



THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

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It's often said that in theory, everything works. This popular maxim serves to highlight the gulf that often exists between how things should work in theory and how they actually work in practice.

Nowhere is this gap more pertinent than in policy-making. The law of unintended consequences seems to hold particularly strong when it comes to the reams of legislation churned out by lawmakers the world over.

Of course, the actions and decisions of individuals can also have unintended consequences. But the unintended consequences of public policy initiatives are usually felt by more people and on a much larger scale. This is due to the ever-expanding size, scope and reach of modern government.

In Australia, Labor and the Greens are leading this charge, constantly finding new and creative ways to interfere in the lives of people across the country. There is no aspect of someone's life too big or too small that Julia Gillard and Bob Brown aren't interested in sticking their nose into.

And of course, with their wasteful spending combined with their array of new taxes from carbon to mining, the intrusion into our wallets can hardly be ignored.

The Gillard Government has a terrible track record when it comes to failing to anticipate the consequences of their policies. Many of the programs they have initiated smack of political expediency and hasty, ill-conceived decision-making.

Take, for example, the Home Insulation and Building the Education Revolution fiascos. Labor failed to see that simply throwing large amounts of money at pink batts and school halls may result in market distortion, which in turn leads to unsafe, shoddy installations in homes and outrageous rip-offs in schools.

They fail to see how the carbon tax will corrode industries, destroy jobs and drive up cost-of-living pressures. They fail to see how the mining tax will damage one of our best industries and wealth-producers. They see only what they want to see; that their policies are high-minded attempts to heal the

earth and redistribute wealth.

Another salient example that has recently come to light is that of the effect of Labor's Occupational Health and Safety Laws on the great tradition of Australian volunteering.

Labor claim that, through this legislation, they are simply attempting to achieve safety for people in their work place. If this is true, then the Government are guilty of an atrocious failure to anticipate the far-reaching consequence of their own laws.

Under these laws, local sports clubs, scout groups, surf lifesaving clubs and other community organisations will be burdened by strict regulations accompanied by harsh punishments for non-compliance.

Australian volunteers are now to be considered as workers in the eyes of the law, liable to severe fines and prison sentences if Labor's OH&S red tape is breached.

We now have a situation where, for example a volunteer could be fined up to \$300,000 or jailed for five years due to non-compliance with Labor regulation.

This situation is likely to lead to a chilling effect in the voluntary sector, whereby people will give up existing volunteer work or choose not to ever begin volunteering in the first place for fear of the possibility of facing these punishments.

This is just one of many examples of Labor's continual attempts to ignore the fact that their policies affect unintended consequences. Good policy-making demands that governments must always attempt to understand and take into account every way that people could be affected by the laws that they enact. That fact that Labor makes no attempts to do so is a significant factor in their failure to provide good governance for the people of Australia.

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