

## **Why NewsCorp is not an impartial media outlet(s)**

News Corp likes to portray itself as a confident, dominant company — the US-controlled entity that bestrides Australia's media landscape, that plays such an influential role in our politics, that shapes the national conversation, celebrates national heroes and vilifies national villains, all of its own choosing.

Beneath the facade, though, News Corp and its leaders have been badly rattled by two former prime ministers that it helped bring down.

There was always zero chance of the government — or Labor, if it was in power — calling a royal commission, a judicial inquiry, or even the most banal of bureaucratic reviews into the company, despite Kevin Rudd's petition garnering more than half a million signatures.

Even when, unexpectedly, Malcolm Turnbull lent his support and his rhetoric to Rudd's petition, it should have been nothing that a large, proud, confident company that believed in its own product couldn't take in its stride and dismiss as the whining of two political losers.

Government, media rewrite history to attack Labor for being too soft — or is it too hard — on China.

Instead, the result has been fear and misjudgment at the highest levels of the company. A key moment was when Malcolm Turnbull [went after Paul Kelly](#) on Q+A on 9 November. Turnbull monstered Kelly over his role in News Corp's climate denialism, producing apoplexy from Kelly.

Kelly is the top of the tree at News Corp, the company's senior Australian political journalist and *eminence grise*, whose bloviating pronouncements are handed down as akin to the word of God in *The Australian*.

So much did Turnbull's attack eat away at Kelly that, a fortnight later, Kelly made a truly spectacular own-goal. In a piece [defending](#) the proposed theft of billions from Google and Facebook that strangely segued into a discussion of what Kelly called "an old and familiar story: the abuses of the Murdoch media, as advanced by Kevin Rudd, backed by Malcolm Turnbull", he said this:

**Rudd complains about News Corp supporting Coalition governments. But this is merely the working rule of established media. Centre-right newspapers back centre-right parties and centre-left newspapers papers back centre-left parties.**

In saying this, Kelly placed on the record, from the most senior commentator in the company, that the policy was to support the Coalition. Not to promote centre-right policies or ideologies, but to support a *party*. Moreover, he portrayed that as perfectly normal and acceptable.

According to Kelly, *The Australian*, News Corp's tabloids, its remaining regional papers and Sky News are in effect propagandists for the Coalition. That's the "working rule".

It was a statement of the obvious, of course, but not one that such an influential News Corp employee has ever before made. It confirms that the company is not a media company, but the media arm of the Coalition (in doing so, Kelly also confirmed that Turnbull was exactly right when he had said a few days before that News Corp and Scott Morrison were [working as a team](#)).

Meanwhile News Corp had decided the petition and its authors had to be destroyed, a campaign that amounted to a front-page "exclusive" dredged up from social media that a far-right troll had added 1000 [fake signatures to the Rudd petition](#). The company then tried to link Rudd to Jeffrey Epstein through the late paedophile's donations. The Oz also ran an [editorial](#) attacking Rudd and Turnbull.

An awful lot of journalistic and editorial time that could have been devoted to, say, lying on behalf of Scott Morrison, supporting Donald Trump's attempted coup or smearing selected progressive targets was wasted on a petition that was doomed to fail.

But the biggest indication of just how rattled News Corp is was yesterday's bizarre, cult-like [all-staff meeting](#) that amounted to a show-trial *in absentia* of Rudd and Turnbull. It was conducted by, according to Nine newspapers' report, Australian company head

Michael Miller, *Australian* editor Michelle Gunn, *Telegraph* editor Ben English and Sky News head Paul Whittaker.

That this line-up of News Corp royalty was brought together to rail at two former politicians while the world is still going through a pandemic and Australia is emerging from its first recession in 30 years suggests how terrified News Corp is. If the company feels the need to indoctrinate its *own staff* in an extended Two-Minute Hate of its critics, it's an outfit deeply unnerved by criticism.

What that gathering looks like is nothing so much as the partyroom meetings political parties have when in Canberra — caucus and the joint partyroom, which are then reported on a no-names basis by party spokespeople. In those meetings, leaders gee up the troops, demonise their opponents and declare all is going well.

Which is entirely apt. As Turnbull correctly identified in his book earlier this year, News Corp is a foreign political party, not a media company.

Specific examples of bias include, and are not limited to:

- Relentless media campaign against ALP VIC Premier Dan Andrews over his handling of COVID-19, despite brilliant handling, communication and outcome of June outbreak from said Premier.
- Relentless media campaign against ALD QLD Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk despite very effective management of the COVID-19 pandemic in that state.
- Meanwhile all blame & responsibilities for other (LNP) states' politicians & bureaucrats ignored and/or deflected.
- Lack of coverage of corruption in Government for LNP States, eg:
- NSW: clearing of koala habitat in NSW.
- Gladys' Berejiklian's relationship with Daryl Maguire and failure to declare her relationship in spite of making strong statements in Parliament about corruption and recordings clearly showing her knowledge of such activities.
- mishandling of Ruby Princess COVID-19 cases.
- John Barilaro's suspicious handling of the Marco Polo Italian Club's finances (see Michael West's investigation).
- Water allocation rights and Angus-gate.
- Murray-Darling Basin irrigation rights and lack of proper reporting on issues.
- Puff piece in The Australian on Anna Palmer (Palmer United Party) leading up to the QLD election. Purpose was to divert votes from ALP to give LNP more chance of winning.
- Constant support of LNP National government policies without scrutiny or accountability (Robodebt, Indue Card, refugee policies, proposal to remove compulsory voting, Jobkeeper paid to large corporations who then went on to sack large numbers of staff, Jobseeker cuts and much more....).
- Andrew Bolt, Alan Jones, Peta Credlin are examples of toxic narratives that are presented as facts through NewsCorp's Sky channel, and are given editorial space in all of Newscorp publications.

- Telegraph smear campaign against Michael Towke (endorsed for preselection by the LNP 82-8) for the seat of Cook in NSW, that Towke had engaged in branch-stacking and had embellished his resume;[2] although these allegations were subsequently proven false.[3] In August 2007, Towke was disendorsed as the Liberal candidate and was replaced with Scott Morrison, a former director of the New South Wales Liberal Party.[4] Morrison won the seat at the election and is the current sitting member. As a result, Scomo is indebted to NewsCorp and some of the government's decision making clearly reflects a pro-NewsCorp bias, despite the fact that NewsCorp (NAH) pays \$0 tax in Australia, and its subsidiary very little (\$200K) - (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-12/ato-corporate-tax-transparency-data-companies-no-tax-paid/11789048?nw=0>)

NEWS AUSTRALIA HOLDINGS PTY LIMITED	2,455,528,510	58,549,520	
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If this concentration of media ownership remains (70% of Australian market) we will continue to shield corrupt and/or incompetent politicians from scrutiny and further entrench inequality.

Australia is following a course that trends towards media in the USA, and the recent election there should be a warning that it is not a desirable goal.

It is never a good idea to allow billionaires to dictate policy and control narratives – please legislate to reduce concentration of media ownership.