

WITH GOD AND SOFT POWER ON OUR SIDE: (AGAIN) LET'S ALL RECOGNISE NORTH KOREA BEFORE ITS RAIL REUNIFICATION

There's a bastard called the Economy and he keeps poor people poor, while the fat cats with more money go on making more and more (Redgum)

Carol O'Donnell, St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank Street, Glebe, Sydney 2037

www.Carolodonnell.com.au

Protest against Australia joining the AUKUS plan to develop nuclear submarines and question its regional and environment relationships to other treaty obligations it may crowd out, with military and construction business. Those getting in earliest on a project may take the biggest bite of available funds.

In the light of Paul Keating's address to the National Press Club last week I urge you to use your voices to oppose the recent decision, led by the Australian PM and others, to purchase nuclear powered submarines under the AUKUS defence pact of English speakers and interests. Whether China is gearing up for war legitimately or not, seems beside the point for anyone concerned about peaceful and green environments with plenty of clean water in future. In the pursuit of jobs and growth alone one easily loses global perspective on the ultimate goal of freedom from want for all. The fact that this is a utopian project does not make it any less important and I cannot see where gearing up for war fits in. I blame **Redgum** for changing Australian sensibilities with '*I was only nineteen*', about a sick Australian soldier who fought in Vietnam. What happened to '*If you don't fight, you lose?*'

We should instead support former PM Kevin Rudd, in his book **The Avoidable War: The Dangers of the Catastrophic Conflict between US and Xi Jinping's China** (2022). My purpose later is to argue for more cultural exchange with North Korea, leading to more cultural exchange and rail unification. How does nuclear power serve the people rather than their masters of war who were given or bought or bartered their caste-off weapons in secret, as in Ukraine? Why do they always tell us their war will be over by Christmas, and then let it go on for years? I guess it is because it makes men money, like father, like son, using and supporting their women and children any way they can and feel inclined. War seems like their weather, continuing their abuses while they are destroying their enemies and their possessions, like peasants and civilians. Then using became more unpopular and so we are here. I will address the Sydney Environment Institute at Sydney University later to point out that, among other things, the SEI seems to be turning inward and social. It isn't enough to do the job as the project is mainly about action on faraway ground. One always wonders who is expected to do the hard ground work in these university research and teaching ventures. (Thank God I'm retired on super, without any mortgage and in good health.)

In his article entitled **We've long said no to US. A yes could now be nuclear**, former NSW Premier, Bob Carr, said the AUKUS pact which Australia had joined to make eight nuclear powered submarines seemed to him like sleep-walking into a ruinous and horrific war in which we make ourselves just possibly the target of a nuclear attack (SMH 18.3.23, p.34). I think we all should share Carr's fear, not least because Ukrainians didn't think they would be

going to war with Russia either. They have all been mixed up for years by their poorer or richer fathers and masters, like us, who fuel and use their technology. At the Sydney Environment Institute at Sydney University one might have expected that a legal expert on governance giving a lecture about *Harnessing the transformative potential of climate governance: achieving deep coordination, change and equity* might have addressed the AUKUS nuclear powered submarine development and what it might do to her worthy aspirations for the Commonwealth to take over the lot and throw money at it, in the quest for renewable energy development and more abundant and cleaner water. To ignore AUKUS in this SEI lecture, supposedly given in honour of an historian, seems a craven step, or indicative of a narrowly career focused mind, or something else. The only excuse for AUKUS I can see is to use the idea to kick top-down approaches to being multi-disciplinary out. They just cost more money or won't really work together without good management. I saw too many tripartite structures like that in the NSW public service. In my view, as a former public servant and academic, the public sector is more focused on the public interest goal, but the academic wants more money for research.

One always wonders who will be expected to do the real work on the ground. Should one guess it's those outside the particular centre as usual? I address the coming state elections and housing in this local light later. The national electricity or water market operations may pale before the AUKUS mindset of business as usual which most recently brought us the Ukraine War. Richard Spencer, 76th Secretary of the US Navy, made a trenchant attack upon the US Department of Defence in his speech to the National Press Club, for assuming the US government is less productive and effective than the private sector in relation to production of the nuclear-powered submarines that Australia will help build and purchase, supposedly for its own defence as usual. Later, I address the Greens and Australian Labor Party candidates in the local Balmain electorate, which seems most concerned about local housing availability, in a related comparative light. I will vote Green in Balmain because of the comparatively admirable intelligence, efficiency and reach of their office.

The 76th Secretary of the US Navy revealed at the National Press Club that Australia is only the 7th country in the world to be told about the US nuclear technology. For those interested in the rule of law, its objects and administration, and who read about the centrality of the Manhattan Project which led quickly to nuclear knowledge and bombs around the world, this is funny? Dr Kate Owens and the SEI missed it? The welcome to country given by Yvonne Weldon from the City of Sydney Council was better than the Owens lecture and the best policy analysis I've heard. Who wrote it?

Bob Carr laments that a supposedly left-wing Labor government took the decision on nuclear-powered submarines, because it further mixes us up. This is common in our system of thought, which is largely built on seeking the ultimate technological mastery over life and death. The powerful entrenchment of traditional Australian alliances with UK and US forces, where they have been rigging the rules and markets for us through the political processes for centuries, seems destined to lead again to nuclear war, not peace. On our experience of our common global history of advance, an arms race featuring nuclear powered submarines appears to be an extremely high-risk strategy inviting more global trouble, especially where weapons are produced, traded, stored or go missing. These are major installations which

must be well built and guarded by people who know what they are doing, I assume. A recent giant explosion of a major hazard in storage was in Lebanon, for example.

Carr points out that in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, Australia fought peasant militias and the current nuclear expansion would be the first war this country has entered against any nuclear power. He states that Australia instead can become *'a gutsy, nagging advocate for peace'*, engaged with India, *which despite its Quad membership, will never join a war in East Asia*. One wonders how he claims to know so much about the Indian state and people, including its more secretly entrenched and uncontrollable elements. Having observed the effects of the second world war upon European Jews, the people of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the rest, including those in the Asia Pacific afterwards, it seems the only reasonable option is to pursue global peace as the top value in regard to global and local security.

A third world war, on the other hand, may potentially start with nuclear bombs dropped on or exploded in Australian cities like Canberra, Sydney, or Melbourne, for example.

Terrorism, however, may be spread for any reason by any man who is comparatively deranged in his moral and empathetic sense. One could certainly see where Anders Breivik, who undertook a major massacre in Norway came from, for example, thanks to Asne Seierstad's great book, **One of Us**. He was a very clever and strong boy, badly damaged by his deeper practical knowledge and associations, than were his student peers with political aspirations. Such people seem better off recognized and nurtured from the start, as well as others. So let writers write and do not gag them. But kill Anders Breivik for us all because to do otherwise is too expensively risky for the rest of us. New Guinea led the way in this, I read in a Sydney Morning Herald obituary, by recalling the death penalty for payback killing. More on this matter is attached.

One wonders where the AUKUS pact leaves Australia in regard to other major international treaties, or to **Laudato Si**, the Pope's **Encyclical on the Environment**, for example. Will Tanya Plibersek, Minister for Environment and Water take this up with PM Albanese and others in Cabinet? Margaret Simon's book **Tanya Plibersek: On her own terms** suggests this will not happen unless the course is urged upon her. (Strangely she seems a little like Julia Gillard and Penny Wong in that respect. Go figure?) Related matters are addressed in the attached letter to homosexuals, indigenous people, faith leaders, prisoners and others, for example. The Pope seems to be a great guy. At least give him a good Voice. As an atheist you might not expect me to say this but anybody can learn from studying the history of the world which is changing, as Joan Armatrading pointed out in song, in **Drop the Pilot**.

In related regional veins one wonders about Foreign Minister, Penny Wong's direction regarding treatment of refugees or other displaced people, such as those addressed in the UN site about the **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons**. In theory, this established a victim-centred approach to trafficking humans. In 2005 it had been signed by 177 countries. I guess a *'victim centred approach'* means treatment to meet the apparent needs of the particular case, according to some law or not, perhaps. In any regional address the key guiding principles of development appear best understood and acted upon more openly together in the service of regional cooperation for better managed and monitored competition. It is hard to see how AUKUS membership makes Australians more capable of

choices, rather than forced conformity to those of other men who see wars as good forms of creative destruction, to build back something bigger, or to die in the attempt.

According to the relevant UN website, the **Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons** is a landmark international treaty *whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.* We should ask Defence Minister, Richard Marles, and others how the Australian adoption of nuclear submarine building and the goals of this treaty may be pursued together. Have Britain, the US, Australia, China, Japan and other nations gearing up for nuclear war also signed this Treaty, expecting war preparation will bring us greater peace? Why should the rest of us continue pursuing their comparative myth which is so easily disputed using historical data?

The Constitutional right to defend a man's person, family and property encouraged the secret manufacture and trade of US weapons around the world. In the 20th century, US men were made into the top land and family aggressors by their laws. The fact that the US experiences the highest domestic rate of gun deaths in the developed world also shows this is so. We may blame the historical warmongers driving the biggest funds, like Churchill and Hitler, but little appears to have undermined the International Labor Organization business as usual stance since its tripartite construction before the First World War. One wonders how Australian political representatives are expected to deal with these apparently conflicting international obligations and assumes that the newer and weaker ones become perverted as usual. The pivot to address wider regional considerations such as quality of life, beginning in areas which appear most poorly treated in vegetation, energy and water, for example, is easily made increasingly expensively weak. How does the central AUKUS mindset help?

Mine is the early World Health Organisation inspiration, which may be more profitably pursued than the normal International Declaration of Human Rights under Western lawyers, I guess. See more on related matters at www.Carolodonnell.com.au and read my autobiography **Power Loving: Everything you didn't want to know about sex and lawyers** (2020). It hasn't been popular enough to meet a tiny part of its production, distribution and storage costs, let alone support me through the labour or make money. However, I'm worth it?

It appears an aspect of the apparent general breakdown in better global understanding if the **Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons** can be so increasingly easily cast aside or overpowered by any rogue state or terrorist group or individual build-up of arms, for foreign or domestic uses. Whether Australians are too ignorant, or too frightened or feel too powerless to stand without a supposed US nuclear protector, or act mainly in the cause of men's jobs as usual, there is another way. This is centrally addressed, for example, by China's President, Xi Jinping in his leading speeches, in his book **The Governance of China** produced by the Foreign Language Press in Beijing and in its 6th printing in 2017. Buy it online or locally through Gleebooks. In **Enhance China's Cultural Soft Power**, Xi begins the chapter with the view that the strengthening of **soft power** is decisive for China to reach the

Two Century Goals and realise the **Chinese Dream** of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (p.178).

The Chinese Dream, outlines national dreaming different from the more familiar **American Dream**. Its success must also be rooted in **Soft Power**, which is essentially cultural communication. In Australia, the executive chairman of Fortescue Metals Group and one of the richest men in the world, provides related direction in this global context. His roots in Western Australian mining, pastoral and other interests are addressed in Andrew Burrell's book **Twiggy: The high stakes life of Andrew Forrest** (2020). Forrest is a figure whose globally wide collection of 'green' and 'freedom from fear and pain' interests had earlier surprised me in the press. Some are addressed in the Australian regional and global contexts attached, for example, in which the duties of local representatives to their constituents may appear equally involved. In 2014, Forrest's report was presented to the Prime Minister's Office, for an indigenous training and employment review. This 244-page review and 27 recommendations entitled **Creating Parity** is easily available on-line. Such recommendations and the report should particularly be examined, one assumes, by any person wondering what regional policy should follow the establishment of any particular community or individual voice to parliament. This is supposedly also intent on closing welfare gaps between indigenous and other Australians. What do the supporters of AUKUS recommend should be done to address needs in regions commonly driving war and not peace? Give them some old-fashioned arms on both sides as usual, encouraging their friends to hop in and finish it off?

Let's try to go to North Korea as soon as possible and collaborate on artistic production and trade if possible (It can only be good for us all)

In his latest book, **The Avoidable War** (2022) China specialist and former PM, Kevin Rudd, considers the common international need for more cooperation, including between the leading global competitors of the US and China. We can work better together as well as with Rudd and others in many forms of managed competition to serve our people, not necessarily starting locally. In avoidance of war, Rudd writes of the need for greater financial stability; avoidance of increasing inequality and corruption; reduction of violence; reduction of greenhouse gases and global warming through investment and other support for cleaner production; and prevention of pandemics by treatments to control infectious diseases or disabilities caused by health and environment collapse. China is Australia's largest trading partner and should look to improving relations with all its trading partners. As Keating pointed out, Australians should understand the vital differences between increasing weapons production and entering into every other kind of trade, which does not encourage land invasion and death. In the realm of men's violence against women, I have argued it is equally vital to preserve the distinction between men's violent assault on women and children, and other types of trading or dispute linked to sex-based power imbalances in the maintenance of children. If these distinctions are not preserved, they lead to commercial goals and expectations ruling as usual and the costs appear increasingly uncertain. This is anathema to the general quality of life and business.

I consider related financial environment matters attached, in the light of many of the views of John Kay, visiting professor at the London School of Economics, and fellow of St John's

College, Oxford. In ***Other People's Money: Masters of the Universe or Servants of the People?*** (2015), Kay primarily addresses the global rise of the financial trading culture since the 1980s which has enhanced the bias to finance generating action that reduces ethical standards and increases the costs of financial intermediation as well as the costs of general population and financial instability. Climate change is a huge Australian and other challenge in an environment of dramatic species loss which will affect poor people most if related problems of trade and development are not addressed better as soon as possible. One assumes that a major way of doing so is expected to be through reference to key Chinese belt and road communications, planning and developments. The creation of the New Silk Road where trade routes and related cultural and other exchange has occurred for centuries, increasingly requires new development across a gigantic amount of territory West of Beijing. See Ben Simpfendorfer's book ***The New Silk Road: How a rising Arab world is turning away from the West and Rediscovering China*** (2009) for example. Chapter six, entitled ***The New Public Relations War***, on Al Jazeera in China, is particularly instructive on these vital regions across the Russian Federation of states that make everywhere else in the world look comparatively small geographically, as well as to its South. This new development opportunity ideally includes Australia as an English-speaking desert country with some well-developed education, communications, health care and other production. English will be the language of business for a long time I guess and the considerable capacities of dual language speakers and writers increasingly deserve to be recognised rather than ignored.

After covid lockdowns affected the world in 2020, as a formerly frequent global tourist, I developed a fear and loathing of all the new technologies I would have to confront with just a poorly used mobile phone. Sometime later, I watched Michael Palin, of Monty Python global fame, take a trip round North Korea, as shown on free-to-air Australian TV. With all the airline changes, crowds, transport strikes and natural disasters around the world, and increasingly with just my mobile phone to guide me, especially in non-English speaking countries, I thought that North Korea looked like a great place to visit as a tourist. I emailed Koryo Tours to arrange it. This set me on cultural, artistic, political and related paths of learning, in which former Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith, appears to have been unhelpfully aggressive. Long story short, I remain at home on the sofa as Australia doesn't recognise the existence of North Korea and so doesn't provide a visa for holiday entry. No problem, was the Koryo story, because I can easily get a visa to enter North Korea as a tourist by going to Beijing. (Oh yeah?) Koryo tours, which has been operating tours to North Korea since 1993, with many tourists from Britain, says the North Korean border was closed in 2020 and nobody knows when it will open. Australia should take the new tourist opportunities which Britain opened in the 1990s, in my opinion. It seems the former Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Stephen Smith, insultingly and clumsily closed mutual cultural relationships off, rather than trying to open them up to more diplomatic and useful trade. That's typical, I guess. So, I wrote to a group of Asian women artists, asking if they would like to support an art showing including North Korean women artists at a small but popular gallery in Glebe. I offered to try to arrange this by going to North Korea alone or with other tourists, as soon as its borders opened up. (See correspondence later below.)

For Australians to ignore or undermine many more normally peaceful trading routes, while pursuing nuclear submarine building with AUKUS, appears to hand over the global reins to a

lot of more narrowly driven, power hungry and authoritarian men again. I address this locally, remembering the Queensland and national history of artistic relations with North Korea, as shown in the sixth Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane. This began in December 2009 and ended in April 2010. According to the Queensland Art Gallery website, *'The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art' included the work of more than 100 artists from 25 countries, including collaborations and collectives, which reflect the diversity of practices across Asia, the Pacific and Australia*. Nevertheless, then Foreign Affairs Minister, Stephen Smith, decided against giving entry visas to North Korean nationals, because doing so for these artists *'would have sent an inappropriate message to the North Korean regime'*, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I address the related failure of elected Australians to understand the regional requirements of the international development contexts they inhabit, starting with art and tourism in North Korea for example. In my failed attempt to visit North Korea as a tourist, in 2023, I discern more peaceful trading opportunities and urge them on you here, merely as a former tourist. I hope you will also speak out about these matters and urge our elected representatives and others to do so.

Koryo has organised tours to North Korea since 1993 and has maintained a very clear and helpful online presence and email communication since the North Korean border closed in January 2020, with no indication when it will open. According to Wikipedia, ***Michael Palin in North Korea*** first aired in the UK in 2 parts in [2018](#) after an earlier documentary was proposed and failed to get up. I also recall that earlier, however, in 2013, an Australian film maker from a well-known diplomatic family, Anna Broinowski, tried to enter North Korea (apparently with the help of Koryo tours), to make her film ***Aim High in Creation***. The title was drawn from a book by the 'Great Leader' Kim Jong-il, about how to make great movies. His book was based on his admiration for the US cultural communications capacity through story-telling which has succeeded so well with so many of us around the world; and better than any other US communication, perhaps, except song. Broinowski found her crew and actors wishing to tell the story of a gas drilling company which met opposition from heroic local communities and landowners concerned about land and water pollution, could not stay long in North Korea. They had to make their movie back in Australia. Perhaps the refusal to give longer visas may be put down to the old-fashioned matter of tit for tat, following the actions of Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Stephen Smith, or perhaps not. Surely the refusal to give reasons for actions, however, seems a key example of the authoritarian mind. This normally also seeks to remain ignorant of any alternative wishes to their own, no matter how poorly or well informed they may be about any broader regional or historical developments. The narrowness of Australian professional association and goals also hinder more peacefully stable and green operations. The Sydney Environment Institute research attitude seems perhaps a case in point.

It is now vital, I think, to address the current arms build-up through AUKUS, in Japan and elsewhere around the Pacific, especially in China, to build the common cultural understanding which is necessary for better planned and more competitive trade designed to serve communities better by also being more inclusively involving. Australians are much more historically used, however, to trade union representatives supported by large

employers who make bargains with the states to keep land borders to labour and production methods closed, supposedly in the related state and national interests. This has implications for the sensible treatment of Australian intellectual property which do not appear to have been grasped by many producers. We should protest against Australia joining the AUKUS plan to develop nuclear submarines and question its regional and environment relationships to other treaty obligations in this global context. Let's urge North Korea to open up its borders and also let's try to go to North Korea as soon as possible to collaborate on artistic production and trade if possible. Unlike joining AUKUS, which is a high risk, threatening strategy, learning more about North Korea seems likely to be good for us all. I urge this upon Australian indigenous people in particular for its global policy value.

Thinking globally and acting locally on housing before the 2023 NSW state elections (the Greens vs the Australian Labor Party in the Balmain electorate)

The Glebe Grapevine (March 2023) addresses the platforms of Kobi Shetty, Greens candidate for Balmain and Philippa Scott, the ALP candidate, in regard to public housing. There is a lot around here, some of it in considerable need of repair, along with a lot of private rental properties. Both candidates are new women and I guess one or other will win the election, after the distribution of the preferences of other losing candidates. I will vote for Kobi Shetty because of the comparatively thoughtful, efficiency and reach of her Green Party organization. The ALP are an ageing party which normally likes to keep control of their women, often deemed sound through their long biddable family and university associations. However, I could never vote for an unusually marginal Catholic school man and lawyer like Liberal Premier, Dominique Perrottet, whose wife is also a North Shore lawyer. They have also had seven children who will go to expensively unusual Catholic schools, like Dominique Perrottet's ten siblings did. (Are these sort of people nuts or another kind of problem for the rest of us, Catholic or not? I guess so.)

According to the Glebe Grapevine, Kobi Shetty said, '*I will always stand up for public housing residents*'. She is not here, however, to be on the side of anybody considered an underdog by themselves or anybody else. She is expected to represent the entire Balmain community, in which a lot of us appear richer but equally interested in her service. The ALP candidate, Philippa Scott, states that a Labor Government will properly fund social housing maintenance (which unlike public housing is managed outside the government sector). To improve public or social housing in any way, however, a Labor state government will have to call upon more subcontractors to do the work of renovation and building, while monitoring their activities more effectively than in the past. This is necessary to understand and improve the comparative efficiency of the operations of the lot. The regional approach to understanding and development is often the enemy of the closed shop, even if the latter doesn't accept donations. Opening up practice instead of closing it off seems a better remedy for shortages and related ills. Common identities of interest need to be better recognised and justified across the board if Australia is ever to reach its development and climate goals.

Land use is normally a state matter, and so is building construction and related land and building management. In NSW government elections the candidates for this comparatively

rich and green Sydney electorate of Balmain had many similar policies. With two unknown female candidates facing off, in an electorate which has a strong relationship to the City of Sydney development and aspirations globally and locally, it is historically unlikely that any Liberal party or rural National party interests will be capable of representation here. Yet it is in the bush, not just in the legally dominating city, where major Australian problems need to be faced to resolve them better in the national or regional and individual interest. As the famous Canadian American economist JK Galbraith noted many years ago, economic activity cannot be distilled into inviolable laws, but is a complex product of the cultural and political milieu in which it occurs. His work included several best-selling books throughout the fifties and sixties. His major contribution to the field of economics is the so-called *American capitalism* trilogy: *The Affluent Society* (1958), *The New Industrial State* (1967), and *Economics and the Public Purpose* (1973). Written in a clear and concise style, they were comprehensible to lay readers, not just economists, and were very popular. It seems the thought in universities around the world has gone backwards in many ways since, stimulated by US, UK and related financial operations. They have pursued their continuing interests in US and UK head offices by selling more of their products according to rules that those who won World War 2 constructed in sectional interests. The Minister for Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek should be urged, in my view, to take up the promotion of cultural exchange with North Korea as a countervailing humanistic approach.

Cheers Carol O'Donnell, St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St., Glebe, Sydney,
2037 www.Carolodonnell.com.au

See below for related correspondence and for supporting positions attached.

Hi Nick and Hafed (Others for info.)

IN THE LIGHT OF AUKUS AND THE STATED INTEREST IN SOFT-POWER OF CHINESE PRESIDENT XI, AUSTRALIA SHOULD RECOGNIZE NORTH KOREA

I hope you are both well and don't mind being written to together, as it saves me time. Please feel free to bin the lot and ignore me. However, I thought it was worth writing to you about Koryo, which is a very interesting tour company which has been operating since the 90s with regular tours to North Korea. After seeing Michael Palin's trip round North Korea on TV, I thought it would be great to travel there as a tourist, possibly to organise a little art exhibition of Korean embroidery and other women's arts. When trying to do this I found out North Korea is now closed to tourism and also has no consular links with Australia. I gave up the idea of a trip there and wrote again to Koryo saying so, yesterday morning. Then yesterday at lunch time, former PM Paul Keating made a blistering attack on the current Australian government AUKUS deal, which will cost \$368 billion. He did so on ABC TV in his address to the National Press Club. I thought you might have the capacity to watch this, if interested, which is why I am telling you about it. On the same day I see that Saudi Aramco has made a huge 2022 profit because of the war in Ukraine so there appears to be plenty of money sloshing around for war and peace. I will campaign for the latter and so wrote back to Simon from Koryo, below. I attach some related papers for information which I had already sent during our correspondence. (Koryo organised the

Michael Palin North Korean tours as well as tours for others making films there and a North Korean art exhibition in Brisbane.)

Best wishes for all your work and family ventures on which I expect you are both very busy. Looking forward to any reply but feel free to bin the lot or act on it instead,

Cheers, Carol, St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St., Glebe, Sydney
2037 www.Carolodonnell.com.au

Hi Simon

After I wrote to you saying I give up any further effort to get to North Korea until it opens, former PM Paul Keating spoke on the National Press Club. He was almost apoplectic with anger against AUKUS submarine deals and journalists who have taken an anti-China stance but was very clear and convincing in his argument that China is no threat to Australia, because of its interests in expansion via the New Silk Road and that Australia is already a reliable supplier of ore for such ventures. He argued that for Australia to associate its military spending with UK and US nuclear interests was very dumb and expensive for us. He said that he told PM Albanese (supposedly of the Left) that the nation should come before the Party, which was why he was speaking out against AUKUS now.

I totally agreed with all of Keating's views so I decided to go ahead with the plan I had written about to you the day before, which is below. I also attach related discussions of recent Oz events in case you are interested. I hope you might be easily able to get a look at Keating's performance, on ABC TV at 12.30 yesterday, if you so wish, because it was really something.

Anyhow, sorry to keep changing my mind but I feel I should throw my old girl's little bit into this Oz debate and invite you to do something similar in your much larger and more influential pond. See below for what I replied to you but did not send yesterday, when I gave up instead. Also see attached for related explanation about politics here.

I always look forward to anything you have to say but please feel free to ignore me and concentrate on your own affairs. Cheers Carol

Hi Simon

I am fascinated to hear of your experience with the films I mentioned and your involvement with the North Korean art exhibition in Brisbane. I knew nothing about or had forgotten it. However, I disagree with a lot of what you wrote because the world has moved on since that exhibition and I now guess Chinese want to open up everywhere with art. Neither am I contemplating a difficult state and federal political extravaganza, like the Asia-Pacific triennial in Brisbane of which you write. Like the little white bunny standing behind Malcolm the Enchanter, in front of the **Holy Grail**, this is just a tiny little exhibition proposed in Glebe, that I would write about. I see my task as being like that of the old woman who stands in front of the Knights who say Nih, helping them by asking for some nice shrubberies first. (Mr Death from the **Meaning of Life**, naturally comes in later.) I suggest you write to your boss in Shanghai and ask him to write to his appropriate Chinese and British contacts

requesting that they also petition more influential others with the intent of improving relations with North Korea, to assist its opening up.

Now that I know your professional background, I can totally see why you might prefer to chat on the phone to writing and your willingness to write to me is also explained further. I will contact Nick Torrens myself by phone once I find his card. However, if you want to talk to him, you might email Nicktorrens@gmail.com Don't hold back on my account and I was very grateful for his years of encouragement and help although I failed to make my proposed movie. (I commissioned a few when in the public service, which gave me the taste.)

You state that I ***don't need to write to the Australian government to ask about North Korea being closed***. I absolutely do think it's important to write and I think you should be happy that I refer to Koryo. As I have said many times since resigning from government and academia, what I write is my intellectual property and I will send it to anybody I like. I may write about Koryo. Do you want a copy? (Can I attach a file including your opinions? That's how we do it in the public service here.)

I will write to local political representatives, such as ALP Tanya Plibersek, the Minister for Environment and Water, the Greens for the state in Balmain and Lord Mayor Clover Moore, for example. I will urge this local grouping, along with the Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, the Treasurers, the PM and others to consider the current AUKUS relationships and arms build-ups in this region, especially in relation to the supposed manufacture of submarines in Adelaide, the Illawarra Coast and abroad. President Xi has always argued for a peaceful region and Softpower and I do too. (Interestingly, one of the early chapters in President Xi's book **The Governance of China (2017 edition)** is called the **China Dream**, and Nick was also asked to change the name of his documentary on remembering the 'Chinese cultural revolution' to **The China Dream**, as I recall it. (He will correct me if I'm wrong.)

My meeting with Nick began around 2010 when Chinese artists of the 'cultural revolution' (1966-76) and more contemporary others were wonderfully shown at a Sydney University exhibition, **China and Revolution: History, parody and memory in contemporary art (2010)**. The Australian art commentary was comparatively timid, I thought, unlike the exhibition, which was very funny and sophisticated in showing socialism all round the world, like the cut-outs on a children's merry-go-round with appropriate revolutionary songs, etc. etc. etc. Shanghai artists were paramount.

You and Nick will be able to natter away on Skype more productively and happily than I ever could about Australian documentaries, if you both so wish. At that time, I was also interested to see more of New Guinea and Oz archives opening up, for example. I will refer you later to a former PhD student of mine called Hafed Shadid who has worked for many years at Aramco in Saudi Arabia and who I heard from again after 2020 about his new development website in which I declined to participate because I like transparency better than normal market relations, as well as being a hopeless IT user.

I made other suggestions regarding Australian HPV (human papilloma virus) cancer vaccines which are given to young people here at about 13 years old because so many cancers, as well as herpes, etc. are transmitted through sexual contact. I will send you the correspondence if you are interested. I note today that Aramco in Saudi Arabia made a

\$240 billion profit in 2022, due to the Russian and Ukraine conflict. (I am not keen on visiting the sports mad, desert location, which doesn't much like women having their own choices, although I developed a great rapport with Hafed, whom I've never met.)

When I was a young post-graduate at Sydney University, I was highly involved in Australia's first green bans demonstrations, where building trade unions refused to pull down historic buildings and suburbs to build LA style free-ways, etc. When the Communist Party disbanded itself in the 1980s, a lot of its members became members of the first Green Party in the world, in tandem with Petra Kelly and her people in Germany (?). I remained without a Party association. Anyhow, in these Communist Party and Labor days of the 1970s and early 80s, the Tin Sheds in Sydney were a favourite haunt of student protest artists. The Australian art exhibition, **Girls at the Tin Sheds: Sydney feminist posters 1975-90**, were at local art galleries again in 2015. They provided excellent visual material for exploring the relevance of the Chinese Communist Party policy and practice in education in 1976, compared with today. I tried unsuccessfully for years to get technology and related support for a film about changing views in Chinese education. I am very pro-Chinese for reasons I could go into for a long time if we were happily on the phone together. However, I'm sure you would learn a lot more from Nick by Skype or phone, should you both so choose.

You state: ***The only decision makers in this opening up regard are in Pyongyang so you simply have to wait for them to open***

In my view, the decision makers in Pyongyang are most likely to be influenced by external Chinese political forces who are also keen to see the Belt and Road and New Silk Road to Asia develop. In Oz we have greenhouse gas targets to meet and little chance of meeting them unless the usual old boys' networks are helped to change and open up. I am most familiar with political and bureaucratic debates and I'm done with DFAT. This must be backed up in analysis for the political masters.

You state: **Foreign Minister (Steven Smith) rejected the artists visas on the grounds that they were propagandists.**

Yes, because the debate in public may be more important than the exhibition. However, these are changed times and Penny Wong, the new Foreign Minister is far from Steven Smith because she was born in Malaysia. The British High Commissioner in Australia is also a Malaysian born woman. Michelle Yeoh is a Malaysian woman and **Everything Everywhere All at Once** has won a lot of Oscars. It seems to me that this is the time to discuss the countervailing importance of art and greener development as well as fighting regional arms build-up through AUKUS. Present Xi supports Soft Power and I do too. I will cc you into the letters I write unless you object. (Feel free to go ahead in any way without me as I'd like a quiet life and your organisation is far more powerfully connected in real world professional terms than I am. On the other hand, I will write to Oz politicians about my desire for a tour and to arrange a small art and embroidery show as this is a comparatively simple country where a lot of people went to the same few Australian universities and ended up in parliament so if something they can use comes along some may use it.)

Peter Dutton, now leader of the Opposition, states he too seeks peace and stability in the Pacific region and I guess that many share his views so need to say so as soon as possible. In my view this is the necessary route to better Australian and Chinese relations through

related concerns about seeking better diplomatic relations with North Korea. (What again? I feel your pain. I often also feel like the dying Tinkerbell calling out to children in the audience to shout out loud that they still believe in fairies, as well as Peter Pan.)

Today, however, I think Australia has a strong ideological, political and community stake in going greener, which now needs to get stronger every day. I say this because of Australian AUKUS relationships with the US and Britain, where we are all apparently going to develop nuclear powered submarines together now. On the other hand, many have been very rude about our current capacities in this area, which leads to demands for more funds and jobs from the usual suspects. I guess a lot of others don't like AUKUS and that we all need to remind Australian politicians and embassies in the region of their vital duties to seek peaceful trading relations, as well as making war a self-fulfilling prophecy.

You state that **there is no way that any one in Australia has any clue when North Korea may open.**

I assume that this is true. However, my search for a tiny art exhibition in Glebe, is naturally related to a huge and vital political matter, not a bureaucratic or business one to be settled by normal business procedures. North Korean and Australian diplomatic relations may best be addressed in the context of the AUKUS partnerships together and in their broader trade relations with China and other governments and business in the Pacific regions. This is why I will draw relevant matters addressed by Xi Jinping in his book **The Governance of China** to attention. This book was in its 6th update in 2017 and published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing. Former Australian PM Kevin Rudd was recently made Australian Ambassador to the US and Caroline Kennedy is the US ambassador in Canberra.

In his latest book, **The Avoidable War** (2022) China specialist and former PM, Kevin Rudd, considers the common international need for more cooperation, including between the leading global competitors of the US and China. Let us work better together as well as with others in many forms of managed competition to serve our people, not necessarily starting with us. In avoidance of war, Rudd writes of the need for greater financial stability; avoidance of increasing inequality and corruption; reduction of violence; reduction of greenhouse gases and global warming through investment and other support for cleaner production; and the prevention of pandemics by treatments to control infectious diseases or disabilities caused by forms of health and environment collapse.

Many ills may spring from problems of globalisation related to continuing environment degradation being visited now on future generations. I address the recent release of the **State of Environment Report** by the **Minister for Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek**, in regionally related development contexts, not professional or party related ones. This is vital in any world which should recognize China and Russia. North Korea appears primarily as the satellite through which larger matters should be approached by larger states, including Australia, Japan and other Pacific nations, for example. Change is very difficult anywhere and politicians often need help from a concerted effort below, or even a lone wolf or grandma. See related discussions attached for example.

I consider related financial environment matters attached, in the light of many of the views of John Kay, visiting professor at the London School of Economics, and fellow of St John's College, Oxford. In **Other People's Money: Masters of the Universe or Servants of the**

People? (2015), Kay primarily addresses the global rise of the financial trading culture since the 1980s which has enhanced the bias to finance generating action that reduces ethical standards and increases the costs of financial intermediation as well as the costs of general population and financial instability. Climate change is a huge Australian and other challenge in an environment of dramatic species loss which will affect poor people most if related problems of trade and development are not addressed better as soon as possible. One assumes that a major way of doing so is expected to be through reference to key Chinese belt and road communications, planning and developments and through the creation of the New Silk Road.

Australia has had a long discussion about the importance of being a Republic on one hand, and the importance of independence from the US alliance on the other, in order to be a truly independent nation. The proposed voice to parliament from indigenous people, first by including them in the Australian Constitution, (which was struck without their specific historical inclusion) is a key related matter, especially in the expected treatment of land in future.

This is the new international and supposedly greener development context in which I guess art and cultural exchange must now too be raised primarily with relevant elected representatives and related embassies, media and others expected to operate with better understanding. I guess we must now act in regional and international interests to obtain Australian national, regional and international goals. These matters are addressed attached, in the light of the work of many more specifically informed others whose work I naturally draw upon.

It is now vital, I think, to address the current arms build-up in Japan and elsewhere around the Pacific, especially in China, as well as through the AUKUS agreement which I will read more about before I write to chosen politicians, academics, embassies, journalists and others, asking that our artistic links with North Korea should go ahead further, through the establishment of better formal diplomatic relations which will allow it better to occur. North Korea is susceptible to Chinese pressure I guess and the place is going to open up sooner or later, preferably in my lifetime. (Always the cockeyed optimist, perhaps.)

Cheers, Carol

Response from Hafed Shadid a nuclear medicine specialist and gas plant manager at Aramco, Saudi Arabia for more than 20 years. He completed his PhD in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Sydney University while he remained in Saudi Arabia meeting his normal work and family obligations.

Hi Simon

KORYO TOURS

Thank you very much for your prompt and clear reply. I am in strong agreement with your travel company aspirations and have particularly wanted to visit North Korea since I saw Michael Palin's travel documentary on TV after covid came along in 2020. I know that North Korea is currently closed but would love to see it opening up more to Australian tourism. Please think of me as a most enthusiastic short, old and old-fashioned traveller in this light. However, I always prefer to email with you rather than phone because I easily

forget what I said on the phone. I love email and websites because they provide a record which can also be changed by either party if necessary.

I have looked further at your company and I address some possibilities you suggest later, either in a tour you have organised and promoted for up to 20 people or in a bespoke package of some kind. I am not normally interested in any sports events or a huge amount of eating, but would love a historical tour of the capital or to see other historical or beautiful sights of nature, museums or wildlife, for example.

I would happily be looked after closely regarding all my travel, accommodation and sight arrangements because I am alone and have always been poor at reading maps, whether in towns or in the country, especially wherever I am a foreigner and alone, so more wary at my age. The increasing expectation that I should handle all arrangements myself by mobile phone is what stresses me out to the point of feeling I will never be smart enough to ever travel independently again.

Believe me, I'm not scared of walking or climbing a long way and can sleep well in most places. However, I have always wanted to see North Korea, as distinct from even more of Australia, and don't think I could organize my own international tour any more without a lot of stress. **For this reason, I would be very glad to fit in with your suggestions in regard to time of year, size of group and what to visit in North Korea for around 7 days, as you suggest. Please feel free to make added suggestions re my flight and tourist bookings on the way there or back. I don't have the knowledge to do it as well as you I usually guess and am very flexible as to time up to and around 3 weeks away from Sydney in any month or year, (God willing).**

See more about my political and current interests in sustainable development at www.Carolodonnell.com.au which are purely an unpaid writing hobby following on from my previous work life. However, now I am only freely doing the unpaid good bits of what my former work was like in the state public service and as an academic.

I have pursued these interests as a personally inquiring travel hobby since I retired in 2007 from research and teaching about risk management at the faculty of health sciences at Sydney Uni. Before that I was a public servant learning about it in the context of national and industry development. Being retired I just want to continue my learning and enjoyment as a tourist. As a teenager I went to New Guinea Highlands in 1966, planting pyrethrum in a student aid program. As a political economy student in 1976 I first went to China on one of their early opening tours. I found the interpreters who worked with our tour were excellent students of English who were also very happy to discuss all matters openly with us and often asked questions of their own about Australia and its way of life. My experience through retirement has generally been that I have greatly respected guides for their knowledge and handling expectations well.

I would most like to put my travel itinerary in your hands but if you wish me to help you establish more contacts in Australia, I would freely do anything I reasonably could to help. I have travelled many times with Intrepid, for example, whose tours and guides I have always thought great for my interests. However, they appear to have succumbed to the increasing financial pressures of the times like everybody else, I guess. My last trip was guided in Sri Lanka in January 2020, after a trip for a week travelling around Taiwan, which I discussed last at www.Carolodonnell.com.au under the Regional side-bar.

However, some might see me as a slightly loose canon and should feel totally free to dismiss me as close to senility. I attach a recent opinion I sent to some of those involved with gay mardis gras organisation which was in Sydney this month, for example. I note the following statement you made.

We do not operate out of Sydney and we don't arrange the travel needed to get to Beijing to start a trip to North Korea. This is simply buying a plane ticket though and most local travel agents should be able to manage that for you.

I'd be happy to buy a plane ticket to Beijing or anywhere else from Sydney if necessary, if we can arrange a suitable tour together. I am not worried about being without the internet for a short time. I am more frightened of being required to depend upon the mobile phone to get myself around effectively than anything else, especially in very crowded regions, so I was wondering if I would ever be confident or rich enough to travel again after covid and its related travel and accommodation changes. Being watched and having my freedom curtailed holds few comparative fears for me. I'm too stupid to travel alone because I can't handle my own organization.

My health history is great and I taught in Northern Nigeria in 1971 and 1972 on an Australian Volunteers Abroad program so I tend perhaps to be overconfident about not getting sick in a 'Hermit Kingdom' after 2020. However, this attitude is far from shared by anybody I know, so I cannot guarantee anybody I know would want to accompany me to North Korea, were this to be a bespoke tour. On the other hand, I would happily and freely promote your business any modest way I could.

Nevertheless, I am not on any social media because I like peace and quiet since I retired. I will give my internet duties to my daughter, who works in the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, in the knowledge there will be little or nothing coming into my inbox that she can't easily bin. In a long lost youth I was in the Communist Party of Australia for ten years after protesting against the Vietnam War but the Party members increasingly began to work in mainstream trade union, teaching and public service positions in Australia and the Party eventually abolished itself. Rightly or wrongly, perhaps, I don't have the common fears of an Australian tourist my age. (On the other hand, I wouldn't be keen to go back to Thailand again, given my normal views on monarchy.)

You state that **'I would suggest a tour of 5-7 days to be honest, that is enough to see highlights, to visit a few places, and so on. As most of the country is not open to visitors you cannot roam at will around the country.'** (I understand that totally and will comply with requirements.)

The amount of time you suggest would be fine with me. However, I would willingly put myself in your hands for longer in this trip of up to 3 weeks as long as we can come to some reasonable agreement before-hand about the treatment of common risks of cancellation, change and final price. I am happy to go any time but the unexpected may naturally trip all our organisations up it seems to me today. My bank usually provides me with travel insurance but I guess they would not operate with North Vietnam. (I've no idea how you feel about insurance matters but will look further at the travel book and related matters on your website.)

I have returned to China a number of times since my first visit in 1976, but always as a tourist. You state you are in Canada now and I lived with a Canadian for ten years in Sydney so I have had some truly beautiful trips in Canada. It is a great place with many things to teach Australians I always think.

Any further suggestions you make would be gratefully received. Sorry to involve you in my lengthy correspondence but I was perhaps too encouraged by your original response.

Best wishes and hoping to hear from you again whenever you like. Cheers Carol O'Donnell
St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St, Glebe, Sydney 2037 www.Carolodonnell.com.au

Hi Aihua

I'm sorry to hear you have been sick and hope you are feeling better now. Thank you for the lovely photos of us together in front of your painting and with others, which were great. Thanks too for your kind words about my book.

The photos also came at a great time as I was trying to organise a tourist trip for myself to North Korea through a company I found on-line called Koryo tours. The Koryo tourist company seems unexpectedly great to me as we have made some contact in writing already and there is a lot of great stuff on their website, I think. However, I find North Korea is still closed, although Koryo has been operating tours there since 1995. Their closure came through covid lockdown. I have written to ask the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DEFAT) for more and better info. about why North Korea is closed and when it will open for Australians wishing to visit. I will follow that up with related questions to our representative politicians, focusing more on my particular interests in going there.

I have always been a great supporter of former PM Kevin Rudd's direction, including in his most recent book, **The Avoidable War, on The Dangers of a Catastrophic Conflict between the US and Xi Jinping's China**. Thinking of this, I thought I might try to do my own small bit of promotion for global peace and friendship by trying to organise an exhibition of North Korean women's paintings at the gallery in Glebe (and/or the Central Coast, where your group meets (?)).

However, I will not put any money into such a venture or seek to collect it, and I don't expect any financial support from you or your friends with artistic interests or who are in favour of a peaceful and inclusive global future with North Koreans as well as everybody else. I will merely write my normal letters to politicians and other people with potential influence, as I write this reply to you. Fortunately, I am old so I have plenty of time at least until I die, and I do this for pleasure.

I have never been an artist or held an artistic exhibition so I would be grateful if I could visit you at the Central Coast to learn from your experience and hear your suggestions regarding this small exhibition effort of mine for a North Korean artists' opening in Glebe. I would do this at your convenience and there is no hurry.

This is mainly a policy hobby interest of mine, so if my idea of having a North Korean artistic exhibition is a good way of helping relations between Australia and North Korea to be better, it doesn't matter so much if my attempt to have a show of North Korean paintings fails in Glebe or anywhere else. If my efforts to travel to North Korea also fail, it doesn't matter much. Just as you and your friends love to make art, I love to write and travel, which is the main reward for us, I guess.

So thank you again for the pictures and your invitation to visit. I would happily share more information related to my current policy efforts with you as I go along, but equally I don't want you to feel burdened by my written enthusiasm for my latest project possibly called: **North Korean Women Come Out** (An art exhibition in Glebe). I am uncertain, for example, about whether to refer to North Korean Art or to North Korean Women's art for best effect and welcome suggestions.)

I have a lot of failed projects behind me, including in film, but as I have hardly ever asked for or lost money because of them I have often been very happy with the eventual results, as in our happy meeting. Thank you for this memory and hoping for future contact at the Central Coast.

Please don't feel you have to ever write back, let alone a lot or fast, however, unless you want to. Very few people do in my experience and I always respect the fact that they are busily engaged elsewhere.

Cheers and best wishes, Carol, St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St., Glebe, Sydney
2037 www.Carolodonnell.com.au