

1 DAY AGO

**'Growing nightmare': Elon Musk sells another \$5.2b worth of Tesla stock**

If Beethoven were of our generation he would perhaps dedicate his Eroica to Elon Musk crossed out with a note appended 'to a disappointing memory'.

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1 DAY AGO

**Energy price cap bill guaranteed after Greens win household gas switch deal**

If selective deaf smugness could be bottled Chris Bowen would be the world's richest person. Why does he think that reducing supply and attacking the energy 'fail-safe' transition sector will benefit either domestic energy sufficiency or the development of renewable industry? This is ham-fisted pig ignorance, closeted political ineptitude and economic lunacy.

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1 DAY AGO

**'They want to be careful': PM defies gas industry fury as price cap bill passes**

Reducing the supply of gas by market intervention will not work to achieve domestic energy benefits without complete nationalisation of the energy industry. Unless this is done, the intervention will on the contrary make both the availability of cheap energy and the transition to renewables not only more elusive but catastrophically unattainable. There are in fact three choices, to elevate social values absolutely and risk a dysfunctional technocratic state; to allow free rein to market forces that will ultimately stabilise prices and ensure energy supply but also increase inequality and slow the pace of transition; or to allow market forces to operate within a responsible regulatory framework with social values and a transition trajectory ascendant. Surely blind Freddy can see that the third way is also the best?

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2 MONTHS AGO

**Forget a president - here's another idea**

What a good insight Waleed's article began with. A race-based president for life is a bad idea however, even if she or he were a mere figurehead. A hereditary powerless monarch is just as good and less contentious than one based on a race-based plebiscite. Waleed is wrong in implying that the existing constitutional monarch has no powers. It is true that the monarch's reserve powers in crisis or chaos can almost never be used due to the convention that the prime minister's advice should always be taken. However, the rights to be informed, to advise, encourage or warn, and to preside at executive council meetings are not to be scoffed at. In fact one of the faults of our own system is that their impartial, tactful and useful exercise would be better learned from the cradle than from a vice-regal appointment. Perhaps the most tragic example of misuse was during the tenure of Sir John Kerr who was as clueless, ham-fisted and autocratic as the late queen was insightful, tactful and democratic in upbringing and training.

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2 MONTHS AGO

**Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II in Marrickville vandalised**

Is that supposed to win friends and influence people?

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2 MONTHS AGO

**'Mourn porn' and the new King: it's been a weird fortnight**

Using the demise of anyone to score race-based points is counter-productive. Egalitarianism is the name of the game, not racial victimhood. My great great grandfather could neither read nor write, and within a week of arrival here from Scotland was speared in the back whilst mending a rural fence. His children were left orphans in abject poverty as a result. That doesn't entitle me or my children to race-baiting ad infinitum. Let's come together with respect, tolerance, love and cultural interestedness, not chips on shoulders for what happened to semi-remote ancestors. At that rate I should bear a grudge, what good would that do? Grudges only create grudges, and affirmative action racism begets resentment racism. Who wins from that merry-go-round?

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3 MONTHS AGO

### **'It won't be quick': Gillard says Australia will become a republic**

More than two millennia have passed since Aristotle classified the many systems of government in the Aegean Greek diaspora. He classified them as a quasi-biologist, first according to whether people who endured each system were happy or not. He came to the conclusion that the main contributor of a political setup to human happiness was whether it was rule-governed or not, that is whether it was constituted by laws or ad hoc. He then looked at the three styles of government, rule by the few, by the many, or by one, and classified these in terms of whether they were constituted or not. The results of his survey have stood the test of time. On the unconstituted or ad hoc side, tyranny rated second worst to oligarchy the worst, with anarchy a mere bad mark. On the constituted side, democracy rated best, with constitutional monarchy next and aristocracy third best. Aristotle did not rest there, but looked at what might be the ideal constituted system for human happiness, and found that it was a mixed constitution, essentially and for most practical purposes democratic, yet with consultative powers given to actually powerful groups so that these did not become unconstitutional oligarchies, and reserve powers vested in a hereditary monarch in times of crisis and to avoid chaos. Little has changed over the millennia, and a democratic republic with a mixed constitution and a queen or king remains the best choice for those of us who are not fanatics and simply want a happy and united society in which prosperity is fairly distributed to all. This is not merely democratic, but also neither riven by conflict nor weakened by failure to recognise powerful voices. One might speculate that what Aristotle meant is that a non-tribal non-partisan and non-political central focus tends to mean that no component minority is left behind.

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4 MONTHS AGO

### **'Shadow government': Anthony Albanese to seek advice on legality of Scott Morrison secretly swearing himself into additional portfolios**

I think SMH readers will find that in 1973 Gough Whitlam had himself and Lance Barnard installed as Ministers for everything. The precedent is an old one, but our current ministers have been out of office for so long they are not familiar with it. The justification of a trip against the Health Minister becoming de facto dictator was surely a good one, as was the overruling of an environmentally disastrous gas project proposed off the NSW coast. Backward facing chatter and political point-scoring is not very edifying, especially when it comes from those not only ignorant of constitutional precedents, but who would also presumably approve of the positive results obtained. Barnaby Joyce was well-known for denying climate change, it is hardly surprising that he also knows far less than Gough Whitlam did about the subtleties of our constitution.

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4 MONTHS AGO

### **Let's not repeat the same mistakes with COVID response**

The crux of the issue of masking up is not whether it is a fringe view but whether it is reasonable. At the time that our health system was failing due to unnecessary Covid infections that in a small ratio but significant number of cases led to serious disease and hospitalisation, masking up and social distancing were reasonable to prevent system collapse. If the peak has passed, some relaxation might be reasonable, but please don't pretend that the death and mayhem of the Christmas period was worth the libertine approach, it wasn't.

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4 MONTHS AGO

### **National approach to coercive control to be discussed by state and federal law officers**

Most reasonable people can see sense in pre-empting physical violence by nipping in the bud things like control of another person's finances, control of what they wear, or control of whom they see or even whether they can go out. Things become a bit muddier when we see nebulous and subjective categories like emotional hurt and psychological harm. Unless these categories are to be weaponised and interpreted so widely that they permit arbitrary arrest merely because someone has been nasty (who hasn't?), then extreme caution should be exercised in narrowing the definitions to real and significant events. Otherwise the danger is a totalitarian surveillance society full of vendetta, false accusation and arbitrary enforcement. The costs to new innocent victims would outweigh the benefits to real potential ones, so great care in drafting is required.

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4 MONTHS AGO

## **My aunt lives in Ukraine. We haven't heard from her in five months**

Disbelief and cognitive dissonance have caused the West to look the other way. Given that tyrants appear to have thrown the rational playbook out the window, our leaders think they face only two scenarios, submission and slavery in a very nasty world scarcely recognisable for its horrors; or a mutually suicidal apocalyptic end to life on earth. In fact there is a third scenario, a necessarily covert operation to effect regime change, showing by example our response to crimes against humanity and deterring any who might wish to follow their example. The two major tyrants of our age play according to gaming rules, so let us demonstrate the rational result for leaders who gamble to win by wreaking violence and terror on innocent families.

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4 MONTHS AGO

### **Imminent risk in Ukraine shows danger of going nuclear**

Finally we get a comment from the SMH about Ukraine, not about the death and carnage of innocents, but rather about the risk to those who have hitherto turned to look the other way?

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4 MONTHS AGO

### **Imminent risk in Ukraine shows danger of going nuclear**

Nuclear power is a fait accompli. It is an irreversible geological fact, with some 440 reactors worldwide. The Australian mining industry is the major supplier of the raw material uranium for many of these. It was very reasonable to oppose the nuclear industry in the seventies because of its horrific risks to humanity, few of which have been solved. However it is neither reasonable nor morally defensible now to oppose the only practical interim solution to fossil fuelled planetary death from climate change in overpopulated regions like Europe whilst renewables are not yet fully established. With all the exits now slammed shut, the urgent need to find solutions to the risks of nuclear power is now regrettably the only safe option. Those in ivory towers will still burn when the planet attains Venusian temperatures due to failure to realise the need for interim and potentially small-scale nuclear power. In the short time we have available before climate apocalypse engulfs us, only such unpalatable interim measures can end fast enough our insane dependence on fossil fuels which represent the more immediate hazard to life on Earth.

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5 MONTHS AGO

### **Why do people join cults? And how do they get out of them?**

The hysteria of groupthink directed to a religious end is a characteristic of humans. Is it always negative, or does it sometimes perform some positive function? Where do we draw the line? Some degree of hysteria or hypnotic trance is surely a factor in genuine meditational experience. The factor of importance is that reason remains intact.

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5 MONTHS AGO

### **As China hawks fly, we need heretics**

Much the same was said about diplomatic prevention of major power aggression last century. It's called appeasement, and it doesn't work. Wobbly knees lead to major falls, quite apart from economic subjugation, geo-political defeat and moral failure. Heresy in this case equates to a kind of myopic collaboration with thugs hell-bent on human and planetary carnage.

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