

## 5th Belmarsh Tribunal

Great Hall, Sydney University

Saturday 4 March, 7pm

[Audio on video stream was faulty at first, coming in at the end of the Welcome to Country]

NADINE DIXON: Just sharing my blessings here to everyone acknowledging elders past present and emerging, acknowledging all of our ancestors and the knowledge of First Nations, so that we are here today to bring transformation and freedom. Thank you

MARY KOSTAKIDIS: Our thanks to Nadine Dixon. The Belmarsh Tribunals draw on the legacy of the Russell Sartre tribunals during the Vietnam War. The tribunals are brought to you by Progressive International; a group of people with vision and energy whose aim is to unite, organise and mobilize progressive forces around the world. This is the fifth Belmarsh Tribunal coming to you from the Great Hall of the University of Sydney, home to the foundation which in 2013 awarded Julian Assange the Sydney Peace Medal for his exceptional courage and his conviction that truth matters, and that justice depends on it. However, for revealing how power works, what governments get up to in our name and the tools used to deceive citizens, his punishment has been brutal. Thirteen years of arbitrary detention, four of those in the supermax prison and the prospect of life in solitary confinement if he lives much longer. The result of being pursued by the world's most powerful government in concert with its allies is what former U.N rapporteur Nils Melzer has condemned as torture. Wikileaks made me sit up in the very early days when it launched an innovation, a facility for whistleblowers to upload information and material anonymously. The protection of the source is a major concern for all journalists. My source for a story in the late 90s had been disclosed to the government by the organisation I worked for. Later it was the value of this vast digital public library of documents which would be available, not just through the filter of one journalist or one media organisation, but to all journalists, academics, researchers, students to all citizens in fact, a trove that would for generations continue to increase our understanding of what's happening in the world and why. It has also helped individuals and groups of people obtain justice in a court of law. Tonight, we'll hear testimony from 16 eminent individuals with direct and unique insight into the unprecedented prosecution of a publisher under the Espionage Act, its extraterritorial reach and the consequences for press freedom and democracy in what is an attempt to neutralise the ability of investigative journalism to hold the powerful to account by subjecting one courageous journalist to death by process. The abuse of Julian Assange has been facilitated by his vilification. From the beginning critics have drowned out the true value of the man and the organisation he founded. One of the many ways Assange has been vilified is by repeated references to his failure to redact names in the documents and therefore he is no journalist. At his extradition trial and at previous Belmarsh Tribunals, we heard testimony from investigative journalists whom Assange engaged to work on the releases for which he has been indicted. They testified to his work as a journalist and as an editor, including his undertaking to first ensure the documents are verified as authentic and that specialists are engaged to identify stories and undertake redactions. My co-chair Mark Davis is a lawyer but during his former life

as a preeminent investigative journalist, Mark spent a month with Julian Assange prior to the first 2010 big releases of the Iraq War logs.

MARK DAVIS: Thanks Mary. I'm not giving a speech, but I will pick up on something that Mary just said, which is the issue of the redactions. There's probably not a single topic regarding Julian that makes my blood boil then that endlessly recycled lie that he didn't react. I understand Julian is not everyone's cup of tea. He was my cup of tea but I understand he wasn't everyone's, so I really wear loads of criticisms about Julian but I cannot tolerate that he didn't redact. I was with him for the month, traveling with him and living with him effectively for the month before that first big release, and I was there intensely in the three days before. I can say emphatically, I won't elaborate on this platform, but please accept my word, I can elaborate in any other forum, that emphatically Julian Assange removed ten thousand names, no small task, 10 000 names, from those logs of people who had potential harm. And he did it around the clock for three days with no assistance. There was no journalist there, no organization there, no media corporation, no digital team, it was Julian Assange. And yet to hear that continually peddled is frustrating to say the least. So, I might ask you this one favour. If you ever hear anyone say that, pull them up immediately because it has done incalculable damage to Julian. It's been used by other journalists to sneer at him and should somehow distinguish what they do from what he does. It's damaging in the public and effectively it was used by the prosecution, the Americans used it as the distinguishing feature of Julian Assange to the others. So please pull it up immediately, tell them I said so, tell them I'll come and get them if they say it again and that I was there, and there were very few people there. Our first Speaker tonight shares a status with Mary Kostakidis as being not really needing an introduction at all, but I think it'd be fair to say that he remains Australia's most respected journalist despite having retired some years ago. I think he'd still be up there. Kerry O'Brien is Australia's most respected journalist and he's of a generation of journalists and journalism who weren't afraid to speak their mind, to have some personality, to have an opinion, to have an intelligent calculated opinion, not to be a robot, which is seems to be the highest accolade you can give to a journalist today. Kerry has always spoken his mind. It gave heat, it gave strength to his journalism and to his credit he gave that opinion, he gave his views on Julian consistently when a lot of journalists were running for the doors. No one wanted to be associated with this man that didn't redact and put lives at risk, but Kerry O'Brien, Australia's best, has stood by Australia's best whistleblower consistently. I introduce Kerry O'Brien

KERRY O'BRIEN: One of humanity's great weaknesses has been its inability to remember, its inability to learn from its history and that applies as much to Julian Assange and the Assange story as anything else. The circumstances shift but the fundamentals remain the same, and for me the fundamentals are these. In 2010, Wikileaks with Julian Assange as its editor, published a massive number of secret documents about the U.S war effort in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many of the revelations were deeply embarrassing to the United States and its allies, including Australia. They included the infamous video footage of a U.S Apache helicopter attack on civilians in a Baghdad Street in July 2007, which was widely and sensationally reported around the world. The British Guardian newspaper reported it thus on 6April 2010, "a secret video showing U.S air crew falsely claiming to have encountered a fire fight in Baghdad and then

laughing at the dead after launching an airstrike that killed a dozen people including two Iraqis working for Reuters news agency was revealed by Wikileaks today." The military whistleblower who leaked the documents to WikiLeaks, Bradley now Chelsea Manning, was prosecuted and sent to jail for 35 years although her sentence was commuted after seven years on clemency grounds by Barack Obama as his presidency was ending. Tellingly there was no effort by the Obama Administration to go after Julian Assange as the publisher of the devastating document dump, even though they had become obsessed about leaks and about punishing leakers. In this context the 2011 decision by Australia's Walkley Foundation, (which has been highlighting great Australian journalism through its celebrated awards for nearly 70 years) to award Wikileaks with Assange as its editor a Walkley award for its outstanding contribution to journalism was highly significant. Walkley judges very deliberately spelled out that in their considered view Julian Assange was acting as a journalist applying new technology to quote "penetrate the inner workings of government to reveal an avalanche of inconvenient truths in a global publishing coup." Walkley judges said quote "while not without flaws the Walkley trustees believe that by designing and constructing a means to encourage whistleblowers, Wikileaks and its editor-in-chief Julian Assange took a brave determined and independent stand for freedom of speech and transparency that has empowered people all over the world and in the process they have triggered a robust debate inside and outside the media about official secrecy the public's right to know and the future of journalism." The future of journalism. As the Washington Post reported on November 25 2013 in relation to the Obama administration's reluctance to prosecute a case against Assange quote "Justice officials said they looked hard at Assange but realized that they have what they described as quote a New York Times problem. If the justice department indicted Assange it would also have to prosecute the New York Times and other news organizations and writers who published classified material including the Washington Post and Britain's Guardian newspaper." So, what changed? What changed was that Donald Trump arrived in the White House. His new CIA director Mike Pompeo, who will shortly be lining up to attempt to be the next president of the United States, in April 2017 declared that Wikileaks was a threat to U.S national security and that Julian Assange quote "and his ilk" (good word, ilk), "seek personal self-aggrandizement through the destruction of Western values." Is it possible that the irony of that description escaped both Pompeo and his president? It does pose an interesting question doesn't it: who has done more to undermine American democracy - Julian Assange for revealing inconvenient truths hidden within an unhealthy secret world or Donald Trump simply by being Donald Trump? The bottom line is that Julian Assange has now spent just short of four years coexisting with Britain's toughest criminals in the high security Belmarsh prison, still facing the prospect of then spending much of the rest of his life in an American military prison. Since the advent of the Albanese government two things have happened here that are relevant to the case of Julian Assange. One was the Prime Minister's comments in and out of the parliament that he has personally raised the Assange case with quote "representatives of the United States government" unquote saying quote "enough is enough, it is time for this matter to be brought to a conclusion" unquote, and that quote "you have to reach a point whereby what is the point of continuing this legal action which could be caught up now for many years into the future". But we don't know whether Prime Minister Albanese has spoken directly to President Biden. We don't know whether he spoke to the U.S ambassador here or to what other officials he has spoken to. We don't know the strength of his intervention, if we can

call it that, and we have no idea of what hope there might be for Julian Assange in the American response. All we know is that Anthony Albanese won't be pursuing megaphone diplomacy. In other words, whatever happens will be negotiated behind closed doors. That is a part of our modern democracy. The other event relevant to the Assange case and to whether this government is genuinely resolved to do the right thing by him, whether they like him or not, was the meeting last week called by Attorney General Mark Dreyfus with Australia's major media organizations to discuss press freedom, ironically also held behind closed doors. Apart from some prepared opening remarks and the photo opportunities, Dreyfus said in his public remarks quote "I think that I still contend that Julian Assange was acting as a journalist when those things happened that have led to him being in jail awaiting extradition to America. I think that journalists should never face the prospect of being charged just for doing their jobs and there is agreement across the Parliament and indeed the community that improved protections are overdue. The Albanese government intends to progress press freedom and protection of press freedom." Mark Dreyfuss was referring to domestic threats to press freedom like the federal police raids on the ABC and the homes of a Melbourne Herald Sun journalist four years ago, but the sentiment he expressed should apply equally to Julian Assange and the longer Julian Assange remains caught in the web of U.S legal procedure and British procedure without demonstrable and effective intervention by the Australian government to bring him home, the more the Australian government's credibility will suffer. If Australia's representations are made forcefully, albeit privately, but are then rebuffed by the U.S, what will it say about the true nature of Australia's status in an alliance that has been preserved at the core of this country's entire foreign policy for generations? It is long past the time for Julian Assange to be freed and to come home. Thank you [Applause]

MARY KOSTIKIDIS: Thank you Kerry. Indeed, our Prime Minister will have two opportunities to speak to President Biden coming right up in a few weeks time. Our Prime Minister is headed to the United States and President Biden we're told is coming here for the Quad Summit. I hope that the Prime Minister will put to President Biden that before he sets foot on Australian soil, it would be a very good idea to release Assange and to drop the charges because he'll find he'll be a little bit more welcome here [Applause]. We're told that and we believe that Australia is the United States biggest ally in the Asia Pacific, and we understand that role very well so now's the time, Prime Minister. Just get it done. The next speaker is Jennifer Robinson. Jennifer is a lawyer and has represented Julian Assange since the beginning of his ordeal and is well placed to convey what he's been subjected to and to the process and what happens next.

JENNIFER ROBINSON: I'm delighted to be joining you for this Belmarsh Tribunal in Australia and I'm very sorry that I can't be there at home with you in person. A huge thank you to Progressive International for their work around the world, including for this work raising awareness about the persecution of Julian Assange. As Julian's counsel, I've been asked to address three points for you today, the first about the U.S indictment and the threat it poses to free speech, the second the extradition case and where we are with Julian's appeal, and finally the abusive process that we've seen in this case on the indictment Julian faces 175 years in prison for committing acts of journalism and for the very same publications for which he's won awards the world over including the Walkley award for most outstanding contribution to

journalism and the Sydney Peace Prize medal. The indictment includes 17 separate counts under the Espionage Act for receipt possession and publication of information. As the Washington Post and the New York Times have made clear, this indictment criminalises public interest journalism. The Freedom of the Press Foundation has described it as the most terrifying threat to free speech in the 21st century and they're right because it is. When it comes to the Extradition case, in short, we're playing a waiting game. Julian won his case in early January 2021. The evidence before the court then was that if he was extradited to the United States, he would be placed under prison conditions known as special administrative measures or SAMS which have been described as the darkest black hole of the U.S prison system. The magistrate ruled that Julian's extradition would be oppressive because medical evidence shows that if he is extradited and placed in those prison conditions he would suicide, and on that basis she stopped his extradition. But the Trump Administration appealed and in its last days sought to get around the court decision and shift the goal posts by offering a conditional assurance that he would not be placed under Sam's. As Amnesty International has said, these U.S assurances aren't worth the paper that they're written on. But in Julian's case it's worse than that, because the U.S assurance was conditional. The U.S only promised not to place him under SAMS unless they decide that he later deserves it, and who decides this the CIA. He would have no right to appeal that decision. As many of you will remember, we learned through important investigative journalism that the CIA had planned to kidnap and kill Julian. This is the very same intelligence agency which will have the power and law to place Julian, once extradited to the United States, under prison conditions that doctors say will cause his suicide. Nevertheless, the British courts accepted this U.S assurance without Julian having the opportunity to contest that assurance with evidence at trial. In June last year, the Home Secretary ordered his extradition to the United States. An appeal was filed in August last year, but we are yet to hear from the High Court on whether he will be granted permission to appeal. We have no idea when that decision will come. It could be tomorrow and it could be a month, all the while Julian languishes in Belmarsh prison having already served longer in prison than the U.S prosecutors claim he will serve if he's ever extradited to the United States. It is an absurd case and an absurd position for him to be in. Finally, I want to address the issue of abusive process. The organisers have asked me to address why due process isn't working and why the case should never have been started in the first place so let me take those points in inverse order. The case should never have been started in 2010. I've been saying like a broken record that the criminal prosecution of Julian Assange will set a dangerous precedent that will be used to criminalise the rest of the media. It was the Obama Administration that opened the investigation but ultimately chose not to prosecute because of the quote unquote New York Times problem, the exact problem that we've been warning about because you cannot distinguish between what Julian does and what the New York Times does so criminalising him will be used to criminalise everyone else. But Trump had no such qualms, and it became clear that he would use the precedent against the rest of the media, which he called the enemy of the people. We now have a Biden Administration who is continuing this prosecution despite it being in violation of its own policy on not prosecuting the media and despite the raft of politicisation and due process concerns that arose under the Trump Administration and with this prosecution in the first place. But before I get on to that, it's clear that there are principled free speech reasons why this case should never have been pursued and should be ended immediately. But it gets worse. Even if we leave aside

these Free Speech concerns, the due process violation should stop this case in its tracks. The abuse of process in Julian's case is far worse than anything we saw in the prosecution of the Pentagon papers whistleblower Dan Ellsberg under the Nixon Administration. In Dan's case the prosecution was thrown out and with prejudice, which meant it could never be brought again because government officials broke into his psychiatrist office. In Julian's case he's been spied on, his medical appointments have been spied on, his meetings with us as lawyers have been spied on, I have personally been spied on, and legally privileged material has been seized. As Dan himself said in evidence in Julian's extradition hearing, what Julian is facing is far worse than the abusive process he faced under the Nixon administration. In my opinion we should all be asking ourselves the question, if the abuse that took place under the Nixon administration was enough to have the prosecution of Dan Ellsberg thrown out in the 1970s then what does it say about our democracy in 2023 if the prosecution of Julian Assange continues to conclusion? Finally, I want to recognise and pay tribute to Dan Ellsberg while I have the opportunity, a deeply principled whistleblower and anti-war campaigner who risked everything to ensure the public had information that they needed about the Vietnam War and helped to bring that hopeless war to an end. With his moral authority, Dan has been one of the most important advocates for Julian and I cannot thank him enough for his work. He's just been told that he's been given six months to live and has shared that news with characteristic courage and dignity. He continues to inspire me. He will leave this life a hero. As Dan himself said in Julian's extradition proceedings, history will reflect on this case. Dan explained that he was vilified after leaking the Pentagon Papers and that it was only many years later and today that he's recognised as a hero. He believes Julian has been vilified too just as he was, and that history will remember Julian as a hero just as they remember Dan as a hero. But how will history reflect on the fact that Julian has now spent almost 13 years under restrictions on his liberty? I think the answer is that it won't reflect well, so let's do all we can to ensure his freedom. Thank you for what you're all doing, and thank you for being here today. [Applause]

MARK DAVIES: As I look around at the portraits in this beautiful room, I hope one day if civilisation is saved, they build a temple to whistleblowers like this and one of the portraits on the wall will be this man John Kiriakou because he truly belongs in a hall of the pantheon of the greatest whistleblowers of this century. John was a CIA analyst who revealed and more significantly, confirmed rumours of the U.S torture program, in particular, the waterboarding techniques, virtual drowning of interrogation subjects. He was the first insider to do that. Could you imagine crossing that threshold to reveal something like that, knowing the semi-trailer that's coming your way? But it was an issue, the torture itself, some sort of mad invention of Donald Rumsfeld that so directly corrupted all that America had stood for, that most profoundly corrupted all that America stood for, that prompted John Kiriakou to reveal that program. Of course, there was hell to pay. He went to jail, but beyond going to jail, he lost friendships, he lost a career, he was mocked and vilified and threatened and yet through all of that he's still standing and he's here today and he's in Julian Assange's corner, so John thank you very much.

JOHN KIRIAKOU: Thank you very much. I don't deserve it. First, I want to thank Progressive International and all the organisers for the opportunity to be here and to address all of you. This

is a real thrill for me. It's a thrill because we're all here for Julian Assange. That's how important this is and it's important for several different reasons. I'm going to begin by asking for your indulgence and I apologise if you've heard much of what I'm going to say before, but I think it's important and it deserves repeating. At the CIA they teach us in briefing training to give your main point up front, so I'll do that: the American government is lying about Julian Assange. That's the bottom line. They're lying and they're going to continue to lie. Where do we even begin to talk about this? Julian has been charged with multiple counts of Espionage. Espionage is the gravest offense or at least one of the two gravest offenses with which a person can be charged in the United States. In some cases, it carries with it the death penalty. I think that the justice department wants us to be happy that they haven't charged Julian with a death penalty case within the Espionage Act. But let's talk about the Espionage Act for a moment so you can see how ridiculous this law is. The Espionage Act was written in 1917 to combat German saboteurs during the First World War. It has never been updated in any meaningful way. It does not even contain the term "classified information" because the classification system wasn't invented until the 1950s. It says National Defense information but then it never defines what the term National Defense information means. It means whatever the prosecution wants it to mean. Many of us have argued over the years that the Espionage Act is unconstitutionally broad and vague, but we never get far enough in the court system to actually make that case before the Supreme Court. Dan Ellsberg, one of the greatest heroes in modern America, tried and continues to try, but we just haven't quite made it that far. Well, the Espionage Act even though the Congress has not taken it up to update it, was actually updated judicially in my case. At the time that this happened I didn't realise how important it was, but in the very first hearing that I had before my judge in 2012, my attorneys argued that I did not have a criminal intent. When I spoke to the New York Times and to ABC News, my intent was to inform the American people that the government was committing a crime and by law in the United States you cannot classify a program if the program is criminal. You cannot classify it for the purpose of keeping the information from the American people. My judge said that she would not just reject that argument, but she would refuse to respect precedent that was set in the case of Thomas Drake, the NSA whistleblower. She then looked at me and she said, "Mr Kiriakou you either did it or you didn't do it and I think you did it". And that was it. So, she defined Espionage in the context of these cases very simply as providing National Defense information to any person not entitled to receive it. National security journalists at the Washington Post, the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and everywhere else do that every single day. That's one of the reasons why this case is so important. It's because, and I don't mean to overstate this, the First Amendment of the Constitution, the freedom of speech and the freedom of press is resting on this case. If Julian Assange is successfully prosecuted, if he's convicted of Espionage, never mind the fact that he's not even an American, but he's a journalist and a publisher, every journalist and publisher in America will be liable to this kind of prosecution. Everybody will be facing decades, centuries maybe, in prison. That's how dangerous this is. Let's also look at what exactly it was that Julian did. Julian reported on war crimes. As I said a moment ago it is illegal to classify a crime that's actually a law in the federal code. It's never been prosecuted right. Why is it that CIA leaders were not prosecuted when they created the torture program or when they created the illegal extraordinary rendition program or when they created the secret prison program? It's because they're the good guys, and you don't prosecute the good guys when they're trying to

keep us safe at night. You remember the old saying about men being willing to do dark things to keep us safe? Have we lost our humanity? It kind of seems that way. Another problem is that the United States does not have an Official Secrets Act, thank God. At least we don't have it yet, but I can tell you that at the CIA, they like very much what they see in the UK and their Official Secrets Act. So this is a way to sort of create an official Secrets Act through the back door if they can. If they can successfully prosecute Julian Assange, they know that they can then prosecute anybody. We're just going to have to take their word for it that they don't want to prosecute the people that they believe to be legitimate journalists. Another issue, and I say this all the time, but I do because it's true: the American people own the information that Julian has released. We have a right to know what our country and our government is doing in our name. I want to know if my government is murdering journalists in Iraq. I want to know if my government is disappearing people in secret prisons around the world where nobody knows that they're there and then they torture them in many cases to death in which case they just cremate them and throw them away. But we have a right to know this information. It was only Julian Assange who gave it to us. For that we should be grateful. I also want to talk about the kinds of conditions that Julian might face, would face, will face when and if he's extradited to the United States and convicted. I want to come back to my initial statement that the government is lying. We know about this provisional promise to not send Julian to a SAM unit. There are other units called CMUs or Communication Management Units. There's also solitary confinement. It is not up to the prosecutors in any case to decide who goes to what prison and who is kept in what unit. They have literally no say on the matter. The judge has no say on the matter. The only people who get to decide that are the senseless bureaucrats in the Federal Bureau of Prisons and even if they decide not to send Julian to a restricted unit, all that has to happen for him to go there is for any random prisoner to walk up to a prison guard and say I just heard two people talking about stabbing Julian Assange then Julian will be sent to solitary confinement indefinitely for his own safety. When I first arrived at prison, I decided to file a Freedom of Information Act request about myself. The reason I did this is because I had begun writing an open letter from prison that I called Letter from Loretto. It enraged the warden, and so I would smuggle these letters out to my attorney and then she would send them to the media. They were getting millions and millions of hits and so I was put in what was called a modified Communications Management Unit. There was a five-day delay on my incoming and outgoing emails, my phone calls were not recorded, they were listened to live by a live guard, and both my incoming and outgoing mail was opened and read. So, in this modified CMU all of a sudden, I felt my style cramped so I wrote a letter to the Bureau of Prisons, and I said under the Freedom of Information Act I request all documents that you have on John Kiriakou and much to my surprise about six weeks later I got a package 220 Pages. 200 pages of it was nonsensical, my medical records, my visitors list, things that nobody cared about, but there were 20 pages that were very clearly stamped at the top and the bottom FOIA exempt DO NOT RELEASE TO INMATE so either someone in the Bureau of Prisons FOIA office was brain dead or they took pity on me and decided I should probably see this. What it was, was a series of memos that the warden was sending out to prison guards preparing them for my arrival. The one that was the most fun for me was one page with very large print, large font, and it said "caution inmate has access to the media." Imagine what will be in place for Julian Assange. He won't be in any modified CMU, he'll be in the CMU. Now there are two CMUs in the United States. One is in the former death row at



the maximum-security penitentiary in Terre Haute Indiana, the other is at the supermax prison in Marion, Illinois. Both of these prisons are hell on Earth and I'll tell you about that in a moment. When these communications management units were set up in the 1980s, they were meant to house the most dangerous criminals that were in the American prison system. I'm talking about the last surviving member of the Abu Nidal terrorist organization, a terrorist who blew up an Egyptair plane that killed something like 183 people, the so-called blind Sheik Omar Abdulrahman who was sort of the Godfather of the first attack on the World Trade Centre. That's not really the case anymore. Now the CMU houses a medical whistleblower by the name of Marty Gottesfeld. It houses the famed drone whistleblower Daniel Hale, it houses environmental activists. This isn't why CMUs were created, but this is what they're going to do with Julian. And why are they going to do it with Julian is because they don't want him to tell anybody what he knows, and he knows a lot. He knows a lot about crimes that have been committed by the American government, war crimes and crimes against humanity. So, when they say that he'll be treated fairly, it's a lie. He won't be treated fairly. I'm going to repeat something that I say a lot of about the court in which Julian would be tried were he to be extradited. This is the eastern district court of Virginia, this is the court that I was tried in, the court that CIA whistleblower Jeffrey Sterling was tried in. It's the court that Ed Snowden has been charged in. There's a judge there, well there are a couple of judges, the one that that did my case in Jeffrey Sterling's, and everybody else's is Judge Leonie M. Brinkema, who used to reserve all of the National Security cases for herself, and no National Security defendant has ever won a case there. Well, she's not Julian's judge. Julian's judge would be the chief judge and what did he do before he was the chief judge? He was a judge on the FISA court, that is the court that is so secret that we don't even really know what they do. That's who's going to try Julian. Now in my case, my best friend's wife had an uncle who was O.J Simpson's jury consultant. Most of you, I would assume, know who O.J Simpson was - a football player, actor and most likely double murderer and they won the case. So, this jury consultant offered to help me for free. He flew up to Washington. We got him a security clearance and he went through fifteen thousand pages of classified discovery and in the end, he told me that if we were in any other District in America, he would say let's go for it, we're going to win this case. But he said in the Eastern District of Virginia, your jury is going to be made up of people from, or with relatives at, the CIA, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and dozens of National Security and intelligence contractors. He said, "my friend, you don't have a chance." And that's why I ended up taking a plea. Now I was charged with Espionage, three counts, but I hadn't committed Espionage and so they dropped those charges. They're not offering Julian a sweetheart deal. They've made this as difficult as they possibly could from the very beginning of the case. There's really no reason for us to think, well, you know, they've made their point and Julian's a journalist. Even they have to agree with that, it's not going to be as bad. No. No, when the CIA comes up with a plot to murder Julian in the streets of London in broad daylight because they don't like the journalism that he's doing, that's a problem. So I wanted to say again that Julian's case is bigger than Julian Assange. This is a case about the rule of law. It's a case about the Constitution. It's about the way the United States presents itself to the rest of the world. The United States professes to be a shining beacon of hope for human rights and civil rights and civil liberties and the rule of law and that's just simply not true. It's not, and that's why we have to stand up and stand

together because the case isn't about Julian it's about all of us. Thank you very much. Thank you [Applause]

MARY KOSTIKIDIS: Our thanks to John Kiriakou. And John, yours is an amazing story but what's even more amazing is your courage. Your courage to continue to speak out as you do and to tell us why it is that Julian must not be extradited to the United States. Thank you. Our next speaker Dean Yates, who was the Reuters Iraq bureau chief at the time of the collateral murder incident and will for the first time reveal details about what followed. This is a story that our Prime Minister needs to hear

DEAN YATES: Thank you Mary [Applause] Prime Minister Albanese, my name is Dean Yates. I was the Reuters bureau chief in Iraq when an Apache gunship with the call sign Crazy Horse one eight killed 12 men in Baghdad on 12 July 2007. Two of those men were Reuters photographer Namir Noor-Eldeen and Reuters driver Saeed Chmagh, my staff, killed on my watch. The US military usually didn't investigate civilian casualties in Iraq. It did in this case because Namir and Saeed worked for a major international news organization. In an off the record briefing two weeks later, I was told by two American generals that the group of men that included Namir and Saeed were showing hostile intent and thus could be attacked. I was shown without warning less than three minutes of footage from the gun camera of Crazy Horse one eight, up to where it opened fire for the first time. I was told the gunship then attacked a minivan because it was believed to be helping wounded insurgents and picking up weapons. U.S forces. I was told. had acted in accordance with the Rules of Engagement. For nearly three years, lawyers from Reuters tried to get a copy of this tape from the Pentagon through Freedom of Information requests so we could understand what had happened to better protect our staff in Iraq. The Pentagon repeatedly refused. Then on 5 April 2010, Julian Assange published video of the entire attack. The classified footage had been sent to WikiLeaks by U.S military whistleblower Chelsea Manning. It was obvious why the US government didn't want to share the tape with Reuters. It showed grainy figures on a Baghdad Street, the hellish clack of the Apaches chain gun firing rounds the size of a small soft drink bottle, the length of a man's hand, and clouds of dust as those cannon shells crashed into men. A wounded man said of Chmagh, father of four, trying to crawl for three minutes, "Come on buddy," says the Crazy Horse 1-8 pilot, "all you got to do is pick up a weapon" when a Good Samaritan taking his two children to school in his minivan stops to help said. Permission to attack is again granted. Crazy Horse one eight fires 120 rounds at the van, "oh yeah and look at that right through the windshield haha" says the gunner. Informed by soldiers from the 2nd Battalion 16th Infantry Regiment that a wounded child had been found in the van, the gunner says "well it's their fault for bringing their kids into a battle." Mr Assange called the video Collateral Murder. It shocked millions of people around the world. International legal experts call the attack on the minivan a war crime. It is footage instantly recognizable by sight and sound. Prime Minister, the Collateral Murder videotape, more than anything, shows why Julian Assange must be set free. When I read the 18-count indictment against Mr Assange for the first time, I skimmed through its 37 pages searching for a reference to the tape. It wasn't there. I got a highlighter and read the documents more closely several times. The indictment against Mr Assange is an attempt to criminalise what journalists do getting information from sources and then publishing the material. The footage

was not among the charges but the Rules of Engagement for Iraq from 2006 and 2007 that Wikileaks released on the same day as the video, were. How could that be? I thought. Why wasn't this tape, one of the greatest scoops in journalism of the past 20 years, which catapulted Mr Assange into the international spotlight, made Wikileaks a household name, the centrepiece of the indictment? Remember Mr Assange published Collateral Murder before any other material about the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan that Chelsea Manning had sent to WikiLeaks. After saving a copy of the tape, Ms Manning told her court-martial hearing that she searched for and found the Rules of Engagement, a 2007 flow chart outlining the chain of command for the use of force in Iraq and an card given to soldiers that summarised those rules. Then I got it. The US government didn't want the video in a courtroom. Too embarrassing, potential war crimes, cruel pilot banter. That footage could do untold damage to its case. The U.S military repeatedly lied about the events of 12 July 2007 in which my Iraqi staff were killed. It was more than 12 hours before the military said anything publicly after the attack. When it did, a little after midnight, the military issued a statement saying U.S forces had returned fire and called in helicopter support after being attacked with small arms and RPGs quote "nine insurgents were killed in the ensuing fire fight, one insurgent was wounded, and two civilians were killed during the fire fight. The two civilians were reported as employees for the Reuters News service." end quote. The statement said quote "there is no question that Coalition forces were clearly engaged in combat operations against a hostile force said a spokesperson for U.S forces in Baghdad," a lieutenant colonel. Collateral Murder showed that to be a lie. When Mr Assange published Collateral Murder, the U.S military said all evidence available supported the conclusion that Crazy Horse one eight shot armed insurgents. Then U.S defense secretary Robert Gates called the investigation very thorough. He said soldiers were operating in split-second situations and that these people i.e Wikileaks can put out anything they want, and they're never held accountable for it. Mr Gates claimed that watching the video was like looking at the war through a soda straw, there was no context or perspective. I'm going to address these points one by one. The Rules of Engagement for U.S soldiers in Iraq said quote "do not target or strike anyone who has surrendered or is out of combat due to sickness or wounds." It was written on the card given to U.S soldiers similarly the international law of armed conflict to which the U.S the United States is a signatory does not allow combatants to shoot people who are surrendering or no longer pose a threat. The Geneva Conventions prohibit attacks on the wounded. Collateral Murder showed Crazy Horse one eight shooting a badly wounded man, Saeed, two unarmed bystanders who came to help him and the unarmed Good Samaritan van driver. Despite this obvious breach of the Rules of Engagement and international conventions and AR 15 6 military investigation cleared the pilots. Among its findings, the AWT or air weapons team accurately assessed that the criteria to "find and terminate the threat to friendly forces were met in accordance with the law of armed conflict and Rules of Engagement "end quote. A day after Mr Assange published Collateral Murder, a military spokesman for Central Command which oversaw Middle East operations said there was never any attempt to cover up any aspect of this engagement. The fact is, the military's lying began when the lieutenant colonel in Baghdad issued the statement that said Namir and Saeed were killed during a fire fight. Officers from the 2nd Battalion 16th Infantry Regiment had reviewed the video and audio recordings from Crazy Horse 18 several times after the attack. The military had time to work out its response. The line continued when the two American

generals outlined to me the military's so-called investigation when one of them told me some of the men could clearly be seen carrying RPGs. The Crazy Horse 18 crew did not use the word RPG until Namir Noor-Eldeen peered around a corner and took photos of Humvees in the distance. When this General briefly mentioned the attack on the minivan but said the driver was believed to be aiding insurgents, giving me a very limited account of the event. The Pentagon was deceitful in withholding the tape. While I arranged for foreign media Bureau Chiefs in Baghdad to meet senior Military Officers to talk about journalist safety, it engaged in a cover-up by stonewalling Reuters efforts to get the video for nearly three years. When reporters in Washington asked a separate spokesman for Central Command where the tape was, he said the military couldn't find it. Another lie. Chelsea Manning found it easily enough. The first few minutes was even shown to a Reuters photographer embedded with the 216 in the months after Namir and Saeed were killed. All this explains why the U.S government didn't put the tape in Assange's indictment. That snapshot of the war would have exposed the hypocrisy of its case against him. The breach of the Rules of Engagement, the blatant way the military ignored the wrongdoing and the extent senior military and civilian officials lied about it. Imagine the damage this could have done in a courtroom. Collateral Murder is so powerful because it is pure truth-telling. No military officials could deflect, sanitize, provide context. There is also no tape from any war like Collateral Murder in the public domain. The only comparable footage, the execution of a Vietcong prisoner on the streets of Saigon by South Vietnamese National police chief on 1 February 1968, is held under license by NVC and could be obtained only with special permission. Everyone remembers the Pulitzer prize-winning photo by Eddie Adams, but not the footage because it's not a mouse click away. Adam's photo taken at the start of the Tet Offensive changed how Americans saw the war in Vietnam. It's part of the historical record. I doubt few people would argue his photo should never have been published or that the Associated Press should have censored it or given the U.S military or its South Vietnamese allies a chance to provide context. A photo that shows new and Van Lam's Temple bulging as the bullet enters his head, the world needed to see the moment of Lam's death, the casual way he was executed can the same be said for Collateral Murder. Absolutely, Americans had the right to know how their government was conducting war in Iraq, how their taxpayer money was being spent, the cost being imposed on Iraqis. So did the people of Australia, whose conservative government eagerly followed Bush into Iraq. It was also in the global public interest because up to that moment so much of the war was hidden from view. Collateral Murder runs a mere 38 minutes but from the pilot chatter and the casual way permission was given to shoot, we can assume it was the everyday in Iraq and Afghanistan. The attack on the van was not out of the ordinary. Collateral Murder showed us that if the United States so readily lied to Reuters, one of the world's biggest media organisations, imagine the falsehoods it fed to the families of ordinary Iraqis who perished in a hail of American bullets. Prime Minister Albanese, Mr Assange faces 175 years in prison from the 18-count indictment against him. Five of those charges relate to publishing The Rules of Engagement for 2006 and 2007, including the reference card that said do not target or strike anyone who has surrendered or is out of combat due to sickness or wounds. For those charges alone Mr Assange faces 50 years in jail. Think about that for a moment, Prime Minister. Assange could be imprisoned for half a century for publishing Rules of Engagement that showed the attack on Saeed and the minivan broke international law, yet the United States didn't prosecute the men who pulled the trigger or anyone else in the chain of

command. It didn't prosecute those who did the bogus investigation into the attack or engaged in the cover-up and lied about it. Prime Minister, watch Collateral Murder then bring Julian home. That said, I urge people in this room and beyond not to make this about the crew of Crazy Horse one eight. The real criminals are the architects of the invasion, George W Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Co. The men responsible for an illegal and reckless invasion based on the lies that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and had direct ties to Al-Qaeda. The men who put the pilots of Crazy Horse 1-8 above the Al-Amin neighbourhood in Eastern Baghdad in the first place. Thank you

MARK DAVIS: Thank you. Many lawyers have volunteered to assist in the Assange case but there's only so many courtrooms and a very few cases to put them in. Melbourne lawyer Kelly Tranter took a different approach when she offered her skills to Julian Assange and that was, she took a very deep dive into the Australian bureaucracy, somewhere where no one else had been to see what they'd been doing to assist Julian Assange because they did say they were assisting him. Kelly has done really quite extraordinary work and I urge you to look for it her FOI work. Some of it is published in the current online edition of Declassified Australia I believe in some detail. I recommend you find it there but tonight she's going to give us a taste of the work she's been doing, and I ask you to applaud her for it. Thank you

KELLIE TRANTER: I begin tonight by recognizing the significance of this tribunal to Julian and his family. It is also very timely as we have reached a point in history for press freedom and for all human rights intertwined with it. Julian once said quote "I understood this a few years ago and my view became that we should understand that Australia is a part of the US. It is part of this English-speaking Christian empire, the centre of gravity of which is the United States, the second centre of which is the UK, and Australia is a suburb in that arrangement. Therefore, we shouldn't go "it's completely hopeless, it's completely lost, we can't control the big regulatory structure which we're involved in in terms of strategic alliances and mass surveillance." No, we just have to understand that our capital is Washington. The capital of Australia is DC. That's reality, so when we're engaging in campaigns, just engage directly with DC because that's where the decisions are made. That's what I do and that's what Wikileaks does. We engage directly with DC. We engage directly with Washington and that's what Australians should do." That is to say, our relationship with the United States has long ceased to be an alliance as opposed to an amalgamation within a various status. Julian's proposition is validated by the Freedom of Information documents I've obtained and examined over almost a decade. Unfortunately, our intelligence agencies whose records would be of great interest are exempt from the FOI legislation. When I started preparing for tonight, I ended up with a story too long to tell here. It will be published on Declassified Oz this evening and I invite you to read it there. It tells a story, not the whole story, of institutionalized pre-judgment perceived rather than actual, risks and complicity through silence. My inference from the records I've examined is that our government's real policy on Julian's persecution is complicit inactivity in deferring to the U.S. Inaction is the policy. An example is Julian withdrawing his consent for the use and disclosure of his personal information on the 13th of June 2019. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has always been aware of the reasons. His lawyers wrote to the Australian High Commission on the 24th of October 2019 pointing out his general entitlement to confidentiality for medical

information and explaining why he didn't want Belmarsh to disclose it. That letter is discussed on Julian's consular file. At no stage did Julian block or refuse consular assistance. In fact, during a visit by consular officers on the 1st of November 2019 after he withdrew his consent, Julian raised his concerns about false reports from DFAT in the media that he had rejected offers of consular visits. They told him the issue of consular visits was raised during Senate estimates and the department responded that four offers of consular visits had been made and not been responded to, but the media reported that he had blocked consular visits. Four years later in Senate estimates on the 16th of February this year our foreign minister is perpetuating this mistruth by saying that Julian quote "does not want consular representation at this stage from the Australian government" close quote. The record shows this is wrong. There's no impediment to consular officers visiting Julian in prison. They have done so after he withdrew consent for medical information disclosure, and they've also contacted prison authorities about his health and well-being. The documents prove the misrepresentation whether careless or deliberate. Individuals direct a state. For every reasonable request that has been disregarded, for chairs that have remained empty when they require the presence of active observers for every international law finding ignored, for every record that remains uncorrected, for turning away when an Australian life has been threatened and for the silence that has descended in the face of injustice, I say to many former and current senior public servants and ministers across many departments that you may have no shame now but history will hold you accountable. Dealing with Julian's case, his very life through the prism of international policy considerations and strategic alliances rather than objective considerations of truth, justice and actual circumstances is what the FOI documents suggest. And it's a continuing institutionalized mistake. A primary precept of good government is justice for its citizens but because our government has ignored every injustice in his case, injustice now threatens us all with a precedent whereby the U.S can seek to capture by any means, incarcerate and extradite anyone including journalists or publishers of any nationality from most places in the world for disclosing shockingly reprehensible U.S secrets. By courageously publishing the truth, Julian terrified with the threat of personal responsibility and accountability those who had been operating beyond reach. He knew they'd come for him. We knew they'd come for him, and they did. It's not a hard story to understand. Julian is a moral innovator. He made moral gains, which had an immense effect on human life. He did what lay in his power to make people less cruel to others and was rewarded with nothing but personal pain. Posterity will pay Julian the highest honour for putting into the world the things that we most value: truth, transparency, and justice. History will look back on Julian as a particularly important person and on his persecution, the details of which undoubtedly will be further filled out over time and preserved forever, as an appalling politico legal abomination. Harking back to Julian's own observations about the real international hierarchy, the way forward is in Washington, not Canberra. Mr Albanese Goes to Washington could and should be the story of an Australian Prime Minister quietly but resolutely standing up for truth and fairness and the rights of a citizen and securing his release, the release of a person who far from being a criminal has put his life on the line for those same values for the benefit of people the world over. Thank you very much [Applause]

MARY KOSTAKIDIS: Kellie thank you for your perseverance and your years of meticulous work because you tell the story, the unfolding story of what was happening to Julian, what was being

said behind the scenes and what is being done or not being done and it's a very important story. Our next speaker is someone who has the ear of the Prime Minister, former foreign minister and now Labor elder statesman, Bob Carr.

BOB CARR: I'm confident our Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is doing the right thing on Assange, but these are the arguments I would use if the Americans show any reluctance. He is an Australian. He's an Australian citizen and he is being seized by the long arm of America's extra-territorial reach. Let me give you a comparison. Imagine an Australian located in London was giving support to a campaign to assist the Rohingya in Myanmar or the Uighurs in Xinjiang Province in China or the Islamic activists advocates in Kashmir. Imagine if the cabinet of India Myanmar or China reached out and sought their extradition from the United Kingdom to face trial in Beijing or Delhi or Rangoon based on their offense to the law of China India or Myanmar. Now we'd be outraged by extraterritorial reach of an Australian in the United Kingdom engaged in advocacy but offending the law of China or India or Myanmar. That's precisely what America is doing here, and we've got an added twist. I think it's a very powerful argument for an Australian to use, an added twist, and that is Chelsea Manning who released the material that Assange merely published has had charges against her suspended, whatever the appropriate legal verb is, and walks free but the Aussie who was part of the exposure of American war crimes is still being pursued. I would say his argument in putting it to a U.S President or a U.S Ambassador in Canberra is saying this is really offensive to Australian public opinion. The American involved in the exposure of American war crimes has been freed and walks free, the Australian is still being pursued through extraterritorial reach. It's a grave offence to Australia, and in these circumstances an offense to America's own law, the First Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees free expression. If This were an American, press organizations would be defeating their Administration in the Supreme Court of the United States as happened with Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon papers. There's another argument and that is that these are war crimes. They're not being pursued by America, not like the war crime of Mei Lai in Vietnam. These are war crimes, and we know about them, and the world deserves to know about them, we know about them because Julian Assange published them. That's what's at stake here and whether an Australian is going to be punished for this because of an extra territorial reach by the Americans that we'd find repugnant, utterly repugnant, if it were another Nation reaching out to extradite Assange because he offended the laws of China, India or Myanmar. These are very strong arguments indeed, but I'd wrap it up with a powerful argument that's impossible for anyone U.S ambassador, Secretary of State, the president himself to rebut and simply the designs are subtle enough: he suffered enough. An Australian Prime Minister can say simply to his American partner, his American interlocutor: let's drop this now. If there are any points to be made or any punishment to be meted out, any message to be sent, the years this man has done, the time this Australian has done in prison have paid the price.  
[Applause]

MARK DAVIS: I urge you to multiply some of the messages we're hearing tonight in the first instance by most simply sharing some hashtags as we go through and that is #BelmarshTribunal and of course the classic at #FreeAssange, so please do so. Karen Percy is the head of Australia's principal journalist Union the MEAA but she's also an outspoken critic of

the creep of the state into our central basic freedoms, in particular, freedom of speech and the erosion of journalism, the foundations of journalism through that state creep in Australia. Please welcome Karen Percy

KAREN PERCY: Good evening, everybody. It's great to be here on Gadigal land. I pay tribute to the custodians of this land who have been long, long time storytellers for tens of thousands of years. Julian Assange has been a member of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance since 2007. We are so saddened that this case just drags on. This week I was among a group of 25 or so media leaders who met with federal Attorney General Mark Dreyfus for the Press Freedom Roundtable that Kerry referenced. The first issue I raised with the AG was Julian's case. I urge the minister to talk to his cabinet colleagues and his parliamentary colleagues about resolving the case so that Julian can be reunited with his family. MEAA sees his case as fundamentally an issue of Press Freedom. MEAA has advocated for many years, like so many of you have as well, petitions, letters behind the scenes chats, in front of scenes chats. We have written to successive Australian governments seeking action. We are as frustrated as anybody that Australian authorities seem to have made little progress in this case. It's symptomatic of a failure to fully appreciate the erosion of press freedom more broadly in Australia and around the world. We like to think of ourselves as progressive and world leaders when it comes to democracy, but over the years, little by little, law by law, regulation by regulation, amendment by amendment, journalists and media outlets and more importantly the public's right to know have been squeezed in the name of national security. Our defamation laws favour the rich and are designed to muzzle brave reporting. We made this clear as industry leaders this week in Canberra, that things need to change. We urge the Attorney General to examine the chilling effect these laws are having on telling stories that need to be told. So far from being a far-off threat to press freedom, we have it here, right now. There are hundreds of provisions in our laws that can put a journalist in jail. Most journalists don't know them or even understand them. We don't know what we don't know because we can't know. There is little, if any visibility for example when governments seek journalist information warrants to get access to notes, documents, or information that journalists collect in their work. There's no ability to contest these requests. It's unclear whether there really isn't a justification for these requests and who on Earth knows if they actually achieve what the agencies are trying to achieve. We just don't know. Receiving classified documents can land a journalist in jail. They don't have to read them, talk about them, never mind publish or broadcast them. The rights of journalists are routinely being trodden on. Our FOI processes are a joke. We get nonsense answers from governments, ministries, and agencies. There are suppression orders, particularly in the state of Victoria where I come from, that just come thick and fast. The latest example is the federal court changing without notice or consultation the rules for journalists accessing documents. The court claims it's an administrative change, but the effect will be that some cases that are very much in the public interest might never see the light of day. These are the stories, of dodgy employers, consumer rip-offs, corporate wrongdoing. It's little wonder that Australia has been sliding down the global press freedom rankings in recent years. We're seeing direct attacks on journalists as well as the fake news brigade continue to harass and harangue. It's happening in person, it's happening online and it's especially vile against women, people of color, those with disability and of course our LGBTI colleagues. Journalists also face physical dangers on the fire field, the



flooding river, the crime scene, outside the court. Ever dwindling media workforces mean fewer reporters are being assigned to difficult stories and so they're exposed to greater potential trauma loads than ever before. The fast-paced digital age adds to stress and strain employers need to pay more than lip service to the well-being and those RUOK days. There has to be a true commitment to ensuring workers are safe physically and psychologically. We do risk assessments for physical dangers and we need to ensure the same for potential psychological harm. Anything, anything that stops a journalist from doing her work is a threat to press freedom. A genuine commitment to press freedom in Australia entails embracing many things you might not like because it might make you look bad. This week's press freedom meeting in Canberra was encouraging. The government says it wants reform and legislative changes particularly to those national security laws, and possible changes to the Privacy Act and even better protections for whistleblowers. We welcome the chance to take part and to shape the conversation but there is a long, long list of change that needs to happen. And that's where you, dear audience, comes in tonight. Our press freedom focus is rightly about one man but to achieve press freedom here and elsewhere in the world, it's got to be a bigger conversation. It's certainly an imperative that Julian be allowed to be with his family and that this awful ordeal come to an end, but as citizens, we need to demand more from our leaders in the media, in government, in civil society, to ensure that our right to know is not impeded and that Australia is once again a country to look up to when it comes to a free and fearless media. Thank you.

MARY KOSTIKIDIS: Thank you. It's good to know that someone in your position is raising all those very important issues around increased protection for journalists and whistleblowers. I think it's also true that for the first time we're hopeful that we have a government and an attorney general where we can be confident that there's going to be some improvement. Thank you also for raising Julian Assange. It was a matter of great shame to me as a journalist that some years ago there was a meeting of a vast array of journalists and no one who would raise Julian Assange was allowed into the room, so we live, we're living in, a different universe. Our next speaker is a Labor member of Parliament and he's co-chair of the Parliamentary committee to bring Julian Assange home his name is Josh Wilson

JOSH WILSON: I'm Josh Wilson. I'm the federal member for Fremantle and it's my privilege to be Labor's co-convenor of the Parliamentary friends of Julian Assange. I'm sorry I can't be with you today, but I thank everyone who's there and everyone who's participated in advocating for Julian Assange over recent years, for the effort that you're making in that important cause. Without question it's time for the persecution, prosecution and incarceration of Julian Assange to come to an end. This parliamentary friendship group has called upon the U.S government to end the extradition process and set Julian Assange free. It's important that that occurs as a matter of justice with respect to Julian and his own personal circumstances, but it's actually important in a larger way because really, the prosecution of Julian Assange undermines some important principles of press freedom and accountability of government action. I'm really glad that the new Albanese Labor government has said that enough is enough. Enough is enough, and that there's no good cause, there's no justificational purpose in the ongoing persecution of Julian Assange, that it is in effect wrong and that it should end. I will continue to work with colleagues on a bipartisan, indeed on a cross-party basis, within the Parliamentary friendship

group to make that case to raise our voices along with yours in calling for an end of the prosecution and incarceration of Julian Assange.

MARK DAVIS: There's a thing or two about political campaigns especially against overwhelmingly powerful opponents. A woman who out of nowhere apparently and against all the odds defeated the Australian Treasurer Josh Freidenberg in one of the safest seats in Australia. I'm very happy to say that Monique Ryan is in Julian's corner, and we hear from her tonight.

MONIQUE RYAN: Hello everyone my name is Monique Ryan, and I am the federal member for the seat of Kooyong in Australia. I'm a doctor and a parliamentarian and I'm speaking today in that context. On 30th of November last I asked our Prime Minister in Parliament what he was doing and what his government was doing to pursue the case for freedom for Julian Assange. He responded on that date that the government is taking steps at this point in time. He reiterated what he's expressed previously, which is that enough is enough. I think that probably all of us present in this Congress today, whether it be in person or virtual, agree that enough is enough. As a doctor I can speak to the psychological and physical effects of prolonged detention on any individual, no matter how strong or robust they may be in going into that process. The extent to which Julian Assange has been victimised by the various processes applied to him internationally in the last few years is extreme. I know that anyone with any concern for his well-being is aware of the fact that those prolonged periods of detention not only cause acute problems, but they cause chronic health issues both physical and psychological, the extent of which we probably don't even know at this point in time. What I'll continue to do as a parliamentarian is to continue to agitate for Julian Assange's freedom. A number of parliamentarians have sent a letter to the UK government this week. We will continue to speak to our own government about it and we will continue to hold them to account as members of the Australian government. We need to do what we can to protect the freedom and the rights of all Australians, but particularly those who speak truth to power. So, I thank you for the opportunity to be with you virtually this evening and pledge that I will continue to work with you in order to secure Julian Assange's freedom. Good night

MARY KOSTIKIDIS: Our next speaker needs no introduction in Australia but we have an international audience. David Shoebridge is a Green Senator. His work in the Australian Parliament is invaluable, as is his advocacy for accountability, press freedom and for justice on behalf of those whose rights are being violated. David, thank you.

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thanks Mary for the very generous welcome and thanks to Nadine for the welcome on to Gadigal land. I too acknowledge the land we're on always was and always will be First Nations land. And again, congratulations to Progressive International for putting on this event and events like it around the world and the depth and quality of the speakers have come before me. Let's start with a very simple principle, which should be a political principle that unites us all: It should never be a crime to tell the truth. Yeah, tragically it seems a very simple observation doesn't it. It should never be a crime to tell the truth, but we've heard from the previous examples from previous speakers, and I won't repeat them, their excellent analysis

about the nature of Julian Assange's journalism, his whistleblowing, the inexcusable surrender of our sovereignty to the United States and the failure of our government to stand up for the rights of our citizens. With our principle of it never being a crime to tell the truth, I thought tonight I could provide a little bit of political context to see what's happening in the rest of politics, what's happening in the rest of our body politic, that might give some understanding for why it's been so bloody hard to bring Julian home. I think to do that we should look at the pattern in which the executive government and the courts have been used to not just neglect the rights of truth-telling, not just to neglect whistleblowers but I think in many ways to target an institutionalised attack on the truth and an institutionalised attack on journalists and whistleblowers with the clear aim of silencing not just Julian but anyone who dares follow his example. And tonight, we will hear from Bernard Collaery and David McBride, but I think it's worthwhile reflecting upon what's happening to other whistleblowers and what's happened to other whistleblowers. Of course, David McBride was a lawyer who saw not crimes in Iraq but crimes in Afghanistan, serious evidence about appalling war crimes committed by Australian troops that had never been brought to light. He blew the whistle and he spoke about it because he couldn't see justice being delivered internally, despite a highly detailed investigation which backed in all his concerns, identifying evidence of dozens and dozens of potential war crimes. The only person who has been prosecuted by the Australian government for war crimes in Afghanistan is sitting right here and it's David McBride. And when it comes to the work of Richard Boyle with the Australian tax office, Richard Boyle blew the whistle on deeply unethical practices in the Australian tax office and was vindicated by an independent investigation, vindicated again by a unanimous cross party Senate inquiry and again who is the only person who has lost their job and faced prosecution. For that scandal it's Richard Boyle, facing years in jail for blowing the whistle on deeply unethical conduct and telling the truth to Australians. And of course Bernard, who blew the whistle, told the truth, acted with decency in relation to that appalling behaviour of the Australian government in East Timor. It's a scandal he spent years and years of his life facing a vindictive prosecution by his own government. I think it's useful and I'm glad that the prosecution was dropped, and I credit the Attorney General, the current Attorney General for dropping the prosecution, but I think it's useful looking at the words the attorney used when the prosecution was dropped. He said and I quote "in taking this decision I have had careful regard to our national security, our national interest and the proper administration of justice." It's fascinating how justice comes last in that list. And I ask this: if it hadn't been for the concerns of a continuing poison of our relationship with Timor Leste and the international ramifications of that and concerns about how other interests in in our region may have used that breakdown in relationship with the Timorese, would Bernard be sitting here still facing prosecution? I think it's important to reflect on that. When you realize the so-called national security interests, the compliance with our large and powerful so-called ally, some would say decision maker, the United States, how the national interest is continuing to trump this perceived national interest, I think falsely perceived national interests is trumping the demands for justice with Julian. It would be remiss of me not to note another current example of Dan Duggan, who as we speak, an Australian citizen who as we speak just a few short kilometres from here is in maximum security detention, in solitary confinement following an extradition request from the United States. I think his wife is here and supreme strength to you and strength to your family. He's held in deeply dehumanizing conditions in an Australian jail,

not in Belmarsh, but in an Australian jail only a few kilometres from here, with no explanation for why following extradition charges he's held in those conditions this, if you like, pre-trial persecution of Mr Duggan. The only explanation that can be given is somehow or other, the interests of the United States, the concerns they have over national security having that influence upon prison authorities in this country and the ongoing brutal detention of Dan Duggan. So, the context is real, the context, the political context in which journalists and whistleblowers are seen as fair game needs to be part of the discussion about Julian Assange's case. The global chill that the United States wants to send to journalists and whistleblowers in relation to Julian Assange has definitely been amplified by our own government and its actions, and it has in fact reached right into Parliament. It was the 4th of August last year when Julian's father and brother came to Parliament, the home of democracy and free speech apparently. They came to Parliament carrying copies of that wonderful book of Nils Melzer in relation to Julian's plight, the persecution of Julian Assange, and they were stopped at the entrance to Parliament. They wanted to give copies of the book to myself and other MPs. They wanted to talk directly to the Prime Minister about Julian's case. They were stopped by security at the entrance of Parliament, and they had the books confiscated as potential protest material. They couldn't even get the books into Parliament. Thankfully after we protested the case, wrote complaints on behalf of Gabriel and John to the clerks and the administration in Parliament, we actually had a review of the conduct and I'm hoping what is a precedent for Julian's more substantial case, we got a promise to never repeat the action and an apology to Gabriel and John. But in what other case, in what other matter, would books be seen as protest material and confiscated and prevented from being given to politicians? But can I give you some sign of hope from Parliament, and we heard a little bit of that from my two colleagues before: there is a large and growing friendship group in Parliament, the Parliamentary friends of Julian Assange. As some sign of Hope I can tell you now that at least 41 of the 226 members of parliament are members of the friends of Julian Assange group. That's a sign of hope and it and it unites politicians who have very little else in common I might add. I won't name them all but people I admire across the aisle are the co-chairs and I credit Andrew Wilkie for his ongoing work in relation to that as the independent co-chair [Applause]. Bridget Archer, a member of the Liberal party, I won't praise her because other Liberal Party people may hear about that. Josh Wilson who you heard from, from the Labor government and myself are co-chairs. There's hope in Parliament. There's hope in Parliament and we're committed collectively to ensuring that Julian's case is always on the agenda of federal Parliament. It's right raised in question time; it's raised in the work of the Committees and we I hope will put aside our political differences in other matters to commit to Bringing Julian home because I think what we're seeing now is that the people are on the side of justice and bringing Julian home. More and more MPs and senators are joining the cause. I hope that gives Julian courage when he's there in those inhumane conditions in the UK. And I hope it gives all of you courage and strength in the struggle, but the challenge remains, as we see from the ongoing persecution of other whistleblowers, to change the nature of executive government in this country, to move it from its decades-long addiction to secrecy and the exercise of secret power and our ongoing supine relationship with the United States whenever they demand action from our government. And that I hope is a political challenge that will unite us all because we all know that telling the truth should never be a crime. Thank you

MARK DAVIS: Thank you David for unfailing advocacy. Thank you also for raising the case of Dan Duggan. Dan Duggan has filed a complaint to the U.N on the grounds that his ongoing harsh custodial conditions constitute violations of the international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and those violations include violation of his right to adequate facilities for the preparation of his defence, and violation of his right to confidential communication. Those things will be very familiar to those of us that have followed Julian's case. Dan Duggan now has very limited contact with the outside world. He can make six minute phone calls and one of the first things he did was to dictate a statement which he has sent to the Belmarsh Tribunal and I'd like to read an excerpt of that: "Now world history is full of stories where those in power from countries considered good and bad have manipulated and weaponized legal systems to unjustly prosecute those who dare to challenge the politics of the day with inconvenient truths. It takes a certain brave relentless persistence to push back and ultimately overcome such abuses of power. When we do, dignity, righteousness and justice prevails for all humanity and future generations. When the truth becomes illegal or when unbalanced politics and unfounded hysteria gets in the way of common sense, fairness and justice in the name of national security or foreign anti-foreign interference, we must collectively stand and say no or risk losing the very sovereignty of our souls. Our Prime Minister Albanese recently made the following statement with regards to foreign policy: "Australia should cooperate where we can disagree where we must" but it should not just apply to one country, it should apply to all countries regardless of who they are. So, when Australia's sovereignty comes into question by politically motivated extradition requests of Australian citizens by any foreign State regardless of their might, Australia must disagree. Please continue to say no to politically charged extraditions of Australian citizens who surely face gross injustice and cruel long sentences setting a dangerous precedent for future generations of Australians. Say no to Australia being a political lackey of any foreign government and say yes to Australian sovereignty." Thanks Mary and thanks for picking up on some of David's comments. The unique features of the discussion and the debates sort of surrounded Julian Assange that I've observed, and very happily observed, is that it hasn't divided on party lines, and I take great hope from that. There is a commonality for the people that take offense of what's happened to Julian Assange: you can belong to any political party in Australia, and you can advocate within that party and that's a rare thing in a political campaign, so we should try and use that. One of the clearest voices on behalf of Julian Assange has been Barnaby Joyce of the Nationals, very consistently supporting Julian Assange. We've heard tonight from the Greens from the Teals, from Labor and I'm very happy to say now from the Liberal party from Bridget Archer.

BRIDGET ARCHER: Thank you for giving me a chance to share my thoughts with you via video and my sincere apologies that I'm unable to be there with you in person. I joined the federal bipartisan bring Julian Assange home parliamentary group due to my ongoing concerns about the treatment that he has endured over the past decade. While there are a range of views about the actions of Mr Assange and Wikileaks which can be debated, at the end of the day to me it's not the point. The ongoing prosecution of Mr Assange offends my sense of natural justice, my sense of human dignity and my sense of fairness. He is an Australian citizen who has endured inhumane conditions and has suffered significant mental and physical challenges as a result of

his ongoing incarceration due to this lengthy legal battle. It's clear to me that Mr Assange committed no crime in the jurisdiction of the United States and that the pursuit of him by American authorities even now is an overreach and does not serve the interests of justice. And even if Mr Assange were guilty of a crime, which I do not accept is true, and there was due punishment given, hasn't he already served that punishment? Surely, he has already paid that price and he has suffered enough. Is this not ultimately a matter of fairness? The ongoing prosecution and indeed persecution of Mr Assange does not serve the interests of justice or of human dignity. He ought to be released from custody and be allowed to return to Australia with his family. I echo the words of my fellow parliamentary group member Labor MP Julian Hill who has said there can never be a legal solution to this case, it is inherently political. We have previously managed to secure the safe return of Australian citizens under difficult diplomatic circumstances and we have a responsibility to do the same for Mr Assange. I called on the previous government to step up and stand up to bring Mr Assange home and I call on the new Australian government to do the same. Enough is enough. Bring Julian Assange home.

MARY KOSTIKIDIS: Our next speaker taught at this very university. He is an academic economist, politician, international activist and one of the founding members of Progressive International, the inimitable Yanis Varoufakis.

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: Hello this is Yanis Varoufakis addressing you from Athens on behalf of the Progressive International. This is the first time the Progressive International is in situ in Australia. It is doing important things and what could be more important than the Belmarsh Tribunal on behalf of Julian Assange and the immensely important campaign to secure his freedom and his life on behalf of all whistleblowers, all journalists, all people around the world who care about free expression, free journalism and for the possibility that we may glean the truth about what our governments do on our behalf in our name. But first, a few words about the Progressive International. It was late in 2018 when Bernie Sanders myself and quite a few others met in the great state of Vermont in the United States and issued a call to all progressives around the world to do that which the authoritarians, the fascists and the bankers have been doing so successfully for yonks, unite, in order to pursue a progressive agenda, against the agenda of the nationalists the racists, the fascists, and of course, the bankers. Officially, the Progressive International was put together by DIEM-25, the splendid pan-European transnational democratic movement that we set up in Berlin in Europe back in 2016. Since then, the Progressive International has spread its wings across the world. We've campaigned against Amazon, against the exploitation of people and nature in Africa, Asia and Latin America in North America and Europe. It was about time we came to Australia. On a personal note, let me express my jealousy as all of you who are gathered in this Splendid Great Hall a stone's throw from the Meriwether building where I spent 12 good years lecturing economics and political economy at the University of Sydney. I mentioned that period of my life because it was in the 1990s at the time, I believe my great friend Philip Adams was also being made aware of Julian Assange's ambitions for creating serious problems for those who are trying to usurp power straight out of our hands and wield it in misanthropic campaigns. Reading about Julian Assange back then was a great relief for me. For the first time I felt it was an answer to what George Orwell was prognosticating in 1984, since big brother was always going

to gain the technological means to peer into our lives, to turn us into transparent beings. Julian's answer was to use the same technologies that big brother was turning against us to construct, think of it as a large-scale digital mirror which we turn towards the face of big brother so while he is watching us we can be watching him. That was the essence of WikiLeaks and that is the reason why the global establishment is so inimical to Wikileaks and so determined to destroy the life and spirit of Julian Assange. For us at the Progressive International, at DIEM-25, here in Greece's political party Maria 25, Julian Assange is not just a celebrated cause, he is a comrade. He was a founding member of the DIEM25. He appeared on the screen at the Fox Bruno theatre in Berlin with us when we introduced DIEM25 to the world. For us Julian Assange signifies and symbolizes resistance to exorbitant power and to a ruthless tiny oligarchy determined to destroy the world if needs be, to preserve its own power. Liberating Julian Assange, saving his life and his spirit, is a duty for all of us. Speaking also as an Australian citizen, I want to call upon Mr Albanese, the Australian prime minister to move Heaven and Earth in order to unsully the bad name of previous Australian governments that stood idly by while one of its citizens was effectively taken to the cleaners by a recalcitrant violent series of American administrators. Mr Albanese, free Julian and bring him home. But friends, we're not here today simply to issue calls and to defend Julian, his body, his spirit, and his legacy. This is the Belmarsh Tribunal. Our decision as a Progressive International to hold Belmarsh Tribunals first in London, then in the United States, now in Australia, wherever we can, stems from a prior decision, our decision to go well beyond simply defending a man whose only crime was to unveil power's dirty secrets. We have pleaded for too long for them to stop torturing his body and mind. We have spent too long warning the good people out there that first they came for Julian then they will come for anyone who tells a truth inimical to the interests of the very few. We have used too much energy trying to impress upon journalists who have not lifted one finger to defend Julian Assange that their profession is under threat if Julian's persecution continues. Enough. The Belmarsh Tribunal is all about trying those who are guilty of crimes against humanity and those who are trying to cover them up by persecuting Julian Assange. If we are truly in that business of allowing unalloyed truths to shine through, we must make the transition from defending Julian Assange from warning against the dire consequences of him being extradited to the supermax prison system of the United States from explaining to the apathetic that their apathy is feeding into their helplessness. We must make the transition to turning the tables against those who are persecuting Julian. We must turn the current judicial process into a process for trying those who killed innocent civilians, who maimed and murdered journalists, who shrouded whole communities in pain and tears. We must turn Julian's prosecutors into defendants, and in so doing allow a well-informed demo to reach the verdict that history demands. This is not hard to do. Thanks to WikiLeaks we have all the information we need; the evidence is at our fingertips. We need to remind even those who still claim to be liberal, that to save what is left of liberal democracies instruments, we need to take the fight to Julian's accusers with a glorious and magnificent, a righteous, a collective we accuse you. For this reason, I salute the Belmarsh Tribunal. I salute today's event. I salute all of you for being here either as speakers or as active observers. Above all, I salute Julian for having sacrificed so much so that we can accuse all those who deserved to be accused, as is our duty free Julian Assange. Thank you

MARK DAVIS: Thank you for your patience. I know it's a long night, but I think it's been a great one so far, but I can urge you we've got a great home straight and it's coming, starting with Bernard Collaery. When I left journalism and returned to law some seven or eight years ago, I needed to get up to speed under the supervision of an eminent lawyer. At that time, I didn't know about it, I knew of him, but at that time Bernard Collaery was taking on the Australian government in The Hague to recapture the stolen oil of the East Timorese. He was the lead lawyer. For that, his home and practice had been raided by ASIO. We have since come to know that cameras and recorders were installed in every room of his home and practice. An Australian lawyer was facing prosecution. They were trying to put him in jail, and he was still practicing. He was my kind of guy and I'm very happy and very proud to say I've worked with Bernard Collaery and I'm equally proud to say Bernard Collaery speaks forcefully on behalf of Julian Assange. He gets it. Bernard Collaery.

BERNARD COLLAERY: Thank you Mark. I was just thinking, it's 57 years since I sat for my constitutional law exam in this Great Hall and 55 years since I received my degree on this stage. Then I really and truly believed we were building an exemplary country. I truly did believe, being one of the post-war generation, that we were creating a modern democracy. And then my law school at this University descended into the Vietnam War protests and life went on. I've just peeled away every point I was going to make tonight as our wonderful speakers gave their addresses, and in fact, like Dean Yates, actually gave admissible evidence. Quite a few of the speakers tonight would make witnesses and that's what the Belmarsh tribunal is about. It's a wonderful idea. And it's very clear to me that Julian is not a prisoner facing genuine judicial process. He is not. I won't rehearse what our colleague from the United States and what Dean Yates said and what the other speakers have said. It's clear that Julian in fact fits precisely what I've been contemplating for the last few months, which is the international definition of a hostage. And it's my proposition this evening that we commence moves to raise a motion through the support of sovereign states that are friendly on this issue or otherwise interested in the stir, that there be a U.N General Assembly resolution. I'll tell you why. In December 1979 the United States moved the United Nations General Assembly to support the then draft International Convention Against the Taking of hostages. With very unusual alacrity, the United States government signed the treaty the International Convention Against The Taking of hostages two days after it was tabled in New York. Britain had already signed, Australia got onto it at its usual leisurely pace, but the reality is, I'll just read to you, what the definition of a hostage is. Article one of that treaty passed and now signed by 176 nations, quite a number of whom who should support a motion in relation to it, makes it an international criminal offense to seize and detain a person under any legal ruse (and read legal ruse about the sort of deceitful indictments) when the objective is to compel a third party, be it a state, a non-government organisation, a judicial body or quote a group of persons (read Wikileaks) to do an act or abstain or refrain by explicit or implicit condition. And if you go to the statements by the United States concerning Julian, they've made very clear that their pursuit of him is a conjoint enterprise to close down or otherwise limit the activities of WikiLeaks, which is a lawfully established body of persons quote in Iceland. The conduct of the United States, with its fabricated series of offenses, which probably, I think, it'll never want to bring to trial like the ones against me, fits precisely the definition of hostage taking that the United States itself pressed upon the world in



1979. I want to call this evening for Ambassador Kennedy in Canberra to ensure that the transcript of the proceedings tonight, the relevant aspects, are transmitted direct to President Biden particularly before his visit so that the United States can consider whether if we all resolve and ask interested states to agitate at the United Nations General Assembly to hold it the United States to account for hostage taking. [Applause] Now not all of what has been done to Julian and not all of what isn't being done for Julian can be taking place without the complicity of senior bureaucrats. I won't repeat what we've already been told this evening, but in my view, there's not going to be a change in this country until we have more Robodebt type inquiries. The persecution of witness k was profound, awful, silent and stealthy, and still stealthy. The indictments against me for conspiring with him to reveal the truth meant that we were indicted for revealing a crime, criminal conduct by the coalition, that's what we were indicted for. I don't think over those four years and 60 court appearances we were ever going to get an answer to the question we sought, which was the one that's asked every day of the week in every magistrate's court, that every lawyer does as soon as they get a brief: what are the particulars of the offense by Bernard Collaery? It was never answered. We never found out what was the secret that was revealed. That's because the secret was something that would shock you. The charges have been dropped against me, but the orders issued under the National Security legislation by Christian Porter have been left in place. I'm still subject to those orders. There's one word that rhymes with something that I can't even mention. It's not over in this country. Those complicit bureaucrats, those people who pursued Witness k got a plea out of him. And so eloquently did John here beside me explain his plea. They got a plea out of Witness K, a man the revelation of whose identity would almost certainly put his family, children, grandchildren in great personal risk, it is a factor always when a man enters a plea to protect his own family. There's a national shame about Witness k that we must look into. Robodebt should just be the beginning and the failures for Julian Assange should also result in an adequate inquiry. For the future I want to say this. Gough Whitlam had a marvellous career but it was blemished, and you know the blemish, the one awful blemish, was his tacit agreement with General Suharto relating to the occupation of East Timor. I want to say as a grey old man to Anthony Albanese still in his prime, don't leave an awful blemish on your legacy. Get Julian out of that place soon or if he perishes you will live with a terrible legacy. Thank you [Applause]

MARY KOSTIKIDIS: Bernard Collaery's prosecution was caused for astonishment in this country. The man was the former Attorney General of the ACT and for those overseas that have never heard of the ACT, it's a territory of the country where the capital of Australia and our Parliament is situated. After years of what the persecution and prosecution have done to Bernard's life, I'm very grateful that he's standing here today, and not only standing here today, attending rallies all over the country to support David McBride, to support Julian Assange. He is a man of great principle and great generosity. Thank you, Bernard. Now following a series of reports on ABC television about alleged war crimes by Australian special forces in Afghanistan the ABC was raided by Australian federal police. A decision was made not to prosecute the ABC because quote "it did not serve the public interest" The outcry in Australia is not something that was going to be contemplated however the whistleblower David McBride is being prosecuted and is likely to serve a very long jail sentence. Investigative journalists rely on whistleblowers and without them press freedom has no meaning. David McBride's prosecution

is continuing despite an acknowledgment by the attorney general that whistleblower laws need to be strengthened to protect those revealing information in the public interest [Applause]

DAVID MCBRIDE: It's been a long night but a great night. I don't have to prepare a speech because my life is the speech. [Applause] We stand here with this distinguished panel in this distinguished place. I acknowledge the traditional owners as well, their magic inhabits this room, but this is a room we can be proud of. This is a great hall and generations of upright law-abiding smart Australians have come through here, people like yourselves, people like the panel. We do not have to bow down to any nation on Earth. There is nothing that Australians can't do and this is a terrific, terrific place for us to be here tonight to remind us of our history and our future. My grandmother's great-grandparents were convicts, all four of them. My grandfather fought in the First World War. When you heard those fireworks, he would have heard that every single night, he fought for Australia, and he came back, rotten as that war was, he never gave up on Australia. He didn't take to the drink, he didn't become a bitter person. He loved Australia. My father's older brother went to the Second World War. My father was well known around the world for standing up to the drug companies and telling the truth. It mattered. Australians have got a lot to be proud of and we are now fighting a civil war. Julian Assange is a prisoner of war in a civil war. His country is not so much Australia, his country is truth, his country is law and he's held by people whose country is lies and greed [Applause] The good news I've got for you is that we will win. And in years to come you will be so proud of being here tonight. You can go around with a smile on your face. If people ask you about Assange, don't get angry, just smile. It's through attraction not promotion that we will win this. And in five years' time, everybody will claim to have been here, everybody will be an assigned supporter. Julian Assange believed in the rule of law, he believed in democracy, he revealed what he revealed to clean up the European powers, to clean up what was going on in America and they say no, they don't want to be revealed for their ugliness. That's all it is. Don't believe he's a criminal. He's not a criminal any more than I'm a criminal. I revealed the truth and people can't stand being embarrassed. Bernard's right. We need more Robo debt inquiries. Every single department is like the same departments you saw in robodet with a dweeb at the top bullying people and a lot of scared people and a few good people saying oh my God what am I going to do. The department that is prosecuting me, the department that prosecuted Bernard, I mean it's a disgrace that Bernard was put on trial, a disgrace that he hasn't had an apology, it's a disgrace that he hasn't been knighted and given a bag of gold. It is. [Applause] But we are going to win. The opposition do not have a team like this. They do not meet in Halls like this. They're in dive bars in Washington DC drinking double whiskeys and talking out the side of their mouths. They think that there's cosplay gangsters like Pompeo. I can tell you we will beat them. We're able to. But that is the fantastic thing, there's nothing like a minority with its engine cool but we are actually laying claim to truth. We are laying claim to values we can be proud of, justice. And we will win. We are the 300 Spartans. We are taking on the big people and we will beat them. And there is nothing like winning a great victory against outnumbered opposition where you're playing a few men down. We're playing a side of sevens against a full rugby side and we're still going to win. And that is something we can be proud of. I'll finish now but I just want to thank everybody here. You are what makes Australia great. Everyday people write to me and say keep it up and I'm going to keep it up. I know that the trump card I've got is: that they can put me in jail. Put me in jail

Anthony Albanese and you will look like a fool, and I will look like a hero because I've just stood up. We stand for truth. We stand for values. And we are going to take Australia back from the creeps who only want pay rises and want to crawl to another country. We say no. We say put us in jail. We're not afraid. And we will win because we are right [Applause]

MARY KOSTAKIDIS: Thank you. You're absolutely right, David. You are a hero [Applause] The current alarming level of self-censorship in the western mainstream media has given cause for one former Diplomat Alison Bronowski to ask in an article in the Independent Media site Pearls and Irritations today, whether the Australian wartime D notices or some similar mechanism has in fact been introduced. Extremely important stories broken by independent journalists are not being followed up in any way. Sy Hersh's report on who was responsible for the bombing of the Nordstrom Pipelines and the interference of a political party and intelligence services in censorship on a major communication platform Twitter to name but a few. Alison Bronowski also heads the War Powers reform body and she recorded this message to us a few days ago

ALISON BRONOWSKI: Prime Minister I've been impressed since the election in May with the way you and your colleagues have done what you promised to do. You had a list of things that you told the electorate were going to happen, and one after another, they've been happening. That is impressive compared to your predecessors. It's refreshing, but there's one particular issue on which we can't find a tick on the list yet and of course that relates to the fate of Julian. Now you yourself in opposition have said enough is enough and you've repeated since then it's your intention that Julian Assange should be brought home, which is what many Australians and people around the world would like to see happen. All I can say is that if you're working on it, it's taking a lot longer than some of the other things that you've been achieving. So, I have some questions for you. First of all, several of the people who advised the previous coalition government on Foreign Affairs defence and intelligence are still in place and still advising you. If they opposed Australia under the previous government taking action on behalf of Julian Assange, can we suppose that they have now changed or can we imagine that they're doing what they have been doing for years and what they were then encouraged to believe by the previous government was the appropriate thing to do and are they still giving that advice to you? It can't be easy with people of that kind of experience to contradict them because they have all the arguments at their fingertips to tell you why it would be a bad thing, bad for the alliance, bad for Australia, bad for International Security blah blah and so on. I could well imagine why people like that might have your ear. Have they or perhaps your legal advisors put to you the possibility of what's called diplomatic protection under customary international law? Now our colleague in support of Julian Greg Barnes SC and Hobart has written very knowledgeably about this and has explained how in this very refined area of law, it is possible for a government to bring a particular citizen's case for diplomatic protection to another government that would be in this case the UK or the US. You've just heard Bob Carr comparing the British and American cases with those of people locked up in China and Myanmar and India, and you have to wonder why it is if it's available to the Australian government why we aren't using it? I suspect, Mr Albanese, that in fact you haven't been even told about diplomatic protection under customary and national law because that's something that those advisors have been there a long time simply don't want. It's a can of worms they don't want to take the lid off. That may be wrong. If in fact you've

considered it, that's encouraging because that might mean that in fact you're considering acting on it and like all legal matters it's just taking time, as Julian certainly knows. Another question for you: have you perhaps considered taking Julian's case to the European Court of Human Rights? He has been locked up in Britain for a very long time over nothing but a breach of bail for which he has certainly paid more than the usual penalty. I'd have thought that the European Court of Human Rights abuse and that plus the fact that Nils Meltzer the special rapporteur on torture has made his opinions on this matter clear to European governments. Speaking of which, have you thought of invoking the Convention Against Torture of which Australia is a signatory? In the United States, is not this important, because an Australian citizens well-being, indeed life, may well depend upon it. I do think the Australian people are getting tired of waiting for some action on this case and would like quite apart from the enduring suffering of Julian, would like to see the case brought to a speedy end.

MARK DAVIS: For our second last speaker tonight, Kylie Moore Gilbert, who knows the desolation, the loneliness and the helplessness of being caught up in a cooked up legal system. Kylie was for two years imprisoned in Iran on Espionage charges that were ultimately abandoned. I know you all know her name, she was indeed headline news for those two years, but since she's returned in 2020 she's hardly been seen since. Tonight, she wishes to break that relative silence and give words of support for Julian Assange

KYLIE MOORE GILBERT: Hi everyone. My name is Kylie Moore Gilbert, and I would like to speak to you today about Julian Assange. As some of you might know, I'm the Australian academic who was arrested in 2018 by the Islamic revolutionary guard corps in Iran after a couple of weeks visiting the country as an academic researcher. I was thrown in prison; I was interrogated, I was subjected to prolonged periods of solitary confinement and had many other of my human rights violated before being sentenced in a sham trial to 10 years imprisonment. I was released in November 2020 in a prisoner swap deal negotiated by the Australian government. The fate of Julian Assange matters to me because it has strong echoes of what I, myself went through. Solitary confinement and prison year upon year without any end date in sight is simply psychological torture. What Julian has been put through for more than a decade is psychological torture. We have grave concerns for his mental health as well as his physical wellbeing and I know all too well what prison can do to your body, your brain, your mind and your spirit. The Australian government demonstrated in my case that it was truly willing to move mountains when it came to securing my release. We saw quite a remarkable diplomatic feat pulled off in the tri-nation deal, which led to my freedom. This involved input from a variety of agencies including the department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and its Consular service, the Australian Embassy in Tehran, the Australian intelligence organisations, and elected politicians. I'm very grateful and very thankful to the Australian government for securing my freedom two and a half years into an unjust 10-year prison sentence for crimes that I did not commit. Julian is similarly charged with ludicrous crimes of which he is not guilty, and he has suffered long enough. I call on the Australian government to demonstrate the same resoluteness that they applied to my own case to securing Julian Assange's freedom. Julian is one of us. He's a brave person who stood up and spoke up for what is right. I call upon Anthony Albanese, Penny Wong

and others within this government to prioritise securing Julian's freedom and to put an end to the long-suffering and torment that this poor man has suffered. Thank you

MARY KOSTIKIDIS: It took intervention at the top level to get Kylie Moore Gilbert out and get her home and that's exactly what's required for Julian Assange. For years we've been told that he's being offered consular assistance. Well, he hasn't lost his passport. He needs a different level of assistance. Our last speaker today needs no introduction. Stella Assange.

STELLA ASSANGE: The Belmarsh Tribunal has come to Sydney almost four years into Julian's arbitrary detention, arbitrary imprisonment in Belmarsh high security prison in southeast London. Julian was arrested on the 11th of April 2019 and every day since then he has been in a cell in this horrible place alongside actual criminals and convicts and dangerous individuals. And he's there not because he is serving any sentence. He is not a prisoner at all. Formally he is there on remand while the United States seeks his extradition. Today you've heard a lot of detail about what the US is actually accusing him of, which is journalism, which is doing the right thing, which is trying to get states to follow their own rules and actually obey the law. Julian's work has been an indictment of how the United States and its allies have conducted themselves during the wars, the illegal wars, in Iraq and the illegal detention of detainees in Guantanamo Bay and the U.S interference for example in Spain and Germany and Italy in their attempts to put U.S citizens on trial for kidnapping and torturing European citizens on European soil and derailing those attempts. So, Julian has stood up for the enforcement of the international legal conventions that Australia has signed up to, that the United States has sometimes signed up to, as you know the US has not signed up to the convention against torture amongst others. And Julian's work and his motivation has been to strengthen democracy and to strengthen citizens' right to know information that matters for democracy and to hold abusers to account. And it is those abusers who have used and abused the legal system to keep Julian imprisoned indefinitely, to keep Julian imprisoned in the worst possible conditions in the United Kingdom and bury him alive in the United States if he gets extradited there. Our youngest child has now turned four and Julian will have spent four years in Belmarsh prison on the 11th of April 2023. And as time goes by, you have these anniversaries. They come and go. And for some it's just a number, but for us, it's our lives. It's our past, it's our present and every day that passes, it's our future. Julian's day-to-day existence is made tolerable through his contact with the outside world, a contact that would be impossible were he extradited. Contact that even in its minimal form is a lifeline. There is no pretence that what is happening here is a legal process, a legitimate process. This is a political case. This is the CIA director, the Secretary of State, putting pressure on the DOJ to extradite Julian. It is not his place, but he admits it himself. There's just no question that this case has political origins, that it is a criminal endeavour by the Trump Administration now pursued or continued by the Biden Administration. So, I think it's no longer a question about whether Julian should stand trial, whether he should be free, but how he should be free and when he should be free in the eyes of those in power. And the answer is right now. Right now. And how? Well, whatever it takes. Australia is the most important ally to the United States. It is more important than Israel in the Middle East. It is more important than the United Kingdom. It is the most important ally because of China. Australia has the power to bring Julian home. The Prime Minister, more than anyone, holds Julian's fate in his hands and

so I ask the Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to take Julian's fate in his hands and bring him home to us. Bring him home to our kids. Bring him home to me and end his suffering.

MARK DAVIS: Thank you. That brings this Belmarsh tribunal to a close. And to echo Stella's words, now is the time to bring Julian home. Make this part of your legacy, Prime Minister. Julian is relying on all of us. We would advise Australians to contact your local MP. People really underestimate the power of contacting your Member of Parliament. I think this is a movement that's building. It sat, to my utter frustration, with complete morbidity for 10 years but I think something is changing. Let's take this moment to see your MP. Look up the Assange Campaign Meet Your MP. Thank you what a great panel tonight. Thank you, and thank you for being here and watching online [Applause] Thank you