

Labor failed on banks, failed in the election



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There are numerous reasons Bill Shorten's Labor failed to convince Australians to elect them to solve their problems, but there is one obvious reason. Inexplicably, Labor let Scott Morrison off the hook on the banks.

It is extraordinary that in the immediate wake of the Hayne banking royal commission which proved that the banks are vast criminal enterprises, it was not an election issue. That was Labor's choice. History shows that the minor parties and rebel Nationals had pushed for the royal commission for years. But as long as Labor opposed it, it never happened. Once Labor changed its policy in 2016 and supported a royal commission, however, the government was exposed as the paid protection of the banks. That led to unbearable political pressure which forced the government to call the Hayne commission, albeit with rigged terms of reference, but which was enough to expose for all the world to see that the banks that were supposedly well regulated and the best in the world are in fact dens of thieves.

So why did Labor stop pressuring the government on the banks? Senior Labor MPs have agreed with the CEC that the government and the banks rigged Hayne's terms of reference to ensure weak final recommendations, so why did Labor refuse to do any more than the government committed to do, which is implement the final recommendations that the arrogant banks actually celebrated as a "good outcome"?

Labor's Mark Butler rightly declared in Parliament in 2018 that the royal commission was wrong in its finding on the BankWest customers who were victims of the dirtiest big bank, CBA, so why did Labor refuse to commit to guaranteeing full compensation for all of the thousands of bank victims around Australia whom the sadistic banks continue to toy with? (For instance, NAB appointed one of Australia's most obnoxious political personalities, Jeff Kennett, to "mediate" with its victims, with predictable, hopeless outcomes.)

Even after Labor doyen Paul [Keating said that Hayne should have broken up the banks](#), why did Labor senators collude with the Liberals to kill a proper Senate inquiry into the Glass-Steagall [Banking System Reform \(Separation of Banks\) Bill 2019](#), and suppress the huge volume of public submissions which proved immense popular support?

And why did Labor refuse to make the banks an election issue, when they could have prosecuted Morrison from one end of the country to the other on his shameless protection of criminal banking practices that fleeced and gouged millions of Australians and left tens if not hundreds of thousands ruined? Labor would not have lost any votes in going after the banks; they would have gained thousands, by proving to voters that they were serious about cleaning out the cesspool of financial corruption. So why didn't they prosecute Morrison on his most vulnerable issue? By not doing so, they effectively covered for him.

The Labor Party is in shell shock at the moment. This must be a wake-up call. It is time for Labor to stop thinking about themselves and their ambitions for power, and think about what the country needs. And that is the "old" Labor Party, the party of Curtin and Chifley who were warriors against the "Money Power". They need to learn the lesson of the UK Labour Party, which similarly lost an unlosable election in 2015, after which the members turned away from technocratic, managerial, back-room deal-making politics and turned to Jeremy Corbyn whom they knew they could trust to always fight on principle, to clean out the dirty City of London banks and their corrupt control over politics, and to defy the billionaire media, experts and commentators.

Corbyn's UK Labour supports Glass-Steagall and a national bank. As do the progressive Democrats and AFL-CIO unions in the USA. Labor members and the unions should force the party to lead the same fight in Australia.

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