Summary By Dr Evan Jones - #TTTRally Canberra

Bank Reform Now Rally - Canberra 21st November 2016

Summary Article By: Dr Evan Jones

On Monday 21 November, Bank Reform Now held a rally on the grass in front of Parliament House.



The group had to compete with a sizeable contingent of Falun Gong members highlighting the ongoing plight of their movement in China. But, with its typical humility, Falun Gong placed its forces to one side, leaving the centre to Bank Reform Now. Thus did BRN sit centre stage on that axis that runs between Parliament House to the Australian War Memorial and presided over by Mt Ainslie. Those on Parliament House's rooftop café had a direct view of the BRN contingent in this iconic setting.

The BRN crowd could have been larger, as many would-be attendees could not make it, but it reached a critical mass. There were people who thought it important enough to make the journey from Western Australia, North Queensland and Tasmania.

The rally was significant as a vehicle to bring victims together, with much story swapping, transcending the pain of isolation.

Full marks to the organisers for a protest that functioned professionally – a PA system that worked (rare!), and canopies, chairs and water for the hot sun. BRN T-shirts were the go. But wearers were not allowed into Parliament House – no doubt suspected as *jihadis* who might disrupt the sacred somnolence of Parliament in the matter of bank corruption.

Some pollies did turn up before the show began. Although none stayed to listen to any of the speakers, there were lively exchanges between individual pollies and the organisers and some victims. Those who showed were Pauline Hanson and her entourage, Wayne Swan and Mark Dreyfus

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from Labor's ranks, and Bob Katter. Katter had accompanied Rod Culleton to the High Court down the road in the latter's coincidentally simultaneous appearance before the Court.

Here's the list of speakers, their State and the bank against which they are fighting.

1. **Suzi Burge** | Tasmania | CBA | (mortgage scam, predatory lending) | Listen To Speech
2. **Dr Peter Brandson** | NSW | NAB | (Founder of Bank Reform Now, mortgage scam re: family member, predatory lending) | Read Speech
3. **Faye Andrews** | Sydney | NAB | (property investor) | Read Speech
4. **Tony Rigg** | NSW | CBA | (building frame manufacturer) | Read Speech
5. **Dario Pappalardo** | Melbourne | NAB | (builder) **Read Speech**
6. **Dario Pappalardo for Rita Troiani** | Queensland | NAB | (brickworks) **Learn More**
7. **Dr Barry Landa** | Sydney | Perpetual Trustees & NAB | (investor, here & here)
8. **Brett Fallon** | Queensland | ANZ/Landmark | (farmer) | Speech & More
9. **Malcolm & Trish Taylor** | Western Australia | NAB | (farmer, inducement to purchase failing business) | **Read Story**
10. **Patricia Thirup** | Sydney | NAB | (mortgage scam involving criminal gang leveraging bank infrastructure)
11. **Michael Sanderson** | Adelaide | BOQ (farmer) | **Read Story**
12. **Kevin Gaynor for Giulia Mandarino & Deb & Jim Barker** | Victoria | CBA | (mortgage scam involving corrupt broker) | **Read Story**
13. **Peter & Anne Harwood** | Western Australia | CBA | (small business retiree investors)
14. **Tanya Hargraves** | Canberra | CBA | (graphic designer/media services/publishing, farmer) | **Read Speech**

Note the preponderance of NAB and CBA cases in the list, not unexpected. Note also the Bank of Queensland case. The BoQ case shines a light on the fact that the entire banking sector is addicted to corruption. The second tier has seen what the Big Four get away with and have opted to join them. No bank has chosen to compete by offering competence and integrity in banking. Banks run with the pack. It's a de facto cartel.

One member of the crowd deserves special mention – Rita Troiani. Rita Troiani is the widow of Sante Troiani, sometime co-owners of Bundaberg-based Wide Bay Bricks. Sante, a penniless migrant, was the compleat technician. He built a business that spread its sales widely, even to Asia. He had developed and acquired two major assets. One, patents for brick technology appropriate for earthquake- and volcano-prone areas. Rita thinks that with WBB's first export excursions to New Zealand, Sante saw the importance of this field. Second, WBB owned a clay field of the most extraordinary richness and diversity, producing bricks of atypical colour. Asian buyers were particularly attracted to both of these WBB factors.

The building giant Boral envied Troiani his business. They knew early about WBB's magical clay field. They had offered to buy WBB but the Troianis declined. They then, being dominant gas suppliers in Queensland, sold polluted gas to WBB which produced the desired results of crippling WBB's output. Sante organised the then Queensland government to mediate and receive compensation, and Sante found an alternative gas supplier.

With WBB still going strong, the NAB, with whom Boral enjoyed interlocking directorships, took down Wide Bay Bricks strategically over an extended period from 1993 to 2001. (Curiously, the NAB

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demanded that Sante return to sourcing his gas from Boral.) Of course, the takedown of WBB and bankruptcy of the Troianis was completed with the help of the Queensland court system. Sante had the technical nous, but was a novice in the financial domain, and he was ultimately easy prey. The Troianis, with assets in the tens of millions of dollars, were reduced to penury. Rita is still trying to get attention for Sante's and her particular ordeal.

The BRN team met with Kelly O'Dwyer, Minister for Revenue and Financial Services, late on Monday. They introduced Rita Troiani to Ms O'Dwyer who hadn't heard of the Wide Bay Bricks scandal. O'Dwyer promised to look into Rita's case. In a previous life, O'Dwyer worked for NAB. So she could very capably assist in justice being done for Rita – better late than never.

There were others in the crowd who could have publicly added their voices, variations on a common theme of bank bastardry. What is evident, being privy to further stories from this gathering, is the multi-faceted character of the problem. The abuse comes in a multiplicity of forms and through a wide variety of channels. One can well understand why nobody in authority wants to go near the problem.

If Labor thinks that a cut-down fixed-term low budget Royal Commission will cut to the quick it has another think coming. A meaningful banking Royal Commission will make the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse look like an overnight affair.

Rod Culleton also spoke to the gathering, wearing two hats – as bank victim and as Senator (just back from the High Court appearance). Culleton is Senator because of his run in with the ANZ, and he was voted in for that reason. Culleton is clearly a controversial figure, attracting opponents and supporters.

What needs to be focused on is Culleton's claim that the ANZ unilaterally changed the terms of his Landmark facilities (and that of other Landmark borrowers) after the ANZ acquired Landmark from the Australian Wheat Board (AWB). This key issue has never been given an adequate public airing.

Landmark is merely one of specialist rural lending institutions whose borrowers have been treated unconscionably after new management has attempted to obliterate the special terms (and considerate treatment of farmer circumstances) and incorporate these rural loans into mainstream commercial lending practices. Similar processes occurred with Labor's sale of the Primary Industry Bank of Australia (PIBA) to the WA R&I Bank (now Bankwest) and thence to Rabobank, and with CBA's CEO David Murray attempting to dismantle the Commonwealth Development Bank (CDB) in the mid 1990s. No doubt we can expect the same after the Victorian Coalition government sold the Rural Finance Corporation to Bendigo Bank in 2014.

Barrister Peter King also spoke to the BRN gathering. King has become a rare champion amongst the legal fraternity in pursuing bank malpractice. Such lawyers are a very rare breed, because there is no money or fame in it and no future. The banks, past masters at reprisals against their opponents, have such people in their sights. These lawyers have eschewed juicy fees in working for the banks themselves, and the prospect of being elevated to the bench thereafter.

I also spoke, summarising the state of play, acknowledging that everything I had to say was pretty much known already at first hand by the victims who constituted the audience.

I highlighted that, although media coverage (especially by Fairfax) had exposed in fine detail a number of financial sector scams, the coverage remained uneven. Significant sectors and forms of bank corruption (small business, farmers, mortgage scams, partnerships with criminal elements etc.) remained under the radar. As a consequence, the general public remains unaware of the full extent of banking malpractice. This spotty coverage has made it easier for pollies to claim that the problems are sporadic, that the regulatory system is generally robust, rotten apples, we're fixing it up. Blah blah … blah.

One thing that I meant to mention but forgot is my disdain for the National Party. The Nats can get hot under the collar re: land clearing, greyhounds and guns but they are missing in action regarding

bank predation. Nats John Williams and Warren Entsch care, but have failed to carry the Party with them.

Ditto for farmer 'representative' organisations. NSW Farmers has been bought off by the NAB. The NFF (No Family Farms) early spent a motzah on fighting unions but hasn't spent a penny on fighting banks.

One facet of bank malpractice that has gone completely under the radar is that it appears that women are particularly vulnerable as potential victims. Whether as home loan mortgagors, businesswomen, investors, or even going about their daily business without entering a bank premise, single women are the subject of an atypical degree of predation by bank staff or bank hangers-on.

There is another dimension of this story that is particularly disgusting. Some women have been taken to the cleaners by their ex-husbands or partners in conjunction with corrupt bank officers. Here are situations in which financial devastation is intimately involved with emotional devastation. These are the backlot stories that are part of the edifice on which bank CEOs 'earn' their $10 million salaries and are regularly quoted in the media as authorities on the state of the nation.

In these cases, the destitute woman's signature is regularly forged. The criminal parties don't even bother to try to ensure authenticity. The victims are told by police, etc., upon complaint – "Ah, this is too hard to prove." One such victim took her case to court, and it was dismissed by a female judge. So much for the sisterhood! If one wants to look for blood brother/sisterhood, go to the judiciary.

> Many victims can't tell their stories without losing emotional control. They are surviving on a pittance. They are typically out of sight.

> Overwhelmingly, those in authority don't know of the extent of the problem and don't care. They are fearful to expose themselves to the extent of the problem because the floodgates will open. To continue to not care after having been exposed to the problem will be a burden too great to shoulder.

> The Bank Reform Now rally aimed to break that impasse.

> One immediate by-product of the rally was the appearance at a press conference in Parliament House the next day of Brett Fallon.

If you wanted a poster boy for the consequences of bank depravity you couldn't do better than Brett Fallon. Fallon is tall, straight out of central casting, the real McCoy, and survivor of a suicide attempt after having been tortured by bank flunkies and the police. Rare for an older generation of male farmers for whom the word taciturn was probably invented, he is a powerful rhetorician. There are those who have died from successful suicides or from victim-sustained exhaustion, but they have no voice. Fallon speaks for them and for all victims.

The BRN principals and their loyal allies are not going away any time soon.

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