

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 911
TWO PROMINENT WOMEN –
AND THEIR VIEW OF THE UNDERCLASS-
PRU GOWARD AND CASSANDRA GOLDIE**

During the past week, the mainstream and social media has lit up in reaction to a two articles published by two prominent Australian women.

One is Pru Goward.

According to Wikipedia,

Prudence Jane Goward (born 2 September 1952^[1]), an Australian politician, was a [Liberal](#) member of the [New South Wales Legislative Assembly](#) from 2007 to 2019, representing the seat of [Goulburn](#).

She was the [New South Wales Minister for Family and Community Services](#) and [Minister for Social Housing](#), from January 2017 to March 2019 in the [Berejiklian](#) government, and the [Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault](#), from 2015 until March 2019. Goward has also previously served as the [Minister for Mental Health](#), [Minister for Medical Research](#), and [Assistant Minister for Health](#) between April 2015 and January 2017, and the [Minister for Women](#) between 2011 and January 2017, in the [second Baird](#) government and the [Minister for Planning](#) during 2014 and 2015. With the first [Berejiklian government](#) she returned to Community Services portfolio which she previously held between 2011 and 2014, in the [O'Farrell](#) and [first Baird](#) governments.

Prior to entering politics, Goward served as the Australian Federal [Sex Discrimination Commissioner](#) and Commissioner Responsible for Age Discrimination with the Australian [Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission](#). In 2019, Goward became an academic with [Western Sydney University](#).^[2]

Goward was born to Gerald Goward and Zipporah Riggs, and was raised in Adelaide. She attended Morphett Vale Primary School, [Willunga High School](#) and gained entrance to [Woodlands Church of England Girls Grammar School](#) on a half scholarship.^[1] She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Econ) (Hons) in 1974 from [Adelaide University](#).

She was married from 1973 to 1983 to university lecturer Alastair Fischer, whom she met while studying at Adelaide University.^[1]

Goward married journalist David Barnett in 1986. Goward and Barnett have maintained a close personal friendship with former prime minister [John Howard](#) for many years, and jointly wrote a biography of Howard in 1997.^[3]

DOGS note that Pru Goward was a half a scholarship girl at Woodlands Church of England Grammar School in Adelaide. Her career indicates a

determination to identify with and relate to the self - styled governing elites of Australia. She has at best, a patronising attitude towards the less fortunate in our society.

The second prominent woman is Cassandra Goldie, currently the head of ACOSS.

According to lawyers group, [Pro Bono Australia](#),

Cassandra believes that, through the law, we can make the world a better place. This is not, for her, a matter of high theory, an ideology. Rather, she emphasises, “It’s about a practical approach”, which “remains a consistent theme through all my work”.

Cassandra formed this view as a young woman, which is why she headed from her high school in Perth to study law at the University of Western Australia. “But, like many young people, I soon learned that the legal profession directs most of its efforts towards people who can pay. Many people who need justice can’t afford it.”

So: not for her a lucrative career as a partner in a corporate law firm. Where did she head to after graduating? “It helps to think in five year blocks,” she offers.

For the first five year block, she travelled overseas, completed further studies in the UK, which is where she became involved in human rights. Rejecting the possibility of a life of academia, she returned to Australia, and joined the Legal Aid Western Australia, ending up as Solicitor-in-Charge of Client Services, cutting her legal teeth working with people who could not afford private lawyers.

Then it was off to the tropical heat of Darwin, and out of the strictures of a large semi-government body. For this five years stint, she was Principal Solicitor of the Darwin Community Legal Centre – small, financially strapped, but working even closer with those most in need of access to legal services.

Then – and, yes, for a further five years – she studied her PHD – its Dr. Cassandra Goldie, LLB, Masters, PHD, to give her full and proper title.

‘Congratulations on finishing, many don’t’, I offer. “Umm...I do remember sitting besides the pool in Darwin reading a booklet on ‘How to get your PHD done quickly!’”

No doubt Cassandra would have completed her doctorate more quickly if she had not also set up the Homelessness Legal Rights Project, at UNSW; a clearing house on legal and human rights for homeless people and a core part of the hub of newly emerging homeless people legal clinics. And if she had not also worked internationally, as the Asia-Pacific Consultant for the Centre of Housing Rights and Evictions.

As is usually the case, the subject of a doctorate tells us much about the author. Cassandra’s title: Living in Public Spaces, a Human Rights Wasteland? It focuses on the legal status and needs of one of the most disadvantaged groups in Australia: people who live in the “long grass” around Darwin, whose are regularly moved on and criminalised. Using human rights

law, Cassandra mounts a critique, and a direct challenge, to the Darwin City Council's bylaw that bans sleeping in public places between sunset and sunrise. The themes of law, human rights, social justice – and a practical approach – shine through.

Next. The now Dr. Goldie then joined the Australian Human Rights Commission (formally known as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, for those of us yet to catch up with the name change), as Director of Sex and Age Discrimination.

It was a period of significant achievement. After a listening tour in 2007, the Commission put paid parental leave firmly on its agenda. Extraordinarily, come 2010, both Labor and the Coalition, with the support of the Greens, took major policies on this issue into the last election (with the Coalition 'outbidding' Labor with a more generous scheme funded by a new tax on big business). Cassandra is quick to point out that this achievement resulted from a broad based campaign that attracted support from many sectors. Yes. And. The ball has to be formed, and then rolled up the hill. And the Commission was instrumental in this process.

Another big achievement was reform of the Sex Discrimination Act, which had not been looked at for a quarter century. The Commission's research on Equal Employment Opportunity legislation showed that Australia had actually been going backwards over the last decade, in terms of representation of women at senior executive and Board levels.

That's why, from January 1, 2011, public companies will be required to report every year on the representation of women on their Boards and in senior management. And if, over the next five years, their performance does not improve, then they will face the prospect of legislation. Well done the Commission; well done Cassandra.

Cassandra was appointed as new CEO of ACOSS, commencing a week into the election, replacing Clare Martin, who has returned to Darwin. She is not new to the COSS world: In Darwin, she soon joined the NT COSS Board, and was soon elected its President and, through that, was soon a member of the ACOSS Board. She was also ACOSS's Law and Justice Policy Advisor for several years.

In her new role, Cassandra seems to have cemented her commitment to social justice, which includes the somewhat legalistic remit of human rights law and equity in legal representation, and extends well beyond.

"What is your personal philosophy?", is my closing, and perhaps unfair question; not the easiest question, especially on a Monday afternoon on the phone. Cassandra does not hesitate: "Human rights starts at home. It is about the small things in our personal lives, in our homes, in our work places – and then all the way through to the big national and international agendas", she says, "it's about the fundamental values of fairness and equity, expressed through our personal lives, the life of our society, and all our institutions. That is what we need."

DOGS NOTE that Cassandra Goldie went to a High School in Perth, Western Australia. Her career indicates a determination to serve the less fortunate in Australia and build a better, fairer Australia.

Why have DOGS assessed and contrasted the schooling background of these women? The proof is in their pens. Here is what they wrote in the Australian Financial Review on 19 and 25 October 2021 respectively :

1. PRU GOWARD wrote in the *Australian Financial Review*:

Why you shouldn't underestimate the underclass

They are damaged, lacking in trust and discipline, and highly self-interested. But the poor are still a force that Australia needs to properly harness.

[Pru Goward](#) Columnist

Oct 19, 2021 – 12.44pm

“If there is hope, it lies in the proles.” So said one of the 20th century’s greatest philosophers thinly disguised as a novelist, [George Orwell](#), in his spookily prescient work, *1984*. I believe my lifelong fascination with the underclass began when I pondered that declaration of independence against a futuristic form of government oppression, which has turned out not to be so futuristic.

As a shopkeeper’s daughter, I understood poor people; they obeyed the law, worked hard, sent their kids to the same primary schools I attended and were equally ambitious for their children. But the underclass, small as it then was, behaved differently.

Like the stoats and weasels of the Wild Wood in *The Wind in the Willows*, yet another English children’s book on the topic of class, they rejected the rules and lived by their own. They were to be feared and were, to use my mother’s words, not very nice. It took Orwell to turn the noble Marxist proletariat into the proles.

Since the 1950s there has been a remarkable growth in the number of proles. The welfare state is not entirely to blame, [as the world of Dickens attests](#). Government agencies view them with alarm as huge cost centres; they are over-represented in their use of government crisis services and are always the last to give up smoking, get their shots and eat two servings of vegetables a day.

Of course, they are always seen as a deficit. Social workers, traditionally good young men and women who thought it would be nice to be kind for a living, despair of their appalling housework, neglect of their children and, notably, their sharp and unrepentant manner when told to lift their game by the patronising do-gooder.

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Oh yes, and they don’t vote often, although, as I found door-knocking, it will be [issues such as refugees and threats to the national flag](#) which will get them out the door rather than the budget deficit or how much we spend on public education.

Orwell was right. The underclass can smell a fake at 50 paces, distrusts conceptual rhetoric and cannot speak a word of Newspeak.

Despite the billions of dollars governments invest in changing the lives of proles, their number increases. Their birth rates far outstrip those of professional couples and they are now a significant potential contributor to our workforce.

Except their children languish in the growing number of behavioural support classes in general high schools where they learn little and teachers itch to send them to the local TAFE to do some form of home-schooling and get them off their books.

Essential honesty

Once graduated with a basic studies completion certificate and little else, their prospects are not great. The discipline of work and often its thanklessness, especially at the unskilled end, also have little appeal.

But Orwell was right. The underclass can smell a fake at 50 paces, distrusts conceptual rhetoric and cannot speak a word of Newspeak, the language of lies made famous in Orwell's *1984*. They know what they want and see no reason why they should take notice of some man or woman in a suit when they get in their way.

They were a significant part of [the anti-vax protests because they don't like being told what to do](#) and even though many drew their inspiration from spurious websites, they had correctly identified the freedoms the rest of us had been only too happy to give up. State leaders might have deplored the demonstrations, but they also knew they represented the tip of a sentiment the rest of society keeps hidden from view and only reveals in the privacy of the ballot box. Freedom has gathered pace.

The underclass is not always a happy place to be and bumping into the rest of the world mostly does not go well. People with chronic mental illness, cognitive disabilities and childhoods of trauma are mixed together in a sometimes brutal way, chaos and crisis never far from their door, living in a Wild Wood in their streets and public housing blocks or caravan parks.

And yet, I like them. I like them because they call us out. They are honestly self-interested, and you always know what they think. I know many of them. So many clever, actually very clever, kids and adults, although often damaged and almost entirely lacking discipline, trust in the system, trust in anyone who represents the system.

I am convinced we can do better to harness the force that the people of the underclass represent. We need to make it a focus of social policy, not a by-product of it. We have little choice, or we will continue to import our workforce and in growing numbers, as risk management parenting forces the birth-rate lower.

So long as we keep looking at the billions of dollars they cost us, we will continue to dislike them, reject them and write them off. Yet, in an age when cultural hegemony is now as strong as it was 70 years ago, only different, never have we needed them more to challenge modern meekism. The child who cried "look at the King" in *The Emperor's New Clothes* was surely a member of the underclass.

[Pru Goward](#) is Professor of Social Interventions and Policy at Western Sydney University, and a former Liberal NSW government minister and sex discrimination commissioner.

2. CASSANDRA GOLDIE REPLIED IN THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW:

We need to fix poverty and stop blaming stereotyped poor

- 25 Oct 2021 10:27 am AEST

By Dr Cassandra Goldie

Published in Australian Financial Review, Sunday 24 October, 2021. Reproduced by permission from afr.com.au

Poverty exists in Australia, but the people who live in poverty should not be blamed.

Poverty is not caused by a lack of motivation and discipline, poor budgeting, bad genes or bad parenting.

Instead, poverty is caused by a lack of resources. In modern, wealthy nations like Australia, this was supposed to be resolved decades ago by full employment, equitable access to free education and health care, social housing for people who can't afford to rent privately, and social security for people out of paid work.

With some shocking exceptions, particularly for First Nations Peoples, up until the mid 1970s, we were making good progress. For many years, unemployment was well below the 4-5 percent the government is now targeting.

Pensions were lifted to 25 percent of average earnings and unemployment payments were set at the same level – there was no judgemental divide between those deemed deserving of income support they could frugally live on and those who were not.

We built universal health care and improved it, though there are gaps as wide as those in the teeth of people who can't afford to visit the dentist.

For a while, the educational divide narrowed as public schools were better resourced and the first generation of young people from low-income families attended university.

We invested in wage subsidies and training to lift people out of long-term unemployment.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke committed to end child poverty, and quickly reduced it by a third as a result of direct policy action, delivering adequate family payments to low- and modest-income households. He was the last Prime Minister to make a serious attempt.

As our ACOSS and UNSW Sydney Report earlier this week showed, over the last two decades, government policies have driven systemic poverty across the community.

Whilst median household incomes have risen in real terms by 45 percent, the incomes of people unemployed rose by just 12 percent (almost all due to the paltry \$25 per week increase earlier this year), and low-income single parents with older children fared even worse rising by a meagre 7.9 percent.

The failure to properly index unemployment payments means the gap between unemployment and pension payments rose from \$45 per week in 2000 to \$165 per week today.

There are 1.2 million people on Jobseeker and Youth Allowance, which are just \$45 and \$36 per day respectively.

Three quarters have had to rely on income support for more than a year, not because they don't want jobs, but because they face persistent discrimination, stigma and lack of resources.

Poverty is not about lack of character

In 2006, the government cut the incomes of single parents with children aged over 7, and in 2009, stopped indexing family payments to wages, greatly reducing their value.

Three years later, 80,000 more single parents were shifted from Parenting Payment to Newstart and lost at least \$75 a week.

There were virtually no new social housing dwellings built over the past decade, so the share of social housing in our homes has fallen to 4.2 percent, its lowest level since World War II. Rents are rising sharply now, especially outside the major cities.

We invest less than half the OECD average in employment assistance for people who are unemployed, and instead press people to apply for 20 jobs or face instant payment suspension.

Again, the assumption is that people are feckless and undisciplined and if only they made more effort, they'd find a job.

Currently, at least three million people in our communities are locked into poverty, hemmed in on one side by \$45 a day unemployment payments, and on another by unaffordable rents and out-of-pocket health costs.

With millions falling into poverty over the last 18 months, many more have been confronted by declining mental health and are struggling to retain hope.

As another recent ACOSS and UNSW Sydney Report showed, the pandemic has hit hardest communities that were already disadvantaged.

People on low incomes have been dying at four times the rate of the rest of the community.

It is not surprising that the people with the least resources are often concentrated in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods with the worst housing and access to services. These are symptoms, not causes; lack of opportunity, not choices.

However, the pandemic has also shown us that poverty can be eradicated if we commit to doing so. The government almost abolished poverty for people receiving JobSeeker last year when it temporarily doubled income support payments.

We can do this again, and restore full employment, and reduce educational and health inequity, if we set aside the tropes and stereotypes and commit to do it.

As the Dutch historian and author Rutger Bregman writes: "poverty isn't a lack of character, it's a lack of cash".

DOGS note the difference between the attitudes of the two women towards their fellow Australian citizens, especially those who happen to fall into poverty in the neo-liberal jungle created by the financial and political elites of the last fifty years. We suggest that the Perth High School education of Cassandra Goldie has produced a much more rounded citizen than the Adelaide Woodlands Church of England Grammar School.

LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM
855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS
<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>

OTHER ARTICLES TO CONSIDER

—OPINION

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T UNDERESTIMATE THE UPPER CLASS

“They are damaged, lacking in reliability and restraint, and highly self-interested. But the ultra-rich are still a force that Australia needs to properly harness.”

Crud Blower
Columnist, AFR

‘You can’t have your cake and let your neighbour eat it too.’ So said Ayn Rand, one of the 20th century’s greatest philosophers thinly disguised as a novelist, in her spookily prescient work, *Atlas Shrugged*.

I believe my own lifelong fascination with the upper classes began when I pondered that declaration of self-interest over any threat of government restraint, which has thankfully turned out to be not that much restraint at all.

As a miner’s son, I always understood that rich people were above the law, that they worked obsessively or hardly at all, sent their kids to very different primary schools to the one I attended, and were determined their children should inherit all their privileges and power, be it deserved or not.

But the ultra-rich as an even more elite class, small as it then was, behaved differently.

Like Mr Toad of Toad Hall in *The Wind in the Willows*, yet another English children’s book on the topic of class, the ultra-rich were mischievous and boastful and lived by their own rules. They were to be feared and were, to use my mother’s words, not very nice. It took Ayn Rand to exhort the pragmatically industrious and selfish rich into the totalitarian-inclined and ruthlessly greedy ultra-rich.

Since the 1980s there has been a remarkable growth in the wealth of ultra-rich. The welfare state only held them back temporarily, as the world of Dickens attests.

Government agencies limply acknowledge the ultra-rich as rampant tax dodgers; they are certainly over-represented in their rorting of corporate welfare and government subsidies; and are always the last to give up quaffing wine, discover sobriety and dine modestly.

Of course, they are always declared an asset. Social workers, traditionally good young men and women who thought it would be nice to be kind for a living, despair of their ostentatious homes, spoiling of their children and, notably, their sharp and unrepentant manner when told to lift their game by the patronising do-gooder.

Oh yes, and they don't need to vote that often due to their control of government by covert party donations, although, as I found door-knocking, it will be issues such as negative gearing and franking credits—rather than climate change or how much we spend on public education (unless it affects how much is spent subsidising private education)—that gets them voting.

Despite the billions of dollars that governments are milked in supporting the lives and interests of the ultra-rich, their hunger for even greater wealth increases by the day. Their birth rates are less even than those of professional couples and they could be a significant potential contributor to our society. Except their children languish in the growing number of narcissism treatment classes in private high schools where they learn little and teachers itch to offload them to local corporates and get them off their books.

Once graduated with a basic studies completion certificate and little else, their prospects are just brilliant. The discipline of work and often its thanklessness, especially at the less skilled end, have little appeal and there is no need for them to consider such challenges and everyday human struggle. Promotions all the way forward, doors open for them.

Ayn Rand was right. The ultra-rich can smell an opportunity at 50 paces, distrust social justice rhetoric and have little time for welfare philosophy. They know what they want and see no reason why they should take notice of some man or woman bent over a bicycle delivering them their designer pizza. Just get out the way when you're done delivering! Life, it's one big devouring thrill.

Of course, the upper class is not always a happy place to be—and bumping into the rest of the world mostly does not go well. People with the aforementioned chronic narcissism, bouts of bullying megalomania and childhoods marked by detachment are mixed together in a sometimes brutal way, indulgence and cruelty never far from their fists, living in an array of Toad Hall mansions on exclusive streets or passing time indolently on their yachts.

And yet, I like them. I like them because they show us how things really are. They are uninhibitedly self-interested, and you always know they don't give a damn about some mythical 'us'. I know many of them. So many clever, actually very clever, kids and adults, although they are often damaged and almost entirely lacking self-restraint, respect for the society, or trust in anyone who might represent a fairer system.

I am convinced we can do better to harness the force that the people of the upper classes represent. We need to make it a focus of social policy, not a by-product of it. We have little choice, or we will continue to import our ultra-rich in growing numbers via multinationals and other off-shore indulgences when our own home-grown gorgons are well able to mine the landscape here.

So long as we keep looking at the billions of dollars they take from us, we will continue to dislike them, reject them and write them off. Yet, in an age when cultural hegemony is now as strong as it was 70 years ago, only different, never have we needed them more to challenge any hint of social justice threatening our profit margins and property portfolios. The king who despised the child who cried “look at the King” in *The Emperor’s New Clothes* was surely a member of the upper class

By [Michael Di Iorio](#)

Published October 20, 2021

<https://www.pedestrian.tv/news/pru-gowards-underclass-article-weasels/>

Snippets and excerpts from former NSW Minister **Pru Goward**’s latest opinion piece in the [Australian Financial Review](#) have made the rounds online today, and for very good reason: it’s a snide attempt at dehumanising Australians.

In case you missed it, Pru Goward wrote a rather deranged — and unfortunately not satirical — piece on why we shouldn’t “underestimate the underclass”.

In it, Goward punches down on her own imagined version of the “poor” of Australia, and paints a ghastly vision that, apparently, she believes is very much real.

Her borderline [racist](#) version of this country’s working class bears ridiculously villainous traits such as being animalistic, “damaged”, idiotic, “not very nice” and lacking in discipline. It’s demonisation 101 from a member of this country’s rather detached elite.

Some folks online have even called the piece a display of [“casual eugenics”](#), which honestly isn’t even that much of a stretch.

Here is the headline and subheading. Again, this is not satire.

Why You should not Underestimate the Underclass

Reading the piece, I couldn’t help but get the uncomfortable feeling that I grew up in the exact location, under some of the exact circumstances, that Goward was indirectly referring to.

One of the areas often seen as ‘poor’ (see: working class) in western Sydney, a place for so-called ‘proles’ to mindlessly work away, unaware we are the ‘pieces’ to a chess game played by the rich. At least, that’s how Goward apparently sees it.

“Despite the billions of dollars governments invest in changing the lives of proles, their number increases. Their birth rates far outstrip those of professional couples,” Goward writes.

Now, what Goward is referring to is the proletariat, or, someone whose work is their only real possession of economic significance.

(I’d like to give the benefit of the doubt here and say she *isn’t* referring to **George Orwell**’s version of proles in *1984*, who are barely literate, easy to control, mindless and “free” from all political worry.)

Either way, it’s an utterly disturbing description of this countries ‘poor’, or, really, people who aren’t university-educated, as if that’s some checkmark for automatic intelligence and worth.

I was the first university graduate in my family tree, as were most people my age were from my home suburb. A generation of kids from what Goward would deem ‘unprofessional’ couples.

To somehow equate lack of university education with lack of intelligence and lack of political drive is just wrong, and reeks of ‘I’ve never stepped foot outside my wealthy home’.

“Like the stoats and weasels of the Wild Wood in *The Wind in the Willows*... they rejected the rules and lived by their own. They were to be feared and were, to use my mother’s words, not very nice,” Goward writes.

“I am convinced we can do better to harness the force that the people of the underclass represent. We need to make it a focus of social policy.”

Comparing ‘poor’ people to fictional animals and pondering upon how they can be ‘harnessed’ for better use is deranged.

The poor and the homeless are not communities of people who are commodities for higher powers to use. More often than not, they are people without a community. Humans who deserve nothing but respect and care.

Goward assumes in her article that many people from western Sydney (or, what she calls, “the underclass”), made up a significant portion of the anti-vax protests because we “don’t like being told what to do”.

“The underclass is not always a happy place to be and bumping into the rest of the world mostly does not go well. People with chronic mental illness, cognitive disabilities and childhoods of trauma are mixed together in a sometimes brutal way, chaos and crisis never far from their door,” she writes.

In Goward’s mind, we come from unhappy places, speak without thought and consume incorrect vaccine information on Facebook without question — after all, thinking is for those who can afford it.

This suggestion ignores the fact that large swathes of northern NSW suburbs are filled with anti-vax conspiracy theorists. Yes, the supposedly wealthy of us are peddling nonsense too, who’d’ve thunk.

Influencers are comparing [lockdown to the holocaust](#), [faking vaccine passports](#) and [proudly attending protests](#). They are not exempt from being called out because they’re more privileged, and they surely aren’t smarter either.

Those in western Sydney went through some of the [harshes treatment](#) in lockdown, and actually [lead the state](#) of NSW in vaccination uptake.

Of course they did. That’s the western Sydney I grew up in, know and love. It’s absurd to suggest that anyone in this country is too mindless as a collective to do otherwise.

I hope to gay Jesus that nothing like this ever gets published again, because it’s untrue, harmful, and is a poisonous example of what the upper class must really think of everyone else

<https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/pru-gowards-opining-on-the-poor-reveals-deep-political-class-prejudice/>

SYDNEY CRIMINAL LAWYERS

“So long as we keep looking at the billions of dollars they cost us, we will continue to dislike them, reject them and write them off,” says Pru Goward in relation to the poorest sector of the community.