**Ballarat COVID-19: No. 5**

**How the Victorian State Government Cannot Do Anything Right Apparently**

I wasn’t going to mention Andrew Bolt again. I promise I wasn’t but in the week or so since I submitted my previous COVID piece from Ballarat, Bolt and his colleagues in the Australian versions of the NewsCorp media have ratcheted up their critique of the Andrews Labor government in Victoria. As my heading suggests, their argument goes – they’re Labor, therefore by definition they must be overbearing and inefficient. This is not to say that Bolt and his counterparts in other Australian states have adopted any of the tenets, or methods, of the American libertarians who are attempting to reoccupy public places – or even capitol buildings as COVID-19 wins hands down in the US. Bolt is not wearing a bandolier. He is a pallid version of a demagogue but a demagogue nonetheless.

So, in the following extracts (Round Two from the pages of the *Herald Sun*, published out of Melbourne) we see further illustration of the key criticisms of the Victorian government put forward recently. They start off with the contentious issue of when schools may be safely re-opened. Authors’ names are indicated at the end of each passage.

1 May 2020: ‘Time to put ego aside and get students back to class. By forcing students to keep learning from home for another 10 weeks, Premier Daniel Andrews has shown he has overreacted to the coronavirus crisis and is putting politics and ego ahead of what’s best for Victorians, writes Kevin Donnelly’

(Incidentally, this is a gross exaggeration of the government’s position but Donnelly has always believed that if you stumble over an inconvenient fact, why, just plug on.)

3 May 2020: ‘Victoria is losing its magic thanks to Dan’s heavy hand . . . For millions of us, Victoria has long been the best place to live. But all this changing with Premier Daniel Andrews taking COVID-19 restrictions too far, writes Sophie Elsworth.’

5 May 2020: ‘A senior health official’s tweet abusing Captain James Cook helps to explain why Victoria has Australia’s toughest coronavirus restrictions – and why we’ll all pay as its Labor government destroys our economy and looks to China for rescue, writes Andrew Bolt.’

(Guide to understanding the above. Google ‘Dr Annaliese van Diemen.’)

6 May 2020: ‘VICTORIANS PAY WITH THEIR JOBS FOR DAN ANDREWS’ VIRUS PANIC.

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews imposed the most pointlessly tough bans of a [any?] state, banning even golf and telling children not to go to school. His panic has come at a shocking price: Victoria has had the worst job losses since mid-March, a drop of nearly 9 per cent.’ Andrew Bolt.

There are more but that’s enough for today.

Richard Trembath

Ballarat, Australia

8 May 2020.