



We The People
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We the People 354 Our Australian Albatross Destiny

Good Day to you. The eighteenth century English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1797 wrote a poem called the Rime of the Ancient Mariner. When schools actually taught things of worth this literary offering rightly formed an important part of the high school English curriculum. It is the story of an old sea-man who's ship is led to safety by a friendly albatross in the Antarctic. No sooner is the ship safe the mariner inexplicably shoots the albatross with his cross bow. An albatross is considered good luck by mariners but to kill one brings loss and desolation and ultimately this is what happens to the ship's crew and the ancient mariner. They are becalmed at sea with provisions gone when these immortal lines are offered up by the poem..... *Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion; As idle as a painted ship, Upon a painted ocean..... Water, water, everywhere, And all the boards did shrink; Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink.*

Now the reason for reflecting on this poem is due to a catastrophic event slowly eating away Australia's very heart yet we the people do nothing. Even the most ardent sceptic must now agree that climate change is very real and this dry arid land is drying out rapidly. The many casualties also include farmers who often struggle now to raise crops because rainfall is low and unpredictable in many parts of this wide brown land. A farmer in Queensland spends \$800,000 to truck in water to his farm while another desperately drills bore holes and yet others leave the land forever or commit suicide. Towns like Warwick, Stanthorpe and Tenterfield are almost out of water and some families cannot even flush the toilet. In NSW towns like Dubbo and Tamworth are facing a water emergency and on and on it goes. My heart reaches out to the animals, birds and fish which are struggling in this dry land. Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth yet we allow Adani unfettered access to the major water aquifers just to mine coal which, when burnt, will add to climate change and drought. Why do we jeopardise our lives and our future especially when the coal will go to a country which is already dramatically over populated and living unsustainably. To make matters much worse we have an insane immigration policy allowing far more people into this country than it can possibly support environmentally, financially or ethically. Let's not forget that we allow the Chinese and others to buy up huge swaths of our precious country, not on lease but in perpetuity and they have no real stake in our future only their own needs and bank accounts. This amazing country which has made us the **'lucky country'** is now run by stupid people and a largely lethargic population. We have shot the albatross which now hangs around our foolish necks and this paradigm of never ending growth, desecration of the land and over population must cease else we ultimately fail as a nation. On the Gold Coast we apparently think more people means progress as we build on fertile land.

Now the ultimate madness is that the financially incompetent Queensland State government has now stated, according to the Cairns Post, that when rain hits the ground the farmer does not own the water and must pay for its use. The State is installing water meters on farm dams in order to make the farmers pay for the God given rain. This is the same as shooting the albatross and just as foolish and completely unfair. All this on top of water licences and a whole bureaucratic structure destined to fail like the Murray Darling river catastrophe. Shame on the Palaszczuk government and the LNP are no better and are promoting these illegal and immoral water charges in spite of **section 100 of the Australian Constitution** guaranteeing reasonable water access. I pray for a real leader to emerge who will be our Albatross of good fortune and that the day will come when we don't have to say water, *water, water everywhere nor any drop to drink.*

Until next time this is Kent Bayley