

POLICY FORUM

POD

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The Auspolicy issue –
what the country voted for
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Australian
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About us:

Policy Forum Pod is the podcast of Policy Forum.net - Asia and the Pacific's platform for public policy debate, analysis and discussion. Policy Forum is based at Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University.

Our regular podcasts are written for a broad audience of public policy professionals, and those interested in public policy throughout the region.

Policy Forum connects with the Asia and the Pacific Policy Society – a network of thousands of people involved in every level of policy around the region.

Host: Julia Ahrens

Bob Cotton: co-host 1; Bob Cotton, Visiting Fellow at Crawford School, ANU

Prof Grafton: co-host 2, Professor R. Quentin Grafton, Director, Centre for Water Economics, Environment & Policy, ANU College of Asia & The Pacific.

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Dr Allen: Dr Liz Allen, Demographer, Postdoctoral Fellow, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences

[intro music 0:00:00-0:00:11]

Host: Welcome to Policy Forum Pod, the podcast for those who want to dig a little deeper into the policy challenges facing Australia and its region. I am Julia Ahrens. Policy Forum Pod is produced at Crawford School, the region's leading graduate policy school. You can find out more about us at crawford.anu.edu.au.

I have got the great pleasure to have two very stellar co-hosts with me here, today. First, I have got Quentin Grafton. Quentin is a Professor here, at Crawford School and, also, the Editor in Chief for Policy Forum. Hello, Quentin.

Prof Grafton: Great to be here, Julia.

Host: I have also got Bob Cotton here, with me. Bob is a Visiting Fellow at the Crawford School and has had a distinguished career as an Australian diplomat. Hi, Bob, good to have you here.

Bob Cotton: Good morning, Julia, great to be here, with you again.

Host: Our regular listeners will know that each week we go over some of the most pressing policy issues and, of course, we are going to talk about the election on this podcast, today, and I think everyone has heard a lot about it in the past weeks, so how about we hear from Bob what he has been hearing about this week?

Bob Cotton: Thanks so much. One issue that has really got my attention this past week — outside of Australia that is, is United States attitudes towards Iran. Once again, we see Donald Trump as President being very aggressive, very on the front-foot, very offensive to an important nation in the Middle East — and always has been. It also brings to mind just what the United States have in mind to do here: it is threatening to take Iran up, basically, unless it complies with the United States.

That kind of policy does not really work terribly well, unsettles the region completely, runs the risk of being titled as playing to the Israeli playbook for strategy in the Middle East, and also makes Australians wonder a fair bit about just what this alliance means for us these days.

Host: I think what you are referring to here is the Tweet that Donald Trump put out just a few days ago. Should we actually be more worried about this this time, as we know Donald Trump is always a bit loud on his Twitter profile?

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Bob Cotton: I do not think more worried, but certainly significantly worried. This was the playbook that he tried with North Korea and we have still got to see how that one does play out in the end. Trouble with both of those nations is they are significant nations, particularly Iran, and they have the capacity to strike back in ways which we do not quite always appreciate or understand. Yes, we should be worried but not more worried than before.

Host: Definitely something to keep our eyes on for now. Quentin, what was on your radar this week?

Prof Grafton: Look, my radar is what is happening in India. They have just gone through several weeks of running an election, which has been an impressive event given that they have got more than a billion people there and, of course, those results are coming out in the next few days. The exit polls suggest that Modi will be re-elected and will be the continuous prime minister, possibly with a majority, so we will wait and see.

That is a very big event, not just for us in Australia. Within the region, I think, globally India is a very significant country, and what happens in India, the policies in India and what they plan to do on the next few years under Modi, if he is re-elected, I think matters a lot.

Host: Yes, we had a wonderful piece on Policy Forum from James Mortensen on the role of WhatsApp and social media, more broadly, in the Indian election. Quentin, what are your thoughts on that?

Prof Grafton: Yes, these are big issues. They have been raised in the context of WeChat and the context of the influence from China, and then WhatsApp in the context that people can enter these groups and provide misleading information.

But, of course, misleading information can be provided directly by politicians and through other sources, as well, so I think it just calls on all of us to be very careful when we receive some information — just to do some triangulation and confirm that that, in fact, is correct, that it is, in fact, factually correct and not some fake news or whatever we want to call it.

I think that is true whether we live in India, or whether we live in Australia, whether we live in the United States. I think that is a [?? 0:04:13] important in times of an election.

Host: Thank you very much, Quentin and Bob, for your thoughts on this. We are going to get started with the Pod in just a minute, but before we do so we wanted to give you

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a quick insight into what we have actually been up to in the Facebook podcast group this week.

It was, of course, all about the election this week, and many of you have submitted some really fantastic and excellent questions to us that we are definitely going to address today. Thank you so much for that. We are really looking forward to hearing our panel discuss the questions.

Many of you were also wondering about the role of the media in democracies and why voters did not seem so keen on progressive policies this time. You have told us about your concerns, about intergenerational inequality, and why you thought it mattered that we bridge the gap between the young and the old.

It was tremendously interesting to hear your thoughts on these things and we are so grateful that you then share all these thoughts with us, and you are such a smart and engaged listener-base. If you are not a member of the podcast group yet, just stop the podcast here, just for a second — we will not go anywhere, type in ‘Policy Forum Pod’ into the search bar, come on board, and share your thoughts with us on what we should discuss next on the podcast. We always love hearing from you.

This week, we have already had a fantastic podcast, *Democracy Sausage*, discussing the result and the politics surrounding Australia’s federal election. On this podcast, Mark Kenny spoke to Marija Taflaga and Kieran Gilbert about the Queensland backlash, the presidentialisation of politics and whether Labor actually misjudged the mood of the electorate. If you have not listened to that yet, definitely give it a go after you have listened to this podcast.

Today on the podcast, we want to turn away from politics and, instead, take a closer look at the policies promised by the Coalition and the challenges the government might be facing in implementing them. If you have a goal, you get a go. Despite opinion polls pointing towards a win for the Labor Party, in the end the Coalition carried away the win and will have another go at running the country, from taxes to climate change.

In the months to come, the government will also have to deliver on its policy promises, so today we are going to have a look at some of those policies, to see what is in store for the next years. We have got a great line-up of guests to discuss this today, have we not, Quentin?

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Prof Grafton: We sure have, Julia. We have got a dream team when it comes to policy in terms of the issues that were on the table during the election. The first person is Warwick McKibbin. He is a Professor and Director at the ANU Centre for Applied Macroeconomic Analysis. That is CAMA here, at the Crawford School of the ANU. He is also a Fellow at the Australian Academy of Social Sciences.

The second guest is John Hewson. He is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at the Crawford School and, of course, to many of our listeners who will know him as the former leader of the Liberal Party of Australia, he is also the Chair of the ANU Tax and Transfer Policy Institute.

The third person up is Liz Allen. She is an Associate Lecturer at the ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods and she is a National Council member of the Australian Population Association.

Last but most certainly not least, we have Paul Burke. He is an Associate Professor at the Crawford School, Deputy Head of the Arndt-Corden Department of Economics and the ANU Grand Challenge project leader of Zero-Carbon Energy for the Asia-Pacific.

Host: Definitely a stellar line-up. It is going to get quite cosy here, in the podcast studio, so very much looking forward to the discussion.

Also, a reminder to our listeners to get in touch with us on Facebook, where we are [PolicyForumPod](#) — join our group there, Twitter, where we are [@APPSPolicyForum](#), or do it the old-fashioned way and shoot us an email at podcast@policyforum.net.

Also, do not forget to stick around after the main interview, because we will be going over some of your comments, questions and suggestions for future podcasts, but for now I will hand over to my stellar co-host, Bob and Quentin, to talk to our panel.

[interlude music 0:08:25-0:08:34]

Bob Cotton: I would like to say good morning to our participants on the panel this morning. Good morning, Paul, how are you?

Prof Burke: I am very well. How are you, Bob?

Bob Cotton: Good to see you again. Fine, thanks.

Prof Burke: Thanks for having me.

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Bob Cotton: Liz, welcome again. How are you?

Dr Allen: I am doing very well.

Bob Cotton: Warwick, good morning. How are things going?

Prof McKibbin: Good morning. Very well, indeed.

Bob Cotton: And, John, hi, how goes it?

Dr Hewson: I am well, thanks.

Bob Cotton: Let me ask you all, to start off with the first big question. The Coalition has taken a surprising win in this week's federal election. Now, they have to deliver on their policy promises. I would like to ask all of you in turn: what do you think the biggest policy challenge ahead for the old and new government now? John, I am looking at you.

Dr Hewson: Well, I think he will start within his tax package and try and get that through. I imagine the Senate will not let him do it in one piece of legislation — maybe split it and only the first part will get through. He certainly will break the election promise because it will not take effect by July 1.

I would think that he is going to make ground on climate, irrespective of what he had actually said during the campaign. Unless he delivers pretty clear transition path on climate, I think that will be a challenge.

Morrison was pretty careful not to give too many other specific [laughs] policy commitments — it is what I said, and not too much detail when he did announce anything.

Bob Cotton: Okay. Warwick?

Prof McKibbin: I think the climate issue is the key defining part of this election because it was a key policy issue going into this debate and into the election. The parties that did well were the parties who were pushing for climate policies that were rational — [?? 0:10:04], for example. I think if Morrison wants to continue his long legacy, which he wishes to have, he really does need to have a clear, low-cost, transparent climate policy that will deliver the transition that we need.

Bob Cotton: Yes. Do you think it will be pretty important to the Australian business community, as well, to be having that? They have been crying out for it for quite a while.

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Prof McKibbin: Absolutely, and I think the answer is to forget about the ridiculous propositions that have been dominating the debate over the last decade. Go back to the analysis that was done under John Howard, the Shergold's report and the work that Martin Parkinson did in that report. That was the foundational stone. Forget about the [Gano? 0:10:41] review approach. Go back to those core principles and, I think, if you start there you will end up with a decent policy.

Bob Cotton: Liz?

Dr Allen: Yes, I am going to go fundamental and say that the line that the government took prior to winning this election was on population, one of an incongruent line on immigration being bad, but at the same time recognition that immigration was essential. We saw that in the Ford estimates when it came to immigration intake.

That will be interesting to see how that narrative plays out. They will have to make moves of unification, to quell the fears around immigration because, whether we like it or not, our economy is built on immigration, particularly as we are going forward.

If we look at the tax cuts, if we look at climate and all these other policy issues, they all come from or are related heavily to population, so that will be a big issue for the government to tackle.

Bob Cotton: Okay, thanks for that, and we will come back to immigration issues a little bit later on this morning. Paul, over to you.

Assoc. Prof Burke: Well, I am with Warwick. I think that the energy sector and emissions policy, this is really a bit test for the returned government. It is a very interesting time. We have a lot of technological opportunities at the moment. The government is developing a national strategy for hydrogen, as we speak. The work on that started before the election.

Bob Cotton: Good to hear that.

Assoc. Prof Burke: There is a big potential there. The interesting thing will be the electricity sector and an emissions policy for it, because our coal-fired power stations are old — some will be closing over coming years, but how do we make sure there is enough investment in that system.

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Will they return to the National Energy Guarantee — the NEG, one of those policies Warwick perhaps touched on just then when mentioning how many we have had, or will they go back to developing a system that economists would be happier with?

Prof Grafton: One of the things I am hearing is about policy certainty and, hopefully for the Coalition, for Australians, that we will get a government that will deliver some sort of certainty on the energy, climate change, or whatever, but one thing is certain: death and taxes [laughs], and tax cuts, I suppose, given the outcome in terms of the election.

And so, the Coalition has promised a very large amount in terms of going forward — and the forward estimates are \$158 billion of income tax cuts over the coming decade. As the first step [indeed? 0:13:14] that is a priority — Prime Minister Morrison has already made that clear since the election result. They will double the lower-middle income tax offset and raise the threshold for the 19% tax rate to \$45,000.

Just to get this kicked off, Warwick what is your opinion on that promise from the Coalition and what, do you think, are the main challenges in terms of not only getting it through the Parliament but in terms of implementation and delivering the good outcomes that has been promised by the Prime Minister?

Prof McKibbin: I will leave the politics to others, but I think the big risk here is the revenue stream that is going to have to be forthcoming to support the tax cuts. Very optimistic projections in the budget in terms of commodity prices, global growth and wage growth in Australia. If that is not forthcoming then you are not going to have the capacity to cut taxes without increasing the budget deficit, and I doubt that the Morrison Government will want to have a larger budget deficit.

The question is: how do you balance the uncertainty in the revenue stream with the certainty of the tax cuts? — and that has always been a dilemma, whether it has been in previous government fiscal projections or in previous government's promises about climate policy.

You do not assume you know the future when you make these promises, and that is the biggest mistake that both sides of politics always make.

Dr Hewson: It is also very ambitious assumption in the budget numbers about expenditure restrained, when over the last six years of the government they have kept the expenditure to about 2.5% energy — rate of growth, I should say — annual, and now they are assuming half that. I just do not think they will achieve that.

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Prof Grafton: But there was a statement two days before the election that they will continue with the efficiency dividend at 2%. This talks about cuts in the public service. Would that be enough to keep the expenditure growth in line, in terms of what the Coalition is promising?

Dr Hewson: I do not think so and I think, as you move into the 2020s, the big unfunded expenditure items, particularly infrastructure and defence, are going to be very big challenges through the 2020s. I think if you look at the recent book by Mike Keating, ex-Secretary of Finance, talking about a three percentage point increase in tax related to GDP over the 2020, just to fund the commitments that were known before the election, so it is a big number.

Prof McKibbin: Can I just add that it is also the upside. We cannot rule out the possibility that, in fact, revenues will be greater, and so there is always a possibility of some transformational impact on the global economy from all the new technologies that are coming online.

I mean, I think the problem is both directions: it is both high risk but, on the downside, it is probably greater than the upside. There is upside risk here, and so you still need to think forward about what you do if, in fact, the world is different than what we expect.

Bob Cotton: Can I just ask on this debate — and this may sound wildly idealistic: is this what we are going to hear the government the next three years on tax? Anything else to say on tax? Tax reform? Reforms of taxes? GST? All the good work was done in the Henry Review — we all remember this.

Dr Hewson: Oh, we all live in hope [crosstalk 0:16:12].

Bob Cotton: We all live in hope, but I have to ask the question: what do you think?

Dr Hewson: [crosstalk 0:16:15]

Prof McKibbin: I mean, again, if you think about what has happened: we have had a miracle. We had no one [laughter 0:16:20]. I thought there was a chance, but a lot of people did not think the government will be returned. The fact that they have has put the Prime Minister in a very powerful position in a short term.

If he wants to be regarded as the greatest leader of the Liberal government ever, he wants to leave behind some fairly large policy reforms. I think tax is one, I think climate change is another, energy is another.

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The question is: do you hold on for another three years and then get defeated at the next election or do you actually make it clear, in a short period you have that window of opportunity, that you are willing to do the best thing for the country and you get the payoff at the next election. My view is that that is the debate that is needed to be had.

Prof McKibbin: I think that is right. There is a bit of a blank slate here, in terms of economic reform ideas and energy policy, and there is just such a great potential. Over the next three years, I think, we should be expecting a few new ideas to be popping up.

Bob Cotton: I would just like to move on now, if I may, to education. The Coalition pledged 4.6 billion for Catholic and independent schools, a two-year freeze on growth of funding for Commonwealth supported places and a 525 million, I guess, skills package to boost apprenticeships in areas with skill shortages. Liz, I think we will start with you. How did that grab you?

Dr Allen: I think what we are seeing in Australia is--; I am very much of the opinion that we are at a bit of a watershed moment, particularly with regard to the demographic transition that we are undergoing in terms of an aging population. I think, in a grand scheme of things, we require the r-word — reform — in the full education suite, and I do not think we are there yet.

I think there are so many issues around public versus private school funding. In terms of the equality and in terms of the differential outcomes that we are seeing in student learning and the like, there is so much more that needs to be done to address that.

I fear that--; We have talked about the government wanting to make a name for themselves and sets themselves up for the next election, my concern is that short-termism will feature quite largely and, in that, they will be looking for quick gains, so that the scoreboard at the end of this term is quite a significant one, but in doing so the r-word does not really get dealt with. The reform does not occur.

When it comes to education, we need to consider a life-course approach, from the cradle to the grave. It is certainty in death and taxes. There is certainty in so many other things in between and that needs to be addressed, particularly with regard to the starting point that we arrive at in terms of from the cradle, the inequality that then grows as education and health disparities compound.

We are not addressing the core issues. We are dealing and tinkering around the edges, and I think part of that is for quick gains.

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Dr Hewson: Well, I do not think there has been a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the education system as a whole. It is the reform question you mentioned. The all ed-talk changes. It had been promised, and it had been promised by both sides, and more money does not solve the problems of some other weaknesses in the system.

I just look at universities. For example, most universities in this country today are steeling from their education budgets to fund research. If you really want to elevate university education and do it properly, there are big questions there to be addressed.

In the schools' area, well, there has been a focus, of course, on Gonski and dealing with disability. What worried me about that was there was nothing forward-looking about. There was, sort of, fixing and failing of funding in the past but, if you take a medium-to longer-term view of where schools will be, and what education should be like with rapid advances in technology, and so on, big challenges.

Of course, then you have got the vocational side, which got a lot of talk about in both sides, but I did not see anything specific apart from a few more apprenticeships or a few more TAFE spaces.

Prof Grafton: It sounds like a lot of work in progress when it comes to education, but I suppose one of the other big issues for work in progress — and we were working on it for many years now in Australia, going back and forth, of course, it is climate change. This was supposed to be the climate change election — and perhaps it was, in a number of ways.

Scott Morrison and the Coalition are supporting a two-billion-dollar climate solution's fund, which is more of the same in terms of what they were doing previously to reduce emissions and, of course, one of the big promises was the expansion of the Snowy Hydro Scheme — the big battery in outback door.

On the other hand, Morrison — Prime Minister Morrison — has also committed to a coal upgrade project in New South Wales. Does that make sense? I am not sure, but over to you, Paul.

We have got an audience question from Mugambi Paul on our Facebook group, and the question is: "How does Australia address climate policies when the voters threw progressive policies under the bus?"

Assoc. Prof Burke: Well, not all voters, of course, threw progressive policies under the bus. I do think we need to step back and remember that we are only speaking about

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one or two percentage points in difference. If it had been the other way around, our takes today would have been very different. Of course, Zali Steggall was elected on the climate platform, and other results one could refer to, as well.

The point really does go to the big challenge, and that is we are a big country, we have a lot of coal, we have natural gas, as well, a lot of jobs on the line and, really, I think a positive narrative is needed about the potential transition opportunities and, to use a better word than transition, the potential opportunities in these great new sectors: in solar power, in wind farms, in hydrogen production, in electric vehicles, and so on.

Prof Grafton: Yes, but if you are a coal miner in Queensland and someone knocks on your door and says, “Well, there is a great transition coming, there is going to be a lot of wind turbines in South Australia,” are they not just going to say, “Well, hang on, what about me?”

Assoc. Prof Burke: Well, it is a big challenge but, of course, Queensland is a fantastic state, with lots of resources that are relevant in the future, zero-carbon [world? 0:22:31], as well, closely located to Asia, a great spot to send off hydrogen from, for example, generated using solar and wind, so Queensland does have a lot of opportunities in the long run, but it is a challenge getting from A to B, definitely.

Prof McKibbin: If I could just chip in here, because I think that the key problem here is that neither party had a set of policies which were coherent. People were talking about targets. The targets do not actually matter in terms of the cost.

You could have a small target with very inefficient policies that is very costly, and you could have a deep-cut target which has very efficient policies which is cheaper, so the whole focus on symbolic targets is not where the answer is. The question should be: what are the policies we are going to implement?

Frankly, the Labor Party did not tell what the policies would be and said, “No need to calculate the cost because the benefits are going to outweigh the cost.” Well, a coal miner who sees that, says, “Well, there are costs and I am going to bear them,” so I think you need to know exactly the policies.

The government’s policies, as they stand, will be enough by a modelling to hear the 28% target, but if the world moves to a much deeper cuts world the framework is incapable of going for the deeper cuts.

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And so, I think you need to design a framework to anticipate that we will be going deeper than we are currently thinking and, therefore, we want to be able to adjust very easily into that new world, instead of having to have a complete readjustment of all your policies. That was the biggest problem in this debate: what are the policies for the deep-cuts world?

Prof Grafton: Yes, it is interesting that you are saying that the policies are going to deliver the 28% reduction in emissions by 2030, but here is a follow-up question, perhaps for one of the other people around the table. Arnagretta Hunter asks: “How can we advance the policy agenda to tackle climate change?” That adds on to what Warwick was talking about. Over to you, Liz.

Dr Allen: I think the language of a target, for many people when it comes to the environment, I think they see a target means a loss of either industry, or loss or cuts somewhere else that affect individual people. I think we--; Definitely, the narrative around that needs to change.

Without a doubt, the renewable energy workforce is growing, and it is growing quite substantially, and I think we need to move from this idea of targets — do not get wrong, targets are important, but in terms of how it is sold to the electorate. It needs to be sold more on the idea that it will cost us more not to act.

I am talking about the fundamental things, such as, as we are exposed to prolonged extreme weather events and our night-time temperatures do not dip so that we have some kind of respite, we will see human lives lost at a greater rate. I think we cannot--;

That idea of a target is so difficult for people at an individual level to see how that plays out in their lives. We will see real lives lost, not just our animals, not just the koalas — personal, loved ones that will die as a consequence of these increased extreme weather events.

What is worse, if we were to map the consequences of these extreme weather events and the human cost of life, where does it all occur? It occurs in the lowest socioeconomic areas — let’s take Sydney, for example, which are not necessarily living--; These communities are not living in housing that is going to help weather the storm, so to speak, and they are not going to be able to retrofit their housing, so we have to start communicating in this way. The cost is more if we do not act.

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Prof Grafton: Yes, this fits into this narrative of a climate emergency in the UK Parliament. Here, in the ACT, they passed a similar sort of movement in the context of pressing the button as they climb an emergency, but this is an important issue about the poor, the rick, the who-pays, I suppose.

Over to you, John. We have got a question from our Facebook group member, Annalise Taylor, and this is this equity issues — and I am happy for other to step in, as well. The question from Annalise is the following: “How do you address intergenerational inequality, not just the present generation, without it being seen as a zero-sum game when it comes to climate change?”

Dr Hewson: Well, to the extent that you do not deal with the climate challenge in this generation you are stealing from future generations quite significantly. The magnitude of the task you are kicking down the road gets bigger and more difficult, in my view.

As far as the government’s policy agenda goes in terms of the climate area, they could effectively scrap the lot and start again, in my view, because it was just let’s get bits and pieces, put them together — a lot of inconsistencies in there, no medium-term commitment, really, to a proper transition, no focus on not only dealing with, say, a transition from coal to other alternatives and the job consequences, the community consequences of that, but no thinking about the new industries and the new potential — enormous potential.

The bottom line is today renewables are cheaper — base-load renewables are cheaper. The Snowy Hydro is a very expensive figment of somebody’s imagination. You probably ought to move from that because there it is never going to be commercially viable — that is why they will not release a feasibility study, but there are alternatives and we have technology in this country for thermal storage that is flexible along the grid, much cheaper in terms of construction cost, much cheaper in terms of through-put cost.

Those things are there and, of course, in the transport sector, I cannot believe that we just [?? 0:28:20] in the idea of a transition to electric vehicles, because it is going to happen — it is going to happen much faster than people imagine.

We always think these things cannot happen that fast but I remember the mobile phone, I remember the LCR camera.

[laughter]

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These things happen very quickly, much quicker than people imagined, and I think that is going to happen.

As soon as you go global, motor manufactures which are now doing them--; I mean, in the recent European car show, they actually released all electric vehicles they are bringing forward — and their charging times are like eight minutes, not five days as Alan Jones [name sp.?] would have you believe. I mean, there is a lot happening already and its pace is accelerating, so I think Morrison should reset that.

Prof Grafton: Yes, so this is the change what is currently on the table.

Assoc. Prof Burke: But I think that you have got to be careful with the way you approach this debate.

Dr Allen: Yes.

Assoc. Prof Burke: The cost of not taking action does not work in Australia because, if Australia disappears, the climate problem does not go away, so you cannot make the argument that Australia taking action is going to fix the barrier reef and is going to save lives. It will not.

What Australia needs to do is create a framework which is part of a global cooperative package where everybody gets in and does it, and Australia, if it does a designer policy package that other countries adopt, which is low-cost, deep-cuts, then we will achieve something, but the argument that you save lives in Sydney does not fly, because you will not.

Dr Allen: I disagree. I think that if we--; We need to personalise the story, because what happens is — and we have already got this narrative running at the moment, is that what we are doing is a drop in the pond compared to the global issue but, again as I said, I think we need to pair this back and move it back to the individual level, so that people can understand that what we do here actually has impact on us, here.

Assoc. Prof Burke: Except, I think, that will then destroy the argument here, because people can demonstrably point out that Australia's emissions are too small. That is what the ring-wing argue. I think you do not engage them in that argument because you cannot win it.

What you do is you say it is a bigger game we are playing here — and there are benefits, as John said, there are big benefits in taking action. It is not to save lives. It is to,

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actually, get the economic benefits to outweigh the economic costs, and then win the argument in a rational way. I do not think the emotive argument actually swings the people who are going to lose their jobs. The point is that you can generate income by the transition, and I do not think that is the argument you want to make.

I agree with you, it is important morally, but from an economic point of view and a political point of view it is just not going to win the argument in Australia. It will in China and the US, because they are big enough, but Australia is too small to have an impact on the climate.

Prof Grafton: That is great that we got this debate, and we have that debate on Saturday, of course, with the election results. I think we will move on to the next set of issues.

Bob Cotton: Yes, I am coming back to immigration, Liz, and looking at you, you are the first-off. Just to remind, the Coalition wants to continue with its current border protection regime — no surprises there, I would have thought, and continues to oppose the new Medivac policy over concerns that it would weaken Australia's border security. What are your views on that and how do you see it going ahead, in the future?

Dr Allen: I think, whenever we talk about immigration, we need a wider look at the whole suite of issues here, and I think the Medivac issue is only one small part of that. Let's say, for example, I think the biggest narrative going into the election — and, I think, will also follow post-appointment, is on an immigration cut overall.

That is part of a hard line we are going to bust congestion, we are going to build infrastructure, we are going to put people into regional areas, and the like, and the Medivac is only one part of that, but, it is a big part of that in terms of the idea that Australia needs to be secure and people do not risk their lives or others do not put others at risk in a promise of something that cannot be delivered.

In terms of immigration, what the government is going to struggle with is this idea that they have put forward very convincingly [is] that immigration needs to be capped at a lower level than it previously has been. That cut is actually quite meaningless and is not a real substantive change in a great scheme of things but, at the same time, in the budget forward estimates when it came to the elements of immigration, net overseas immigration intake, it is much higher than expected. Moving forward, it is actually an increase over the next 10 years.

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Those things do not align, and I think that it is going to lead to issues around immigration, Australia's borders, Australia's security. It is going to fester and, I am concerned, it is going to deliver really poor results for everybody.

Bob Cotton: Okay. Just quickly around the table: are there any other views on that? I mean, it is a big process. We started with our immigrants overseas, the whole refugee issue, what are we doing coordinating with other countries to cope with that in the future, getting one border protection, resettlement, citizenship — the whole processing of immigration is a big issue. John.

Dr Hewson: I think, in terms of refugees they have got to focus on the resettlement strategies as a matter of urgency.

Dr Allen: Yes.

Dr Hewson: [?? 0:33:45] going, putting some of them in New Zealand and they will need to do that. The American solution is not going to be a sustainable long-term solution. I think that has always been the inadequacies of refugee strategies, not having that third leg of refugees' resettlement process.

In terms of immigration, and congestion, and so on, I mean, when I sit on the M5 in the morning, I do not think it is impacted very much by the number of refugees that came across the border.

I mean, there is a lot of misrepresentation in that argument so far. I think we do need an objective look as to the level of immigration that is appropriate. Obviously, the nation has been built on it. There are always social and economic consequences of cutting it or increasing it, but you need to have that informed, evidence-based debate, let's say, rather than just a political argument being run.

Prof Grafton: About the New Zealand solution — Bob, I just want to add--

Bob Cotton: Yes, the New Zealand solution [crosstalk 0:34:37].

Prof Grafton: --because that was off the table before, in terms of the Coalition.

Bob Cotton: I think Bill Shorten tentatively said that they [?? 0:34:44] that — if elected, they would pick up, which is having our people on Manus and Nauru resettle in New Zealand, and accepting there might be some risk that some of those people might then seek to come to Australia for permanent residence, and so on.

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Dr Hewson: Ignore the number of people who arrive by plane, which is about ten times the number of *[who]* arrived by boat--

Prof Grafton: Absolutely.

Dr Hewson: -and will just end up overstaying their visas, you know. It has been a nonsense argument for years.

Dr Allen: That is right.

Bob Cotton: Paul and Warwick, anything to add to this?

Assoc. Prof Burke: Just sticking to a technology theme, when it comes to road congestion, I mean, we have good ideas for solving this type of problem.

Dr Allen: Yes.

Assoc. Prof Burke: The use of economic pricing and satellite-based devices, this type of system has been used overseas. We have a great opportunity—

Bob Cotton: So, congestion charges and this sort of things?

Assoc. Prof Burke: Congestion pricing, that is right, and this is a type of reform. It does not need to make people poorer. It raises some revenue, that is right. We can use the revenue in the best ways possible. That could be for improving public transport, it could be for providing direct transfers, it could be for cutting other taxes. This type of approach can more directly address some of these key issues.

Bob Cotton: Warwick, anything to add to this?

Prof McKibbin: Just to make the point that more immigration is not necessarily good for the economy, because what matters is per capita quality of life. I think you cannot just have an immigration discussion without looking at the entire gamut of policies that would have to go with it, and so I think it is like almost a meaningless conversation without understanding what we are trying to achieve, what our goals are and what we are actually care about. It is per capita welfare of Australians, not the number of Australians.

Dr Allen: And the fortunate thing is we have that research available. The optimal range, according to Peter McDonald and colleagues, sits between 160,000 to 220,000 permanent migrants each year. That is in accordance with what you have just said.

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That is definitely an important factor, but the other thing, too, when it comes to congestion, if we were to cut immigration today and we said, “That is it, we call it, no more as of tomorrow,” we would still grow as a population, so in terms of congestion, if you are sitting in traffic, you are traffic, you are part of the problem. We need to stop blaming the other, which is so visible now, of course as a result of the change in migrant intake.

As I said, I would encourage the government to take steps to changing that discourse, to change that conversation and move it away from what it has been quite harmful across the whole spectrum of the political debate.

Prof Grafton: Good. Industrial relations — there was [figured? 0:37:23] very, very highly in previous elections, but not this election but, I suppose, there is a lot of issues around industrial relations and one of them is the uber-economy — the gig-economy.

There is a couple of items here in terms of what the Coalition promised. The first thing, it pledged to create a right for casual workers to request permanent, full-time or part-time work, and the second issue, that was headlined from themselves, was to give the Federal Court power to deregister unions or disqualify officials for repeated, serious breaches of the law.

Over to you, John. Where do you stand on these promises and pledges, and where is that going to take us in terms of industrial relations in Australia in the next three years?

Dr Hewson: I think, having had a miracle win, there is an enormous sigh of relief in the business community that the Labor agenda, the Sally McManus agenda, was not going to be pursued and take us back to the 1950s. In that sense, you will only see marginal change, I think, from the government. Some of the areas you just mentioned are possible, but I do not think they will go into that area very quickly or with much substance.

This whole issue about casualisation of workforce and whether a casual should have the full benefits of a full-time employee, there are reasons why they were appointed casual in the first place, on both sides. I think that debate will just fade, myself, and I do not think you will see too much in terms of industrial relations.

I mean, we were getting enormous benefits from a transition to more enterprise-focus and wage determination. That started really under Hawke and Keating and carried through. It should be continued. I think to go back to some more collective bargaining across areas, that would be a big minus. I do not think you will see much change.

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Prof Grafton: What did you think, Paul?

Assoc. Prof Burke: I would agree with that, in particular if you look back to the 2004 election when John Howard beat Mark Latham, and then that final term of the Howard Government they went for work choices and that, in the end, backfired, so I would tend to agree with John, that they would go for a more quiet strategy on the industrial relations front.

Bob Cotton: How about the concern that was expressed about wages being flap, decreasing, inequality of the wage across the weak signs in the economy?

Assoc. Prof Burke: Well, all that comes down to productivity.

[crosstalk 0:39:45]

Assoc. Prof Burke: I mean, you cannot get a wage increase. You can promise it, but it will not be forthcoming unless you get higher productivity. If you implement it, you will end up with unemployment, and I think that was the mistake in the Labor platform.

How do you get high productivity? You have economic reform. How do you get economic reform? You make hard choices. You reform the tax system, you reform people's incentives, you improve infrastructure. There is a whole range of policies which are needed to solve this problem.

In terms of wage distribution, I think Australia is not the US, and I think the other problem was that the Labor Party was pushing the agenda that was consistent with the US data in terms of income distribution but was not consistent with Australian data. It was just not true what they were saying, particularly after the tax and transfer system was taken into account.

I think this division by trying to win the election by diving society either through generational divisions or worker divisions is a very, very dangerous road to go down, and I am glad that that road now has a dead end.

Dr Hewson: One thing that Morrison could do is adopt, say, a 10-year objective of, say, doubling our national productivity and then embarking on a reform agenda across so many areas, to actually achieve that, trying to refocus the debate on the significance of productivity and the reform that should require to get there rather than pretend you can go to the Fair Work Commission and, in effect, regulate or legislate an increase in wages. This is not going to happen.

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[crosstalk 0:41:06]

Dr Hewson: [crosstalk 0:41:06] If he would manage to do it, he would have the consequences that Warwick said, increase unemployment.

Assoc. Prof Burke: From my experience, there has been a lot of promises on productivity, a lot of promises on reform that never actually have been delivered, so let us see what Scott Morrison and his team can deliver in the next three years, in terms of productivity growth increases.

Dr Allen: Just on this issue of there is a dead end to intergenerational conflict. I do not think the conversation is over, because we see on climate, we see on matters of education and the like that the conversation around the language of intergenerational theft — and, definitely you are right, we do not have the same issue as the US, but we do have intergenerational issues with regard to wealth, and that is something I think--;

Think about home ownership and buying your first home, this is really a big issue for many young people, and I do not think there is a dead end to it. I think it is going to simmer but, you are right, I think the harmful conversations we are having, we cannot have that boomers versus the rest of the world, but we do need to address that because it will simmer. It will keep growing.

Prof McKibbin: It has to be a cooperation, not conflict. If you get a cooperative arrangement — and there are ways of doing this, I think that is a much more positive way of doing it.

Dr Allen: Yes.

Prof McKibbin: I agree there is a problem, but you do not fix by conflict.

Dr Allen: Yes.

Bob Cotton: Okay, we are going to shift it just slight and now move to water. This is where Quentin and I ask each other questions and you, guys, please come in after us.

[laughter]

Water has been a major issue in Australian politics, of course, not lastly because we have seen the last year or so the fish-kills in the Murray-Darling Basin. In response, the Coalition wants to continue with the Murray-Darling Basin plan, run the basin-wide

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study to better understand the conditions in irrigation communities and establish a national water grid, with a focus on building new dams.

How does that sound to you, Quentin? Is that going to be enough to deal with the issues?

Prof Grafton: Sadly not. I wish business as usual would deliver for Australia when it comes to water, but it will not, unfortunately. When you build a dam you store water, but you do not create water. Water, of course, is limited by hydrological cycle. Most of Australia is arid and semi-arid, so building dams is not going to contribute much, especially when you have high rates of evaporation.

That is not to say I am against dams. Some dams and some locations may well make sense, but they will need to go a proper cost benefit analysis. I think the Coalition, certainly from its previous term, was very keen on spending a lot of subsidies and giving grants for dams and water infrastructure without looking at the bottom line: what is the payoff for the public purse, what is the rate of return on investment from the public expenditures?

I think it is worth keeping in mind, because we have the discussion on taxes. Of course, the money does not come from the clouds. Money comes from taxes and it means that, if you start spending money on building dams, it means you do less expenditures on something else and, furthermore, you can have to take it out of taxes, and taxes cost. Taxes have an impact on productivity, it has an impact on a whole range of different things, so we have to make sure we spend wisely. That is the first thing I would say.

Then, of course, there is a whole range of issues around integrity issues and the hashtag water [?? 0:44:28]. We do not know where those are going to land up and, of course, there is the environmental issues. We have the big Menindee Lakes and Darling River fish-kills in January and December of last year. Those are not going to go away. Building more dams is not going to fix that problem.

I think we have to look at demand-based solutions, we have to look at a range of issues about water re-allocation and we have to spend the money wisely. Our community is hurting so spend it on the communities, do not spend it on building pipes, perhaps.

I mean, I think there is a range of things that are available to us. Even basic water data — even basic water data we do not have available for us in the Murray-Darling Basin, and that is incredibly shocking to me. Unless you have got the data to know what is

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going on, you cannot even make decisions about what you should be doing in the context.

Bob Cotton: Can I ask you: do you think the situation is that bad that we need a Royal Commission to this thing?

Prof Grafton: Well, we had a Royal Commission from South Australia. The problem with that Royal Commission was that the Coalition government refused to have its public servants appear before it. There was a court case, it went to the High Court and, eventually, it was not decided on because of time limits.

There were a lot of questions that were left unanswered, and so unless there is a judicial inquiry where there is coercive powers where people are actually obliged to answer those questions under oath and if they give false testimony then they perch it themselves, then I think a lot of the key questions out there, in terms of what has happened in the last few years, will not be answered. I certainly do not expect there to be a Royal Commission on the Murray-Darling, on the water in the next three years.

Bob Cotton: Colleagues, anything to add [crosstalk 0:46:09]?

Dr Hewson: I think water is a very big issue going forward. I mean, you do not want to underestimate how significant it is going to become. As an economist, I got annoyed years ago that the number of industries that are big water users, like cotton and rice, would never have been developed in this country if we had actually charged them market price for their access to water.

We are living with that legacy and, of course, there is a part of the government, the National Party, that will go to the walls defending their rights, which does not give you a really good start in looking at the proper access and a proper pricing of access to water.

There are also going to be a plethora, I think, of proposals now to bring water down from northern Australia and some sort of pipeline or whatever. They have never stacked up, as far as I can see, in terms of cost benefit analysis, but the National Party stands for more dams, they stand for more pipelines. That is a big constraint in this government as to what they will realistically do about water. Maybe a judicial enquiry, but they are going to resist that, too, probably.

Dr Allen: The entire system needs to be reviewed, in terms of not just river systems but storage and the integrity of the types of storage, where they are, and things like that. If we think about the population side of things, [?? 0:47:34] without water.

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A very smart person once said to me that World War III will be fought over water. Whether that remains to be true, who knows, but it is something that the entire system and its integrity needs to be understood for all Australians.

Prof Grafton: Let's look a little bit further forward — which we have done, I suppose, for the next three years. Our Facebook Pod group member, Mitzi Bolton, asked this question for the whole group: "Please, what are your thoughts on how to progress complex policy issues when the Australian population has just rejected the party that tried to do so?" Liz, to you first.

Dr Allen: Oh. It is a big issue and we see this in research, as well. It is the idea of tackling complex issues and complicated issues. If borrow from the literature, particularly with regard to how we tackle complex and complicated health issues, well, we break them down. We break them down into manageable chunks.

I think that the other thing that has come out quite overtly in this election is that, appealing to all of Australian with one voice, and one slogan, and one line, is just not realistic. It is odd that we have come this far and realised it.

We need to understand the population, what the population needs are, how they are going to be met, and break the complex and the complicated issues down — and how they are inter-related, and have a conversation that meets the needs of all people that is beyond three-word slogans, that we assume that everyone is going to understand or even appeal to them.

Prof Grafton: Of course, Scott Morrison in his speech on Saturday night said he would govern for all Australians, so let's see.

Dr Allen: But we are not all the same.

Prof Grafton: Not all the same, and the 12-million-or-so voters, they have voted in different ways. Please, anyone else around the table? John or Warwick?

Prof McKibbin: I think we have a danger here of learning the wrong lesson from this. It was not that it was too complicated. It was that the people rejected policies that had been very clearly explained. They did not want to go down the road that the Labor Party wanted to take the country. A third of the population voted for it, two-thirds of the population did not, so I think it was not the fact that the policies were described and laid out, it was the fact that people did not agree with the strategy.

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If we learn that, then we have to come up with a set of policies. I agree with your comments that it has to be something that encompasses the majority of Australians, and they have to understand the implications for themselves as well as the implications for the national good. Those are two very different aspects there: that people understand — most people I talk to, from all walks of life, understand that there is a national interest and there is a self-interest, and you have to manage the relationship between the two.

Bob Cotton: Looking back to Bob Hawke, as he has just been in the news, of course, recently, why was that period of reforms so successful? Was that doing the sort of thing you are talking about, Warwick?

Prof McKibbin: Well, John knows this much better than me, but from my point of view it was the fact that the policies which the Hawke, Keating government were replicating were supported by the Opposition, so you had somewhat of a consensus across the political spectrum on the key issues.

That is what, I think, where should head for from here: 80% of the things we care about both major parties probably agree with, so let us address the 80% that they agree with, put in place good policy frameworks to deal with that and then argue the margin on the other 20%.

What we are doing is fractured policy debate where you change a position every electoral cycle to argue for the opposite, just to be the opponent of the government in place. That just does not help the national interest. I think there has to be a change, and I think Bob Hawke was successful for the very reason — that he understood what Australians cared about and he was lucky that the consensus in the other side of politics was to an extent supporting his views.

Dr Allen: Australians liked Hawke. Australians liked Hawke or, at least, tolerated Hawke. Bill Shorten is a totally different story. There is not a lot of love, and I would suggest that plays a lot here, as well.

Prof Grafton: So, it is not just the messages, it is the messenger?

Dr Allen: Yes, that is exactly right.

Prof Grafton: As we pointed out or we discussed briefly, the presidential nature of the election, and the Scott Morrison vis à vis Bill Shorten very much was the focus. Yes. John?

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Dr Hewson: Morrison has got a unique opportunity, I think, to step beyond the short-term, day-to-day sort of point-scoring and blame-shifting we call politics, and actually set a medium-term agenda in the national interest, and then try and take the community along with that.

They are going to have to explain the detail of that sort of transition across a lot of policy area, they are going to have to sign off on it to be successful, identify the policy steps in bite-size chunks moving forward, and challenge the Opposition constantly, to give at least the bigger issues bipartisan support and, as you said, Warwick, argue about the 20% but do not worry about 80% — just get on and do it.

Morrison can do that. I mean, he can provide that leadership. It means he is going to have to do that every day — day in, day out, argue the case at all levels of the community, but in fact that is what he has a chance to do. We will see whether he does. We tried that with Malcolm, for example, and he came in with great flourish, promising to do all of that, and all the options went on the table then they all came off the table, in the end he did very little.

I think Morrison has probably learnt something from that and, hopefully, that will provide a platform for him to move forward.

Prof Grafton: Paul, last word for you on that question?

Assoc. Prof Burke: Well, just briefly, I think that the electorate result does, to some extent, show that communication is vital. The Prime Minister is a good communicator. He speaks very clearly, he gets his messages across, and he will look overseas. Leaders like Jacinda Ardern and Donald Trump are very good communicators in their different ways, as well.

I guess the holy grail is good communication and designing policies that do not just sound good when you communicate them but actually have substance to them, and that benefit people widely so that your slogans, if you do have them, can actually stand on strong feet, as well.

Bob Cotton: Thank you, all, for those great contributions and, listeners, do not forget to stick around for part three of our podcast. We will go over some of your questions, comments and suggestions for future podcasts.

[interlude music 0:54:13-0:54:20]

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Julia Brown: Hi, I am Julia Brown.

Ian Pollock: I am Ian Pollock.

Simon Theobald: And I am Simon Theobald.

Julia Brown: Some of your familiar strangers from The Familiar Strange podcast.

Ian Pollock: The Familiar Strange is a podcast about doing anthropology — that is about listening, looking, trying out, and being with in pursue of uncommon knowledge about humans and culture.

Julia Brown: The show alternates between in-depth conversations with experts and senior academics about the ways they think, write, do research, and navigate the academic world.

Ian Pollock: And panel discussions where emerging anthropologists, like ourselves, take a look at our worlds using what we've learned as students of anthropology.

Simon Theobald: Subscribe to The Familiar Strange podcast at our podcasts' sound cloud, Spotify and all the other familiar places.

Julia Brown: And find our blog at thefamiliarstrange.com.

Ian Pollock: Is that it?

Simon Theobald: That's it.

Julia Brown: Excellent. Check us out and keep talking strange.

Host: Welcome back. Thank you, Liz, John, Paul, and Warwick, for this fantastic discussion. What do you think about it, Bob?

Bob Cotton: I think it was a fascinating discussion, partly because there was quite a degree of optimism there, which is a bit contrary to what I think a lot of people are feeling since the election results.

The real question is whether the government and, indeed, has the will and the capacity to evolve policy questions and then take them out into the broader electorate and get some wider and, hopefully, bipartisan support to that. It just underlines the fact that, well, policy is hard, actually getting [buy-in? 0:55:42] and implementing policy successfully is a big task.

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Host: What do you think, Quentin? Do we have a reason to be optimistic?

Prof Grafton: Well, let us be hopeful, let me put it that way. The last six years were not successful, in my view, in terms of policy reform and moving the agenda forward for Australia, so hopefully the next three years will be.

Certainly, Scott Morrison has got the mandate. He is certainly the “*Messiah from the Shire*” as The Australian did in its headline, so he has got the mandate. He has got the party on side, so let us see whether he will deliver for all Australians. I wish him well.

Host: Listeners, you heard what we thought about the discussion, but we want to know what you thought about it. Please, keep sending us your comments and suggestions. We really love hearing from you because each week we get the change to go over some of your fantastic comments that you have given us over the past week.

We would like to start with a piece by Gemma Carey, which is *Ensuring better insurance for Australians*. In this piece, Gemma writes that, though some of its most pressing issues remain unsolved, the National Disability Insurance Scheme has so far gone largely unmentioned in Australia’s election campaign.

We had a comment by Mary on Policy Forum, who writes: “The NDIA refuses to provide participants with any information on how their plan was determined. One person is told that they should use bike lights instead of providing them with wheelchair lights, yet others get wheelchair lights.” What do you think about that, Quentin?

Prof Grafton: Look, I think the whole policy behind that initiative was great for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is just unfortunately--; Hopefully, they are just teething issues, but there is a whole series of stories that are out there of people who have not had their plans approved — they have been waiting long periods of time. Some people are very happy with it and some people are very unhappy.

Keep in mind, these are the most disadvantaged, the most vulnerable Australians, so I think we need to focus on making sure it does work for all of them, not just for the some who have their plans that work for them, because I think it is critically important. These are the worst-offs in Australia, and we have got to look after them.

Host: Bob, do you agree that these might just be teething issues or is there something deeper?

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Bob Cotton: No, I absolutely agree with Quentin. I spent, early in my life, a bit of a time on the Board of [? 0:57:59] ACT and we did have a lot of to do with the way the NDI was introduced here, into Canberra. The teething problems were really quite immense. The initial take-up left quite a few people out.

Sadly, quite a degree of confusion about how new plans were to be put together, what were the elements of those plans, what was the degree of self-selection by the disabled person, and how the funding would be taken forward, and what degree of freedom and flexibility did people have, so there is quite a lot of work to do in this space yet.

Of course, it is just going to become — has become — one of the big funding demands on our future revenue stream. No problem with doing that, it is just that it has got to be really well-spent for this seriously disadvantaged group.

Host: We have got another comment here. This time, on a podcast which also discussed a topic that we would say is a work in progress. It is *Can Australia spark an energy change?* with Kenneth Baldwin, Kylie Catchpole and Mark Kenny. In this episode, our panel discusses Australia's energy policies in light of the not-anymore-upcoming federal election but the federal election that has now happened, as well as the government's role in ensuring a smooth transition to renewables.

We had a comment by Liam Hughes on our podcast group, and he wrote: "Great episode. I like that. It was really optimistic. I think that it's really easy to be just negative and worry about climate change, and I think it's great that we can have a discussion that talks about the amazing stuff we are currently doing and the opportunities we have to deal with in a positive way." What do you think about that, Bob?

Bob Cotton: Look, I share some of that optimism. I did not actually catch up with that panel discuss myself, but just hearing people talk on it and, again, Paul this morning, the way technology is changing, the opportunities out there, there is a positive story to be told to Australians about how we transition, how we do get renewable energy up into the system, how we make it work, how we get the grid working with the new energy sources.

Behind that, there lies a whole new industrial base that could be to Australia's very significant advantage. Ross Garnaut was talking on this just a week or so ago. Really, the opportunities out there are quite magnificent, if we are able to have the courage and the wit to get them together and go for them.

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It has been a rocky road the last 10 years or so in our climate change and energy policies. To be frank, this government did not have any to take to the electorate in any serious way, and now we have to move on. The world is not going to indulge us here. The world is just going to keep moving right on [?? 1:00:35], so we need to have a big of a catchup, as well.

Host: A rocky road ahead, indeed, as well. What do you think about that?

Prof Grafton: Oh, I fully concur with Bob and the panellists on that Pod episode, that we do not have energy policy — at least we did not have going to the election campaign, so this is [something? 1:00:54] to deal with for Scott Morrison and his team, because we have to have an energy policy and, I think, he understands that, so let's make sure they come up with an energy policy that is going to work for Australians.

Host: Thank you for your thoughts on that and thank you to anyone who has commented, particularly to Liam and Mary. A reminder to, please, keep sending us more comments, more question, more suggestions — more is always better in this space. You can get in touch with us on Twitter, where we are [@APPSPolicyForum](#), on the Facebook, where we are [PolicyForumPod](#), or just drop us a line: podcast@policyforum.net.

Now, let us get on to your suggestions for future Pods but, before we do so, I would also like to welcome a few of our new podcast group members. I apologies ahead if I butcher any of your names. I would like to welcome Holly Halford-Smith, Danielle Roubin, Vildana Anna, Dylan Jones, Becky Kim Le, Dan Gregg, and Lobezno Meneses to our podcast gang. Thank you so much for joining us.

We had actually quite a funny comment from Lobezno — hello, Lobezno. Just some quick context: every time someone joins our podcast group, we ask them a few questions, and one of these questions is: which of our podcasts have you listened to recently? Funnily enough, Lobezno wrote: “I just binged the last half dozen, so they all melted into one.”

I did not even know that Policy Forum was binge worthy. What do you think about that, Bob? I see you laughing there.

Bob Cotton: I think it has to be absolutely binge-worthy. I mean, people can do it on Netflix and a whole lot of other stuff, why not get binge-worthy on this lot?

Host: Thank you so much for your comments, Lobezno. We are always really keen to hear your thoughts on the topics that you would like to see covered on the podcasts, so

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please do jump into the Facebook podcast group and let us know or reach to us on Twitter.

One last thing, if you enjoyed today's episode, then perhaps you might want to leave us a quick review on iTunes. It only takes 30 seconds — just find that fifth star. It will be a big help to us in getting the word out about this podcast.

We will be back next week with another Policy Forum Pod, but until then from me, Julia, cheerio.

Bob Cotton: And goodbye from me.

Prof Grafton: And goodbye from me, as well.

[closing music 1:03:07-1:03:26]

[audio ends 1:03:26]