

Open Letter to Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia

Yesterday ACCCI celebrated the 39th anniversary of its inaugural AGM on 16th September 1976 - we have seen a lot of Prime Ministers and Presidents come and go in Australia China Economic Relations.

For about 12/18 months senior decades-old members of Chamber's Board of Life Governors have been intellectually struggling with the formulation of a new ACCCI Narrative, in part a reaction to the international embarrassment of the Tony Abbott Federal Liberal Government - thank heavens that has now changed.

However we await with eagerness the announcement of a Turnbull Manifesto for Change as you have self-labelled yourself "the agent for change". This we believe should be in two parts: both a recognition of, an apology to the Australian people for past Liberal Party mistakes, and a forthright programme of public policy pronouncements for the next several decades setting the country's foundation for the second half of the 21st century.

There needs to be an acknowledgement of the Liberal Party's policy role in the Vietnam War for the decade 1962/72 which led directly to the death of over 500 Australians with thousands wounded for a needless military adventure, not to mention the approximately 4 million casualties of the Vietnamese people that the Australian Government condoned. Remember the Australian Labor Party opposed your party-partisan intervention from start to end.

You need to apologise to the Australian people for the wrong-headed military intervention in Iraq from 2003 which still continues and is now extended to Syria resulting in millions of deaths and millions of refugees, with the resultant and predictable extremism of powerless people against Western weaponry. The world has judged Australia and only the US supports us.

On the Public Policy front we urge a new Narrative for the Liberal Party, a Turnbull Manifesto for Change. This should include pronouncements on:

- 1) a timetable for Governance structural change through COAG beginning with a strategy for a Republic and constitutional recognition of both the Indigenous People and Local/City Government - say in your first two terms up to 2022?
- 2) a seriously upgraded Productivity Commission with integrated programmes across all federal departments for growth targets both domestic and international. The Great Game of Global Economic Relations is bedrock for Australia's survival in an Indauspac Maritime Region where the Asian component alone is well approximately four billion people.
- 3) an action-based commitment to Climate Change Policy with an ETS in your first term re pre 2019 - take a detailed new policy to the people in the next Federal Election due by end of 2016?

4) the range of social policies to meet the thinking of the 21st century such as Same-Sex Marriage - your mantra used to be "the police have no place in the bedrooms of the nation" and nor does religion of whatever variety.

Malcolm, forget the neo-conservatives and fundamentalist religious in your Liberal Party ranks, they kept you from Prime Ministership for six long years and will do all to undermine you in the future. Reach out to those who want a reason to vote for you, including many of the ageing and numerous New Left from the 1960s who strongly supported, with reservations, Keating and Rudd, and who though recognising the social institution of trade unionism do not believe it should control a political party re ALP.

Be a genuine agent of change, Malcolm, just don't change suits.

Michael C H Jones
17th September 2015