancel culture threatens to corrode civility, destroy civic trust and fuel community discord, fracturing social cohesion. This paper examines the campaign to eradicate offensive words, images and opinions from the public square and the dangers this poses to free speech.



Rationalising Regulation: Helping the economy recover from the corona crisis

Gene Tunny and Ben Scott

In addressing the massive build-up of regulations in recent years and analysing its negative effect on productivity, this paper delivers a series of practical deregulation proposals.



Parents' Perspectives on Home-Based Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic

Glenn Fahey and Blaise Joseph

This paper presents the findings of CIS-commissioned polling on parents' experiences of home-based learning during the pandemic, with results pointing to the need for more flexibility in schooling and better interaction between parents and schools.



The End of Monetary Policy?

Warren Hogan

Monetary policy in most advanced economies was already suffering from overreach before the pandemic. This paper argues that more easy money is not the answer to economic problems, which are structural in nature and can only be solved by major policy reform.



A House Divided: The AFRB and China's subnational diplomacy in Australia

Salvatore Babones

This paper assesses the Foreign Relations Bill as a tool for countering China's subnational diplomacy, with a focus on Victoria and Belt & Road. It recommends shifting the legislation's focus from bureaucratic approval to transparency and community approval.



Dollars and Sense: Time for smart reform of Australian school funding

Glenn Fahey

This report highlights the shortcomings of policy approaches to school funding and argues that funding should be tied to education outcomes.



Planning Restrictions Harm Housing Affordability

Peter Tulip

In this paper, one of Australia's foremost experts on housing affordability documents the perverse and distorting effect of planning restrictions and regulations in limiting the supply of housing, thus pushing up prices.



Victims of Failure: How the COVID-19 policy response let down Australians

Monica Wilkie

This paper outlines how the federal and state governments failed consistently to: justify increasing restrictions; outline a clear exit strategy; weigh trade-offs; and meet basic standards of accountability.



Fundraising & Engagement

2020 has been a year like no other. Covid-19 has hit our society in a manner unthinkable only 12 months ago. Apart from the horrific infection and death rates across the globe, the world economy has also taken a massive hit with shutdowns, closures and job losses. Australia has entered its first recession in almost 30 years and the government has introduced assistance packages that will be have to be paid off for generations to come.

Throughout all this CIS has stayed strong, due mainly to the unfailing generosity of our members and donors. Despite the pandemic, memberships and donations received over the last financial year were higher than anticipated in such uncertain times and we are extremely grateful to all our loyal supporters.

In accordance with our charter to be truly independent, the CIS Board chose not to accept Job Keeper and unfortunately this meant some staff were lost through redundancies. All remaining staff accepted a temporary reduction in salary and/or hours. This, coupled with the extraordinary generosity of our supporters, has meant CIS is in a sound financial position for the immediate future and able to continue the fight to develop evidence-based policy in line with classical liberal principles.

Your ongoing support is critical to our success. Together we can continue our research, outreach and events to improve public policy, advance liberty and promote free enterprise.

There is still more to do and we cannot do this important work without you.

Thank you!

Legacy Society

We welcome you to become part of our growing Legacy Society by considering making CIS a part of your will.

A bequest to the Centre of Independent Studies will allow the continuation of the policy and research you currently support. For more information, or to request a booklet about the CIS Legacy Society, please contact our Membership Manager Jennifer Brown at jbrown@cis.org.au.

Make Your Impact Heard

You can make a difference today by joining as a member or contributing a tax-deductible gift. We would love to discuss options and ways for you to make the greatest impact in person.

Donations, memberships and other forms of support are the lifeblood of our work, and we thank all our contributors for their continued generosity. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible, and all support makes a difference! For more information, please call us on (02) 9438 4377 and ask for our Membership Manager, Jennifer Brown, or go to cis.org.au/donate

Researchers

Associate Professor Salvatore Babones

Adjunct Scholar

Salvatore is a political sociologist and an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. This year he authored three Analysis Papers: *Australia's Export Exposure to China's Coronavirus Epidemic*, *The 12-Week Window: The coronavirus crisis Australia didn't have to have* and *A House Divided: The AFRB and China's subnational diplomacy in Australia*. He is also the host of the new CIS weekly webcast *On Liberty*.



Professor Gary Banks

Senior Fellow

Professor Gary Banks AO was Chief Executive and Dean of ANZSOG, Chairman of the Productivity Commission from its inception in 1998 until 2013. Among his current roles Gary chairs the OECD's Regulatory Policy Committee and is on the board of Macquarie Bank. He has headed national inquiries on a variety of significant public policy and regulatory topics. For many years, he chaired the COAG Steering Committee for the Review of Government Services, was the Convenor for the Review's Working Group on Indigenous Disadvantage, and had responsibility for overseeing the Commonwealth's regulation-making processes through the Office of Regulation Review.



Robert Carling

Senior Fellow, Economics Program

Robert's expertise is in fiscal policy, taxation and federalism. In 2020 he published the POLICY Papers *State Finances After the Pandemic* and *The Economic Challenge of Covid-19*, and co-authored *Policies Against Covid-19: Reflections on the way in and the way out* with Terrence O'Brien. Robert also contributed regular commentary on government responses to the pandemic throughout the year.



Simon Cowan

Research Manager and Economics Program Director

Simon heads the research team and manages the report writing process. In addition to this work, in 2020 he oversaw the production of 16 papers for CIS's From Pandemic to Prosperity project. He is also a regular media commentator.



Glenn Fahey

Research Fellow, Education Program

Glenn's focus is on education finance and accountability, and in 2020 he published the Research Report *Dollars and Sense: Time for Smart Reform of Australian School Funding*. Glenn also co-authored, with Blaise Joseph, the papers *Pain Without Gain: Why school closures are bad policy* and *Parents' Perspectives on Home-based Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic* as part of the Pandemic to Prosperity project.



The Right Rev. Robert Forsyth

Senior Fellow in the Culture, Prosperity & Civil Society Program

Robert Forsyth was the Anglican Bishop of South Sydney, from 2000 to 2015. This year Rob edited a collection of essays with Peter Kurti called *Forgotten Freedom No More: Protecting Religious Liberty in Australia: Analysis and Perspectives*. He also developed a series of podcasts called *Liberalism in Question*, which began airing in December.



John Humphreys

Research Associate

Dr John Humphreys is an economist and a sessional lecturer at the University of Queensland.



Blaise Joseph (to August 2020)

Research Fellow, Education Program

This year, Blaise co-authored with Glenn Fahey two papers for the Pandemic to Prosperity project: *Pain Without Gain: Why school closures are bad policy* and *Parents' Perspectives on Home-based Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic*. He is now pursuing a PhD in Educational Leadership at New York University and is an Adjunct Scholar at CIS.



The Rev. Peter Kurti

Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Culture, Prosperity and Civil Society program

In 2020, Peter published three papers: the Occasional Paper *Rights, Morals, Dignity: Why defending religious freedom matters*; an Analysis Paper entitled *Civil Society After COVID: On rebuilding a virtuous civic culture* for the Pandemic to Prosperity project; and another Analysis Paper called *Cancelled!: How ideological cleansing threatens Australia*. Peter also edited a collection of his essays, *Sacred & Profane: Faith and Belief*, and co-edited *Keeping Australia Right*, both for publisher Connor Court.



Greg Lindsay AO**Senior Fellow and Founder**

Greg founded the Centre for Independent Studies in 1976. He handed over the role of Executive Director to Tom Switzer in 2018.



Barry Maley**Senior Fellow**

Barry's research primarily focuses on social policy with particular attention to family and taxation. Other areas of interest to him include cultural change, ethics and civil society.



Dr Fiona Mueller (until March 2020)**Director of the Education Program**

Dr Fiona Mueller joined CIS in July 2019. She has a wide-ranging background in schools, universities and government bodies including working as a Director of Curriculum at ACARA. She is now an Adjunct Scholar at CIS.



Jacinta Nampijinpa Price**Director of the Indigenous Affairs Program**

Jacinta joined CIS in July 2019. She has worked as a cross-cultural consultant for nearly 20 years. Her work at CIS is looking at how to change the narrative about Indigenous disadvantage to achieve real and lasting change. She is a regular media commentator, and in 2020 she authored several op-eds for the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Australian* and *The Spectator* (Australia).



Lukas Opacic (until March 2020)**Senior Policy Analyst in the Culture, Prosperity & Civil Society program**

Lukas joined the CP&CS program in early October 2019. He is currently completing a PhD in Law at the University of Sydney.



Scott Prasser**Senior Fellow**

Scott trained as a political scientist and served as education adviser to two federal education ministers.



Professor Steven Schwartz**Senior Fellow**

Professor Schwartz is a former Vice Chancellor of Macquarie University. His expertise is in higher education.



Tom Switzer**Executive Director**

Tom is a prominent commentator and is sought after for commentary on both domestic politics and international affairs. He regularly chairs and moderates CIS panel discussions and debates.



Peter Tulip (from August 2020)**Chief Economist**

Peter came to CIS in August from the Reserve Bank of Australia. His research focuses primarily on housing and monetary policy. Peter published the POLICY Paper *Planning Restrictions Harm Housing Affordability* in December this year.



Monica Wilkie**Policy Analyst in the Culture, Prosperity & Civil Society Program**

This year, Monica released an Analysis Paper called *Victims of Failure: How the COVID-19 policy response let down Australians* as part of the Pandemic to Prosperity project. She also contributed regular commentary on the pandemic and its impacts throughout the year. In July, she launched a new series of CIS webinars with prominent public intellectuals.



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Jennifer Brown
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Accounts

The Centre For Independent Studies Ltd

Income & Expenditure Statement

Ending Financial Years 30/06/2020 and 30/06/2019

INCOME	To June 2020 AUDITED (\$)	To June 2019 AUDITED (\$)
General Donations	3,397,298	3,204,628
Membership Subscriptions	115,570	139,384
Building Fund Donations	25,000	271,000
Book Sales and Copyright	27,985	88,739
Event Income	779,936	631,247
Interest & Other Income	103,626	218,805
TOTAL INCOME	\$4,449,416	\$4,553,803

EXPENSES	To June 2020 AUDITED (\$)	To June 2019 AUDITED (\$)
Salaries & Consultancy	\$2,595,622	2,635,053
Events	\$907,394	629,406
Administration including travel, publication cost, rent, etc.	\$400,146	496,219
Depreciation	\$406,651	416,926
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,309,813	\$4,177,604

SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$139,603	\$376,199
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CAPITAL FUND AS AT 30 JUNE 2019	\$312,492
DRAWINGS	\$27,481
CAPITAL FUND AS AT 30 JUNE 2020	\$339,973

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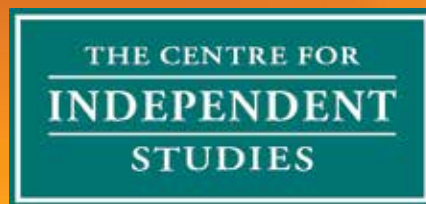
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Centre for Independent Studies

Level 1, 131 Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000
Tel: 02 9438 4377 | Email: cis@cis.org.au | cis.org.au
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