


THE AUSTRALIAN

'I'm a baby boomer ... I'm the embodiment of evil'

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By **JASON GAGLIARDI**, COLUMNIST12:48PM NOVEMBER 29, 2019 •  COMMENTS

Welcome to the column where you provide the content. [Judith Sloan bemoaned the war on Boomers](#) and blasted Treasurer Josh Frydenberg for stoking a clash of generations that was unlikely to produce good public policy but would lead to hard feelings all round. **Louise's husband waved the boomer standard:**

"I am a baby boomer. My parents went broke banana farming, so I started work delivering papers in primary school. I worked my way through university making car parts in the days when Australia still had factories and manufactured things. I graduated and worked often over 100 and rarely under 60 hours per week.

"I paid vast quantities of tax, at 49pc and what was left over I saved and invested. I developed property and along the way provided employment for architects, builders, landscapers, tradesmen etc. I now provide renters with somewhere to live and ongoing employment to estate agents, tradesmen, cleaners, gardeners etc.

"I raised my children without government subsidies. In spite of this contribution to the community, many think I should pay far more personal tax, land tax and be stripped of my superannuation.

"I still work and have the satisfaction of knowing when I come home each night, that when I haven't saved someone's life, I have improved the lives of the patients I treated that day.

I am a happily married, straight, white, Protestant male aged over 65 and hence in this new prejudiced world of identity politics, I am the embodiment of evil."

Alan added:

“Johannes Leak’s cartoon this week was spot on with this issue. Who fills the cohorts of unpaid volunteers across this land? Not the self-absorbed or under pressure young folk. It’s those with time to devote and a care for their fellows to express; and with wisdom and experience to know what is needed. It’s those derided elderly people.

“More widely, young people no longer join organisations that give our society strength and support, so from mainstream political parties to churches, only the ageing see the value in participating. Hence they are in a slow decline as the youthful energy needed to refresh and drive their activities is increasingly diverted to fads and fashions; to protests and rebellions. More destructive than constructive.

“Josh Frydenberg needs to understand that not everything of value can be measured in dollars.”

Sue said:

“As boomers we paid mortgages of over 17pc, we did not have maternity leave, no subsidised child care, we didn’t dine out, we didn’t go on overseas holidays — and to the young lady who attacked me personally (and my generation) last week as the cause of all her problems, grow up, and put your energies in to saving and other strategies to make your life what you want.”

Grahame groaned:

“Talking to some Millennials is informative. I had one telling me recently that as a baby boomer I had it easy with no HECS debt. I pointed out millennial benefits such as first home buyers grants, tax benefits part A&B, child care subsidies, baby bonus, low interest rates (not 18pc), on call free grandparent baby sitting services etc. The look of horror on a Millennials face when contradicted with facts is priceless.”

Mark snarked:

“What have boomers ever done for us? Oh I don’t know, developed the internet, invented mobile phone technology, invented smartphones, invented modern computers and operating systems ... In fact, invented all the devices required that contain the sum of human knowledge so that entitled folk with memories of goldfish can take photos of themselves and look at pictures of cats.”

Clive James's long goodbye began in 2010 when he was diagnosed with leukaemia and "several lung diseases", and it [ended in a blaze of immortality](#) this week. **Tributes to the Kid from Kogarah poured in, not least from our readers, among them Barry, who earns comment of the week:**

"While Clive, born and raised in Sydney, lived overseas for 50 years now, he still felt the powerful pull of home, penning this wondrous ode to Sydney Harbour and Oz: 'As I begin this last paragraph, outside my window a misty afternoon drizzle gently but inexorably soaks the City of London. Down there in the street I can see umbrellas commiserating with each other. In Sydney Harbour, twelve thousand miles away and ten hours from now, the yachts will be racing on the crushed diamond water under a sky the texture of powdered sapphires. It would be churlish not to concede that the same abundance of natural blessings which gave us the energy to leave has every right to call us back. Pulsing like a beacon through the days and nights, the birthplace of the fortunate sends out its invisible waves of recollection. It always has and it always will, until even the last of us come home.'

"Unforgettable text from the last para of Unreliable Memoirs that will speak in my soul during all my days. Vale Clive."

Gabrielle gulped:

"Tony Abbott quoted this in his speech to Parliament when David Cameron was here. I could not stop crying."

Bless, said Bernie:

"I hope that Clive has finally met his father. And that they're having a few beers together in Heaven."

John's take:

"I always sensed he was frustrated. His drive for success and recognition overpowering him to be seduced then trapped by Britain. But he longed for the sunsets and sunrises under the Southern Cross. Always a price to pay."

Bruce observed:

"The obituary is a fine and detailed summary of Clive the man and his monumental strengths and human weaknesses.

"However, there are 2 sour notes which are hard to explain and relate to his 'Australianness' and how Australia is still perceived and how Australians perceived Clive by the writers.

"Firstly and in reference to Clive contradictions, why refer to him being 'an expatriate Australian who explained culture to the world' in the same context as the writer who doubled as television performer, the poet as comfortable with Dante as Game of Thrones and the literary critic renowned for his television analysis. This is not a contradiction at all.

"Secondly, 'Australians laughed along with the somewhat rotund, balding performer and had little awareness of the literary sensibility and classical knowledge that lay behind it'. There is an element here of the old cultural cringe which doesn't deserve being part of this otherwise fine obituary."

Macavity remembered:

"I remember laughing out loud at Unreliable Memoirs. So sad to see him go."

Murray recommended:

"There was actually a fifth book in his autobiographical series, Blaze of Obscurity, which covered his television years.

"I loved all five, but May Week Was in June was probably my favourite. Brilliant Creatures is among my most-loved novels. The Australian Suicide Bomber's Heavenly Reward is my pick of his poems, although possibly a bit on the frivolous side.

"The three books containing extracts from his television critic columns are still hilarious after all these years, even now that most of the programs reviewed have been long forgotten.

"I also have all of the albums by Pete Atkin, for which Clive wrote the lyrics. Some wonderful stuff, but sadly they never made it big. (A record company executive explained to them both, "in widely spaced words of one syllable" that their music wasn't "commercial" enough.)

Roy recollected:

“So goes the ‘kid from Kogarah’. I loved your literary and television work and self-deprecating humour. Unreliable Memoirs and their sequels were hilarious yet intimate and moving. CJ a true genius of the literary arts, a clever comedian and performer, and a great Australian. And Leanne Edelston, who would have thought after all your ‘love letters’ in various works over the years to Germaine Greer. RIP Clive.”

VictorTT said:

“Clive was a fellow climate sceptic. In 2016, he published his poem ‘Imminent Catastrophe’:

*‘The imminent catastrophe goes on
Not showing many signs of happening.
The ice at the North Pole that should be gone
By now, is awkwardly still lingering,
And though sometimes the weather is extreme
It seems no more so than when we were young
Who soon will hear no more of this grim theme
Reiterated in the special tongue
Of manufactured fright. Sea level Rise
Will be here soon and could do such-and-such
Say tenured pundits with unblinking eyes.
Continuing to not go up by much,
The sea supports the sceptics, but they, too
Lapse into oratory when the predict
The sure collapse of the alarming view
Like a house of cards subsides with just a sigh
And all the cards are still there.
Feverish Talk of apocalypse might, by and by,
Die down, but the deep anguish will persist.
His death, and not the Earth’s, is the true fear
That motivates the doomsday fantasist:
There can be no world if he is not here.’”*

Andrew offered:

“Australia and the world have lost an iconic author and broadcaster. His Unreliable Memoirs were an Australian masterpiece. His TV shows sharply observed, self-deprecating and hilarious.

“Mr James is a reminder of a golden era that is being lost. Namely, an era in which a working class student could excel based on talent, hard work and wit and conquer the world.

“Mr James’ courage in calling out the hoax of climate science underscored a man unafraid to tell the truth and he scorned the cant and lies of the self-appointed elites. A great loss to our national character and conscience.”

Last word to Lisle:

“At a time when universities are trying to cut out Australian literature, Clive James reminds us of a time when we were top of the tree in the English language. I hope he never realised how poor our English has become when he wrote about the wonderful Australian state school system which gave everyone the opportunity to be at the top of the tree.

“I am old enough, or too old, to remember the ABC when all these wonderful young Australians used to entertain us — Clive James, Barry Humphries, Germaine Greer, Robert Hughes.”

“Crisis? What crisis?” said embattled Rugby Australia boss Raelene Castle, insisting she will [remain at the helm for at least the next four years](#) as she completes a strategic overhaul. **Ruhroh, said Rolf:**

“What a startling admission. She’s going nowhere. Neither is RA.”

Stephen said:

“I’ve taken a break from rugby and won’t be back until Raelene Castle goes and I’m assured that the new management puts the game first.”

Brett warned:

“I can’t remember what the terms were but I stopped watching cricket about 10 years ago until someone went. They’re gone now, still don’t really watch.

“Took a break from the Liberal Party, still not back. And that golf club I took a break from until they got new management. Got new management about 5 years ago, never stepped foot in the place again.

“Rugby might like to consider that. Takes a lot of work to get people to turn away from something they love but then they see all the other options and it's a lot of work to turn them back. I'm getting to a point now where I'm turning away from professional sport across the board and I really really loved professional sport.”

Anne was aghast:

“This says it all. A true leader knows when their time is done and will gracefully bow out to let the next person usher in the much-needed changes. If they're staying because they are trying to bring in 'change,' that will never occur, as usually by this time their support base (or what was left of it anyway) is usually gone.

“Anyone who stands there and defiantly digs their heels in and says they're not going anywhere was never the right person for the job from the start. Step aside with dignity as this will only end in tears otherwise and the comments on here show there isn't the support base.”

Mark remarked:

“Super rugby attendances plummeting from nearly 16,000 in 2015 to just over 11,000 in the last 2 years. Alienation of an entire geographical half of the country due to an opaque and overtly self-interested decision making process axing the Force.

“A further concentration of power of the game within the closed circle of mates that form the corporate body at the expense of the nation of players and supporters. A complete subservience to the major sponsor's social justice agenda. The worst on-field performances in living memory.

“None of these are positive measures of strong performance in the Australian sporting landscape. To think so is just denial. I hear that grassroots suburban rugby is in good shape in many communities, but I would say this is in spite of the ARU and certainly not because of any ARU initiatives.”

S.R. said:

“For RA's sake I hope that this is her 'this isn't Enron or Lehman Brothers ... we will make it through this' moment.”

Roger rified:

“People say rugby is in crisis. There is no crisis,’ says Castle, much as Monty Python’s Black Knight described his fatal injuries as ‘just a flesh wound’. Notice everything she says is about administration and nothing about rugby and the enjoyment of it by players and spectators. She does indeed have an inverted view of the world seeing it as being all about her.”

Ist was furious:

“Grassroots rugby is unhappy and struggling. Super Rugby is a joke, its ratings are pathetic and its revenues are declining. The Wallabies are riven with management disagreement. The Folau affair hangs over the game without resolution. RA Directors are quitting. The rugby community is calling for change. What’s the response? Nothing to see here.”

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