

2024-04-05 Graham and John speak to former prime minister Tony Abbott...

Publish

April 5, 2024 3:00 pm AEST

Well, hi, everyone, and welcome to Club Grubbery for the interview of, uh, well, some time. I think, John, we're interviewing Tony Abbott, uh, as we, uh, as we finish recording this intro. And, uh, we're looking forward to that. We're going to be asking him some questions and looking forward to his answers. John, you've worked hard to get this one.

Yeah, look, it's been, uh, been one of those ones that we've, we've really had to, uh, Nurture hoodie because, uh, you know, obviously former prime ministers are very difficult to get hold of. Uh, they're wanted by everyone. So, um, but it's good to see that, uh, uh, Mr. Abbott has, uh, you know, allowed, uh, his time for us on Club Grubbery.

And I, and I think that speaks volumes about what we're doing. Uh, I mean, because they, they research these things that just don't go on anyone's program. And I think it, uh, demonstrates that he, he would. Uh, believe that, you know, we are, we are doing a good job. I think so. And people need to note that in the Nemesis program, which discussed the leadership spills in the Liberal Party, between, uh, he and Morrison and, uh, and Turnbull, uh, he refused to participate in that with the ABC.

So they approached him and he declined, but he's come on to Club Grubbery, which says a lot. And we thank him for his time and effort. We trust you enjoy this interview, but it doesn't do any good unless you share it. So please get it out there. And any mainstream media groups that are going to be watching this, there's some good grabs in there and we hope you use them.

So enjoy the interview and we'll see you on the other side of the break. Bye bye. Well hi everybody and welcome to another great episode of Club Grubbery. We know you've all been waiting for this one, Friday the 5th of April. And it's a great interview we have lined up for you today with former Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

And we welcome you Tony, thanks for joining us. Thanks for having me, Graham. Nice to be with you. It's, uh, it's been a tumultuous few years. There's no doubt about that. And the thing that resonates with me about you personally, uh, in 2019, I was living in an area that was threatened by bushfires. very badly and we're on the edge of evacuating.

And while Scott Morrison was swatting around on a beach in Waikiki, you were wearing blackened firefighting gear and I think you're at Sussex Inlet fighting fires. Um, and that really resonated with people like me. And you know, you came in Uh, you came in in 2013 as the elected Prime Minister and you stood for, you know, stopping illegal immigration and stopping the boats and you managed to do that.

And since then, a whole lot of things that have gone against the grain of you personally from the things you've stood for, like trying to get rid of the deficit and get the budget back in the black and a whole raft of other things have all gone south. And uh, it must be very perplexing for you to see the way this country is going.

Well, Graham, I guess every former prime minister suffers from the dread relevance deprivation syndrome. Some of us are better than others at hiding it or managing it. And I guess one of the ways that I dealt with it during the black summer was By spending a lot of time on the back of a fire truck. I'd been a member of the Davidson Rural Fire Brigade for about 20 years at that point in time.

And I certainly did more firefighting in my 20th season than in the previous 19 seasons put together, including a bit of pretty serious firefighting down near Sussex Inlet. It was the 4th of January when the fires swept out of the forest. Uh, into, uh, Bandalong and Munyana. And there were a couple of Davidson crews, along with other Rural Fire Brigade crews that I think were instrumental in saving those two beautiful settlements.

And, uh, it was an honor to serve and I'm pleased that we were useful. And yes, it's easy to be a bit despondent about the state of the world. All we can do is our best to make it better. I keep saying to people, effort doesn't guarantee success, but lack of effort does guarantee failure. So good on you, Graham and John, for, Doing this podcast because in its own way, you're trying to help people.

And I guess, encourage people to make things better each in his or her own way. Well, that's very true. And it's been an arduous task, but it's very rewarding at the same time. Um, obviously the vaccine mandates have caused a lot of harm. Uh, I've spent 15 months touring the country with my wife, uh, visiting, uh, 300 communities and we've spoken to over 30,000 people.

And the desperation out there is palpable, but it seems invisible when it comes to Canberra. Nobody's seeing anything. And John, uh, you've been at the forefront of the fight. You've been in court. You've risked everything to try and defend yourself and, and deal with these, uh, these horrible mandates. And I think you should ask, uh, Tony, a question or two on that.

Yeah. Thanks, uh, Woody. And, uh, thanks for being with us, uh, Tony. Um, yeah, a very dreadful time. I ran as a candidate, uh, in the 2004, uh, Cunningham election as a liberal candidate and a mutual friend of ours, Connie, um, uh, was assisting me in, in the campaign. A lot of people might not realize that you were a former, um, health minister as well, federally.

Uh, so, so you, you, you're ideally placed to, uh, to comment on pandemics and, uh, and the like. Now, I was 25 years a paramedic. My wife, a registered nurse with a master's degree in clinical teaching in the frontline emergency departments, uh, and also working in schools for Murrumbidgee Health. Unfortunately, we had to take on Brad Hazzard, uh, in the Supreme Court because of the public health order and the mandates, um, which obviously ensured.

Now, at a time when, uh, there's a critical shortage, uh, even then, uh, for frontline medical services, uh, do you, do you think it was a good decision, uh, to, to withhold those people from work? Sack them. Well, John. I really feel for you and your wife and for the hundreds of thousands of people initially and the tens of thousands of people still impacted by these vaccine mandates, uh, COVID hasn't really left in terms of its consequences.

And this is a form of long COVID that people like yourself are suffering from, not from the disease itself, but from policies put in place, some good, some not so good to deal with the disease. Now. You're right. I was the health minister in the Howard government for four years. At the time, I spent a lot of time and effort on pandemic preparedness.

In those days, we were worried about a potential bird flu pandemic, but, but we, uh, we certainly prepared a very detailed pandemic plan that was designed to cope with, uh, with any major infectious disease outbreak. And the trouble is that. Our plan, which was comparable to the British plan, the American plan, and indeed the Swedish plan, was essentially junked in the first week of March, when people panicked over footage coming out of hospitals in northern Italy, and instead substituted for the plans that had been carefully put in place over many years, what was really the Wuhan plan.

Lock everyone up and try to wish this virus out of existence and plainly that shouldn't have happened. I can understand the pressure that people were under. I can understand what was going through the minds of decision makers at the time. The reason why we have these plans is because it's best not to act under pressure in a panic.

Um, it really is. And, and so look, uh, I think we, we drastically overreacted, uh, to a relatively mild pandemic. Uh, it certainly wasn't Ebola. It certainly wasn't the Black Death. It wasn't even Spanish flu. It was worse than the Hong Kong flu. It was worse than the Asian flu, uh, but only modestly worse than those.

And our countries went through those in the 1950s and the 1960s without closing schools and businesses, uh, without, uh, vaccine mandates. Uh, without locking down, uh, without closing our borders, uh, for any length of time and so on. So look, I think there was, uh, uh, uh, an understandable, but ultimately grotesque overreaction to the pandemic.

And part of that was the insistence on vaccine mandates, uh, particularly. Uh, the prolonged insistence on vaccine mandates after it was clear that the vaccines were not nearly as effective as we had initially hoped. They didn't fully protect people and they certainly didn't prevent people from being infectious, which was the main reason why, as I understand it, uh, healthcare workers and, uh, other professionals dealing with the public, uh, were expected to get to.

Uh, triple vaccinated and then to maintain vaccination. So look, uh, we were operating in some doubt, uh, in the fog of war, if you like, at the start, but it was pretty clear by the end of April of 2020, that this pandemic was not All that serious, uh, that if you weren't either very old, already very sick or very unlucky, it was unlikely to kill you.

I'm sure it could put a lot of pressure on the hospital systems and that had to be managed. It was clear from about the end of April, what we were dealing with. And yet for a long, long time, it was treated, uh, uh, as though it really was something akin Uh, to Spanish flu or worse, uh, when, uh, it shouldn't have been now as for the vaccine mandates, Scott Morrison, to his credit, said that there shouldn't be vaccine mandates.

Uh, some of the state premiers agreed, some didn't. But the truth is that there were vaccine mandates, regardless of what any politician said. There were vaccine mandates. They were enforced rigorously, even ruthlessly, by state governments. And a lot of people, including yourself and your wife, have suffered grievously.

And that's wrong. The police force in New South Wales at the moment is under the spotlight because of the Commissioner's refusal to reinstate or even revisit officers who were terminated for gross misconduct under Section 118D. Now Section 118D, gross misconduct for a medical professional, a teacher or a police officer means that they're virtually unemployable from there on in.

Not only have they been punished because Uh, of standing for their bodily autonomy and in, in their own integrity. There is now a refusal like a dog in the manger attitude that these people will never be reemployed. Do you, do you think there's any moral standing in that? Don't you think it's time now that we went back to the beginning and said, right, let's draw a line in the sand and get these people back to work?

Well, obviously if you're a teacher, policeman, ambo, um, otherwise in good professional standing We really need you back in the classroom, back on the front line of keeping our community safe. Um, we need you on the road, uh, looking after people, uh, who are in trouble. So, so of course we should, uh, I think let the past be the past and, and, and go forward from here as best we can.

I should say, uh, Graham, that I got vaccinated, um, triply vaccinated, not with any great enthusiasm, I've got to say. Uh, because, uh. I always took the view with the pandemic that I probably wasn't going to catch it, but if I caught it, I probably wasn't going to die and see if I died. Well, okay. My time must've been up anyway.

Later, we have to accept the fact that our time is up. Um, and, and part of our problem with dealing in dealing with this was, um, I guess, uh, our reluctance to accept that. The one absolutely inescapable fact of life, the one thing we cannot avoid at the moment we come into this, into this world is that we'll eventually leave it.

Um, and, and, uh, these times live in denial of death in a way that no previous generation, uh, has. So, so look. I got vaccinated because I didn't want anyone to have an excuse for keeping us locked up any longer than it was

absolutely necessary. Um, and look, uh, I'm certainly not anti vax, but in the end, uh, at least for adults, that old slogan, my body, my choice, and that was deployed in a different context.

Uh, but nevertheless, there's, there's a lot of merit in that slogan, uh, my body, my choice, and yet, um, That certainly wasn't the approach that health, health authorities adopted at the time now. Now, people were reluctant to get vaccinated for a whole host of reasons. Um, some, uh, strong, some in my view, not so strong for whatever reason.

Um, that was then, and this is now, and I'm very conscious of a recent decision out of the Queensland Supreme Court, which says that these vaccine mandates were unlawful, unlawful. Now, um, I, um, imagine that, um, Eventually, uh, comparable cases in comparable jurisdictions are going to wind their way through the system, and it's highly likely that these vaccine mandates will be found to be.

unlawful. And, um, I think a lot of people in authority are going to end up looking pretty silly, um, deservedly silly, uh, for insisting for too long on mandates whose time had passed, if it ever existed, and for treating as a disciplinary matter, as a professional disciplinary matter, something which really should have been a matter of, of, of personal choice based on individual judgment, uh, of their own health circumstances.

John, yeah, well, I'm in the case of Justin poor, the former state of origin, uh, rugby league player. That's, uh, was terminated from the police is point in case. I mean, I, I've sent Tony, uh, correspondence in relation to that and the decision made by Yasmin Katli, uh, and Commissioner Webb. I mean, it begs belief to me that, uh, you know, this Yasmin Katli, I mean, she, she was a librarian.

I mean, with no disrespect, what would she know about policing? I mean, you know, the whole thing is just completely, completely gone bonkers. And look, you know, if a policeman is given an order to break up a riot, for instance, or to breathalyze someone, uh, or to, uh, you know, not use lethal weapons in a particular context.

And I mean, these are operational matters. And if you fail to conform to reasonable instructions in an operational circumstance, sure, that's a serious disciplinary issue, a very serious Disciplinary issue and people should be hauled over the coals. And if needs be dismissed over that, but, um, but this is not our operational matter.

And I don't think that, uh, uh, failure to, to, to adhere to an unreasonable instruction, uh, about your personal life, uh, justifies sacking people and keeping people sacked. It certainly doesn't particularly given what we know now about the relative. ineffectiveness of these vaccines, and particularly, uh, now that COVID is just one of the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.

And I think that's evident with this 181D legislation. Uh, uh, Paul Whelan, when he introduced this, it was on the back of the The corruption in the use of whilst police through the Woodrow commission, read that second, second reading, uh, there was never any intent for this legislation to be used in the manner that it is now.

I mean, it even goes on to say that. The commissioner should not, uh, overuse or over, overreach in regard to this, uh, legislation. So it's completely ridiculous. Do you think? And, and John, I imagine that this, this will be likewise challenged in the New South Wales courts as, uh, as similar rulings have been challenged in the Queensland courts, uh, successfully as it turned out.

So let's, let's see, but, um, just as a matter of common sense. Really, this should be, should be really considered. Uh, I noticed that the, uh, the, the new New South Wales health minister is now reconsidering vaccine mandates for nursing staff. Well, good on him for doing so. And, um, if it's good for the New South Wales health minister to reconsider this in respect of health staff.

Surely, it's all the more strongly good for the NSW Police Minister to reconsider it and for the Police Commissioner likewise. Yeah, I think the issue is, Tony, that the police have dropped the mandate. There is no requirement to have the vaccine, but the problem is, under this 181D legislation, that they've been charged, or

not charged, but they've been terminated for gross misconduct under that legislation, for failing to follow the order.

And so now Commissioner Webb and Yasmin Katli are refusing those individuals, I think there's 55 of them, to re-enter the police because of that finding. Yeah, and, and it strikes me as being completely unreasonable. Now, I've got to say to you, John, uh, uh, institutions hate doing things that suggest that they might've been wrong.

Politicians, uh, and I'm speaking from experience here, uh, hate admitting they might've made a mistake. Even to say, well, it was the right thing at the time, but it's not the right thing now doesn't come readily to us politicians. Sometimes if you're going to be a decent human being, you've got to accept that you didn't get everything right.

And particularly where your decisions have impacted adversely on, on people, you've got to be prepared, uh, to look at them, uh, reconsider them on the basis of all the current evidence and if needs be reconsider those decisions and reverse them. Tony, if I can touch on one thing that really, uh, got the hackles up on the back of my neck, um, I was 32 years a captain with Qantas, one of their most senior guys when I resigned.

Um, I could not get the information I required to give an informed consent. I just couldn't do it. So my, my training was such that if you're, if in doubt, don't go there. If in doubt, pull out. And I contacted the Civil Aviation Safety Authority to get advice on it. They couldn't give me any because they hadn't done it, which is pathetic in my, in my, in my opinion.

Um, but when, when I saw this all happening, I was also an instructor in human factors, which is bringing teams together to solve problems in the airline industry. I did that for medical teams and for the military as well. What really got me thinking was, while there was a whole bunch of scientists looking to race to a vaccine, and there must have been a lot of corners cut, let's forget about that.

A whole bunch of scientists and doctors were racing for a vaccine. While they were doing that, a whole bunch of other credible scientists and doctors were thinking, well, while they're doing that, What do we have in the cupboard that we can use now that we can save lives with? And so they started looking at prophylactic treatments and looking at drugs like ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, and they were coming up with regimes that were most definitely saving lives.

Then when they came to health authorities and said, okay, while they're working on the vaccines, we've come up with this thing. Because in New South Wales, the New South Wales Health Department told people who were home critically ill with, with COVID not to come to the hospital unless their lips turned blue or they were coughing blood and then just gave them Panadol to treat themselves with.

There was no prophylactic treatment offered at all. But instead of those treatments being looked at, examined and worked through committees to work out whether we could use them, those people who suggested them and the treatments were censored and banned and, and, and cast off into oblivion. That really should get any rational human being wondering what's really driving this.

Well, look, Graeme, I, I certainly, uh, am, uh, generally deeply sceptical about anything that smacks of conspiracy. There did certainly appear to be a lot of herd thinking, um, a lot of, uh, I guess, uh, reluctance to, uh, be open minded about things. About things and you do sometimes wonder, uh, what pressures were being brought to bear behind the scenes by, uh, different entities, uh, that may or may not have had financial interests involved.

So look, uh, this is exactly the kind of thing that should be gone over by a properly constituted Royal commission. Uh, I mean, We need to have a very thorough going inquiry, uh, into the decisions that were made by all levels of government, uh, and by other key institutions, um, states as well as the Commonwealth, um, major institutions and big businesses.

Uh, they do need to look at lockdowns, vaccine mandates, asking themselves masks, asking themselves. what was really effective and why, what was relatively ineffective and why, um, and they've got to look at, if you like, whether the national cabinet was, was effective, uh, uh, whether border closures were effective, what were the processes that led us to make these decisions and, uh, were those processes adequate?

Now, okay. A lot of it will. Inevitably be, I suppose, difficult for the people who were making decisions at the time. And, and again, I don't want to be too personally critical of anyone because they were all operating in, in the fog of war, so to speak, and they were all operating in a context where stepping out of line, uh, was, was, um, very severely frowned upon to put it, to put it mildly.

But, uh, we only advance. By critically appraising what we've done and what we thought in the past. And I very much fear that if we don't do the sort of thorough critical appraisal, an event of this magnitude requires, we will end up duplicating our overreaction the next time we get a pandemic. And I would, I would hate that to be the case.

I mean, I can remember when I was starting to think about Pandemic policy as health minister, try to read all I could, uh, on, on the Spanish flu pandemic. Now I had lots of other things to do, uh, as a, as a senior minister in a government. Uh, but so I, I probably only read the couple of readily available books on the Spanish flu pandemic.

I didn't go back and pour over what parliamentary committees might've, uh, might've said back in the 1920s in Britain and Australia. But but nevertheless, that is the work that I am pretty sure was done by the genuine experts who put together the pandemic plans that did stand for a couple of decades before they were, as I said, largely thrown out the window in the in the first week of March of 2020.

Incidentally, I did in 2022 and late 2022. Run into the Swedish ambassador to the United Kingdom at an event in London. And I said to, uh, to the ambassador, look, I want to congratulate you, Excellency, on the way your country has handled COVID. And I think your country has been, uh, a singular exemplar on what we should have done.

And this guy said to me, he said, well, you know, what we did in Sweden, Uh, we just copied the British pandemic plan almost word for word, just that we followed it and the, and the POMS didn't. Yeah, it was all set up to work really well before people get into it. That's, that's for sure. But, As you say, at the end of the day, it shouldn't be trying to target one person or one, one institution or another.

We've got to find out what caused it, what we could do to fix it. Every, every incident should have a post incident debrief and the Royal Commission. Correct. We all know this. I mean, if anything ever goes wrong in an aircraft, there's a critical incident debrief. Whenever anything happens in the fire brigade or in the ambulance service or in the police.

Yeah. The first thing you do is ask yourself, well, you know, exactly what happened, exactly what did we do and what can we learn from it? Was it, was it good? Was it bad? And, and you can always learn from everything. It doesn't matter how well you handle it. There's always something that you could have done differently and better.

Um, but so much of, of, of what we're doing in the aftermath of the pandemic is about, uh, self justification. Or political targeting one way or another, and we've got to try to avoid both of those temptations. Let's go into the politics because a lot of people in the last four years that I've been talking to are very disenfranchised with the Liberal Party, Liberal National Party.

We're starting to see that there's Very little that defines Liberal and Labor in the eyes of the electorate. Now, as, as someone who moves in political circles, you might disagree with that. But from the pundit at the coalface, it doesn't matter who you vote in anymore because, you know, let's be honest, Labor Party founders, back at the Tree of Knowledge in Barcaldine, would be rolling in their graves at the leftist wokeism of the Labor Party.

And, and likewise, the people of the Menzies era would say the Liberal Party has become something that doesn't resemble any of that. We've seen our Commonwealth of Australia Constitution, uh, totally ignored and that's the way it's being perceived by the people. And where do we go with that now? What, what has the Liberal Party got to do to redefine itself as a conservative party to give people an option to make a change that they can sit with?

Well, Graham, I can fully sympathize with your view that a lot of people today feel a bit politically homeless. I think there's a lot of traditional working class people who feel abandoned by a green left Labour Party. And I think there's a lot of traditional conservatives, particularly social conservatives, who feel that the Liberal Party is not as on side with them as, as they like, uh, we can lament this fact, or we can do our best to take back control of the political parties, which for all their current defects still best represent, uh, our overall position.

My first political mentor, Graham, was the late, great B. A. Santa Maria. Yep. And, um, Santa often told those he was close to, uh, that they should join the political party of their choice, accepting that no political party is ever going to be perfect or fully reflect your own, uh, views and, and, and values. Um, but they should join the political party of their choice.

And strive hard to make it better, accepting that it will never be perfect. Uh, but they should strive hard to make it better. So, so I would say Graham to you and to John and to any of your listeners who are feeling unhappy with the coalition or unhappy with the labor party. Um, and I can absolutely understand that unhappiness.

Um, please. Uh, join the party which is closest to the mainstream party, which is closest to your general orientation and do your best. Uh, to make it better because, uh, if you don't, I don't think you really have that much standing to complain. Um, uh, John, Tony, uh, do you think the, the, uh, justice system has been politicized?

I mean, we, we found the very hostile in presenting these cases in, in, in view of the data that's been available. Uh, but they've just been thrown out. Um, Lyndall Dean, the Deputy Commissioner in the Fair Work, uh, was essentially, uh, pushed aside, uh, for giving a dissenting view on a vaccine case and, uh, re educated.

Uh, the Justice in the, uh, the SAM matter, V Hazard, Justice Beach Jones, uh, has been promoted to the High Court and is now giving keynote speeches at, uh, the University of on the virtues of mRNA vaccines. I mean, it, it doesn't, uh, paint a great picture, does it? Hmm. Look, I, I can't say that I've been following the cases in vaccine matters with, uh, I guess the kind of intensity that others might've been.

I, I, I don't know. I did follow the George Pell case, obviously, in Victoria, uh, because of my great personal regard for the late Cardinal, and there's absolutely no doubt that the Victorian justice system disgraced itself there, and it appears that the Victorian justice system has been gravely deficient in some other important respects as well.

I guess I'd be reluctant to generalise beyond the Victorian system. Because I'm just not sufficiently familiar with it, but I do accept if you look at, for argument's sake, uh, the conduct of some people in that, um, Higgins Lehrman business in the ACT, if you look at what seems to be happening Between the DPP and some judges in New South Wales, you can understand people's anxieties.

But again, again, I guess this is where, you know, all of us have got to try to be our best selves. And if you're a judge, it's incredibly important that you inform yourself as, as widely as possible, and you attempt to be as, Fair minded as possible. And you do your best to obviously to respect the law, to respect the precedents, to respect the people who come before your court and bringing all that together as best you can, uh, try to do justice according to law.

And look, uh, we're all human. None of us are perfect, but yeah, there does seem to be. More evidence of imperfection at the moment than perhaps at some times past. Yeah, it's interesting you raise the issues relating to Cardinal Pell and I don't really want to go down that path. My wife and I have been heavily involved in the rehabilitation of sexual abuse survivors from childhood.

She was one and she gave evidence in the Royal Commission. And I don't think there are too many people who speak glowingly of the Catholic Church's response to the victims of childhood sexual abuse. It's been deplorable. Well, Graeme, you're absolutely right. The church should hang its head in shame about things that happened.

It's not the only institution, I've got to say. Yes, you're right there. I think that very few institutions dealt with this well. Mostly, I think, because people found it very hard to grasp the enormity of the whole thing. Interestingly, And I, I, I don't really want to get too deeply into this because it is, uh, it's a vexed topic, but I should just make this one point before we move on.

I mean, whatever mistakes Cardinal Pell made, uh, he was actually the first senior prelate in Australia to try to deal with this rather than sweep it under the carpet. But yeah, uh, thank God we are collectively and individually vastly more conscious of the need to absolutely protective of young people in these sorts of contexts.

Referring to matters of faith, I have to ask you too, a lot of people are totally disenfranchised with Pope Francis at the moment. He's making some decisions that are affecting the global situation at a, at a grace level. And I'm probably making you uncomfortable, but we've got an opportunity to discuss this.

Uh, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for example, you know, the Anglican Archbishop. said during the pandemic that if Jesus was alive, he'd be vaccinated. Um, I've got to ask you, how do you feel about the position of the Pope on all these global issues at the moment? Well, the great thing about, uh, the papal office is that infallibility does not extend beyond matters of faith and morals.

So as Cardinal Newman once said, the Pope is not infallible when he chooses his necktie. So if the Pope wants to give us an opinion on Ukraine, for instance, or on Gaza, for instance, he's, he's welcome to it. And I guess we've got to listen to him politely and with respect, but in the end, the Pope is simply another voice on these things.

Catholics are not required to, um, uh, religiously obey papal thoughts on topics beyond, uh, As I said, uh, that which is strictly covered, um, under faith and morals. Sorry, John. I was just going to say, Woody, I think that's where, uh, you know, Tony spoke earlier about the fog of war. Uh, you can understand people making these decisions and, uh, in that fog.

But the problem for me is that the fog lifted very early. Uh, and the Kerry Chance of the World, the Popes, uh, the Brad Hazards, the Gladys Berejiklians and all these other premiers were, you know, in my opinion, acting inappropriately. Uh, you know, they need to be held to account. Uh, and that's why we need a Royal Commission.

That's why Chris Ullman, uh, too said, we need to look at the iatrogenic harm that's been caused from the vaccines. I mean, Cletus Berejiklian was making people, young kids line up at, uh, sports stadiums to get vaccinated in the thousands so they could do the HSC. I mean, the whole thing was reprehensible.

Look, John, uh, You're right, there was too much groupthink, uh, and, uh, and there was too much, uh, herd mindset, and, and that's why we do need, as you say, we need to have a very thorough reconsideration of everything, not in a spirit of vindictiveness and, and, and finger pointing, uh, but to try to learn the best possible lessons So that next time it happens, and almost nothing is surer than that there will be another pandemic at some point in time, it might be in a year, it might be in a decade, it might be in a century, but there will be another one.

And let's arm future generations with the best wisdom that we can in dealing with the problems of their time, the right lessons learned from the way we dealt with the problems of our time. Look, I know we've got to let you go and I don't really want to because it's, you've been very gracious and, uh, we could, we could go on for ages, but I want, I want to ask you for the benefit of all the people who watch us.

Are you over the international, um, pandemic health treaty and the changes being made in it? Look, I, I'm not Graham. It's something that I do want to become more familiar with because I, I, I don't think the world health authority covered itself with glory during the pandemic. Um, I tend to be a skeptic of global bodies anyway.

Um, I believe that, uh, uh, you're more likely to get wisdom out of the democratic polities of countries like Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States than you are out of a body such as the UN. Um, so, so look, uh, something that I want to become, uh, more familiar with. Uh, and certainly I think it would be a grievous error, uh, for our country to bind itself in advance, uh, to following any directions that might come from a global entity such as the World Health Organization.

Wow. That's, that'll be the clip of the whole interview, I think, uh, Tony. Absolutely it will. Now, John, you got a final question? Are you asking, um, Mr. Abbott when he's going to come back? Look, uh, I think the most important thing any of us can do at the moment, and I'm speaking now as a liberal, I'm putting on my party political hat, the most important thing we can do at the moment, uh, is do everything we can, uh, to ensure that, uh, Peter Dutton, uh, succeeds at the next federal election.

Well, on that note, you can get rid of Matt Keane.

No comment. I just, I just, uh, that's probably a good note on which, on which to end. All right. Well, uh, look so much more we could, we could talk to you about, and I would hope that we could get back together again at some time in the future with more relevant things, uh, happening at the time, but I know you're a man of God, uh, Tony, and I'd really appreciate it if you'd close this out with a prayer.

Well, thank you, Graeme, and I am a very flawed and imperfect Christian, but I'm, I'm obviously someone who does take God seriously. Holy faith, seriously, uh, dear Lord, bless our lives, bless all the endeavors upon which we are embarked, uh, bless all of those with whom we. Come into contact, uh, and may all of us, to the best of our ability, be a force for good in this world.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord, Amen. Amen. And I thank you for that. And I can tell you, I don't know of any Christians who aren't flawed deeply. So, uh, we just thank you so much for your time. Uh, Johnny Lardy, you've often been heard to say. You just couldn't make this stuff up. You couldn't make this stuff up.

Stay out of the trees everybody and don't forget if you love somebody and you haven't told them please call them and tell them it's vitally important. There's a lot of brokenness in our country but together we can overcome these things and stand in our, in our, on our own two feet once again. So God bless you all.

John and I will be back after the break. Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, thank you so much for your time. God bless you. Thanks Graeme, thanks John. Well Johnny Lada, how good was that? That was worth the wait. It was worked the way he, uh, all good things take time. They say don't they? They do. And look, he was gracious and, um, he was, I think he was reasonably forthright as much as he could be.

Um, there were a couple of things we could have got really tangled up with, uh, with him, but it all worked out well in the end. And I think there'll be a lot of grabs outta this interview that will be hopefully seen on mainstream media because he is a former prime minister and he is got a, a pretty solid view on how badly this was handled.

Yeah, I don't think he left us in any doubt, uh, either before or during the interview, Woody, uh, how serious, uh, he, he feels that, uh, you know, this needs to be taken in reviewing it, uh, with regards to a Royal Commission and, and that was the gleaming thing here. You know, we need to, to, to move on and move on in a positive way so that we can make sure that this, uh, this doesn't repeat itself.

Absolutely. And, and interestingly, before we recorded the interview, um, we were given half an hour and, uh, he said half an hour is normally enough. I think we went for 45 minutes and, uh, I didn't want to stretch the friendship any further, but hopefully he'll come back on the program and discuss some other issues.

But he was, he was gracious. He was, uh, open and, um, and I enjoyed interviewing him. Um, and we'll just see where it goes from here. Yeah. And I think people should really listen to his wording, uh, because it, it, it, uh, demonstrates that he was very, uh, you know, upset about what had gone on, I mean, he was very strong with his words in regards to the way that we'd been, uh, treated, um, uh, you know, I think he, he's, he's absolutely sincere in, in, in what he says.

And, uh, look, I hope, I hope these politicians take note of. Of what a former, uh, uh, prime minister thinks about all this. Absolutely. And we've got to, regardless of who's to blame for whatever, we have to do a ruthless examination of how this was managed, uh, and how badly most of it was handled because most of it was handled very badly.

He did talk about the fog of war. Yes, that's true. But intermixed with that fog of war, there's also corruption and there are other things that need to be looked into to make sure that that's weeded out because public policy issues like this, Um, cannot go down the drain like that anymore. I mean, there's so many people being very badly hurt and impacted by government and corporate decisions.

So it was a great interview. It's one of the good ones. Please share it. Everybody, uh, get it out there far and wide because these are the things that make a difference. So, um, John, you got any further comments? No, look, just get on the line and have a look at the, uh, those non compliance t shirts, Uh, there they go at Drifter, uh, on our merchandise, um, thing.

So Luke's, uh, been busy printing them up with the, with the bags as well. Um, so yeah, everyone should, uh, have a look at them. No to the W. Have you got one there? Have you got it there? Actually, I've got the bag, Woody. I've got the bag. See if I can stick it up. There's the shopping bag.

Yeah, that's not working. No worries. It's alright. Yeah, there we go. We will not comply. Um, a great initiative. So go to www.drifter.com.au And get yourself some of those and t shirts and whatever, because it all helps. A lot of people are saying they've been wearing these and they're starting incredible conversations in supermarkets and bank queues and all that sort of stuff.

Um, good on you. Yeah. Thanks, John. And the other thing is, uh, Brad from the Kelly hotel, uh, sent me a text message saying that, um, in the last 12 months, most of his business was conducted by FPOS, 85 to 90%. And in the last few months, he's noticed that cash transactions have increased to about 30 percent of his business.

So people are using cash. Uh, and that's a really good thing to do. If you've got cash, get it out and use it. Um, and, uh, Just don't tell the ATO, Brad. Don't tell the ATO. But the other, the other thing is, um, uh, when the, uh, when the cash out Tuesday happened the other day, a lot of the banks restricted the amounts of money that was allowed out and post offices as well.

Very interesting. So they're hanging on for grim death. But anyway, We want you all to have a great weekend. Please get this interview out. It was fantastic and it helps to make a difference. God bless you all. Stay out of the trees and Johnny, you just couldn't make this stuff up. We'll see you with another interview coming up.

We're interviewing a lawyer this afternoon, Katie Ashby Copens, and she's got an incredible story to tell that'll come out next week. God bless you. Bye for now.