

Commissioner for Urgency

Justice –

The hoarding of wealth lies at the heart of so many human-made problems, from diseases of poverty to homelessness in even the world's most prosperous cities. The present generation is inheriting a dramatically widened gap between rich and poor, and as Commissioner for Urgency I see many different pathways to solving what is an increasingly pressing problem. Inequality across the country can be addressed right now through taxation and other mechanisms that, although they might be unpopular in the short term, will ensure an ethical spread of resources. It's a small cost to pay to ensure a fair future for all.

Work –

Humanity is in the middle of a work-from-home revolution. As the Commissioner for Urgency, I track the increased number of jobs that can now be performed just as well, if not better, by people scattered far and wide than by employees cooped up in a traditional office. Some existing hierarchies and cultures resist this change, and they shouldn't, because it's good for the environment and for their employees' wellbeing. Embracing this revolution allows workers to freely choose how, where, and why they work—with the added bonus that aging workers may feel encouraged to stay in the workforce longer, to transfer valuable knowledge and skills to an increasingly youthful population.

Health –

One of my most pressing concerns is the threat of chronic illnesses, such as long Covid and other emergent pathogens, with mental health and age-related disease issues that also deserve increased attention and resourcing. Dealing with so many problems requires a fully-funded and -staffed healthcare system that operates with capacity sufficient to meet peak demand (a principle that should apply to all complex systems, not just health). This cannot be achieved by half-measures. For the sake of everyone's wellbeing, we require an immediate increase in financial commitment from our government—after which ramping will be a thing of the past.

Climate –

Fixing the planet's global weather woes may seem daunting, but I'm pleased to inform you that, just as humanity has defeated vast challenges in the past, we can defeat this one too—if we commit to working together *now*. Our economies at every level, from corporate to individual, must transition to green technologies as quickly as possible. At the same time, economic growth must begin to take second place to sustainability, particularly as we contemplate a world containing fewer people. Economists have modelled incentive schemes that will work. All we need is the political will to act, and we can start turning the carbon ship around, at last.

Education –

As Commissioner for Urgency, I'm here to tell you what you already know: today's world is awash with information, pouring in from every side. How do we teach our children to navigate this flood? Through critical thinking skills that can be embedded in school curricula and demonstrated in our media. The future is certain to be as changeable as the present, and objectivity, open-mindedness and empathy are the qualities that best turn knowledge into ethical actions. By ensuring our children have these qualities, along with the freedom to put them into practice, I have no doubt that they will teach their parents a thing or two.

Culture –

With my Commissioner for Urgency hat on *and off*, I'm proud that Australia is home to the longest living cultures on Earth. I am dismayed, however, that these cultures have little say in their own governance. In other settler nations around the world, such as Canada and New Zealand, treaties exist and rights of political representation enable indigenous peoples to work with the newcomers who now share their lands. The lack of such a voice in this country is an injustice that must be dealt with without hesitation—to bring us up to speed with the rest of the world; to embrace our country's diverse past, present and future; and to make Australia unique for only the right reasons.