



# Australian Citizens Party

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Liberal Senator calls for national infrastructure bank!

The recent fracturing of the neoliberal consensus that drove both major parties to mass-privatise national assets and hand control of the economy over to private banks is accelerating into a full-blown breakdown. Now a Liberal Party politician no less, Queensland Senator Gerard Rennick, has taken aim at the neoliberals' most sacred cow and called for a national bank to invest in public infrastructure. He is part of a growing core of support in parliament for a national bank from across the spectrum of the political parties, which Bob Katter MP and the Citizens Party are leading with the proposal to expand the Clean Energy Finance Corporation into a national development bank.

Senator Rennick made his call in a must-watch 28 May episode of banking expert Martin North's Digital Finance Analytics YouTube show, "[Australia's Opportunity Knocks: With Senator Gerard Rennick](#)". As a new Senator, elected in 2019, Gerard Rennick brings a fresh perspective into Parliament, informed by wide experience from growing up in Western Queensland and a business career that has included long stints overseas. Explaining his drive to get into politics, Senator Rennick said: "I want to bring back this notion that the role of government is to provide essential services, not regulate us [individuals] into exhaustion."

"I think the role of government is to build and own infrastructure", he expanded. "This idea that privatising infrastructure works, and that the 'market' is going to fix it, I think has been a complete failure."

Pointing to a national bank as the solution, he continued: "If you look through history, [US Treasury Secretary Alexander] Hamilton started the national bank in the late 1700s to power the fledgling US nation. [NSW governor Lachlan] Macquarie used it with the holey dollar, he basically used currency to generate infrastructure. And look at China: 60 years ago, these guys ... were really struggling, and now somehow in 50 years they've managed to bring almost a billion people out of poverty, they're now a creditor nation to the US, they've built high-speed rail, dams and everything like that. They've based their economy first and foremost on infrastructure, which I would call the backbone of the economy. And they've been very clever about it, as was Lachlan Macquarie, as was Hamilton, as was [US President Franklin] Roosevelt with the new deal—they've used the country's currency to fund infrastructure."

The Senator declared: "I don't see why we can't have a national bank to basically fund infrastructure." He then went further and attacked the current system of the Reserve Bank being an "independent" central bank: "The problem with independence is where's the accountability?" he demanded.

In his interview Senator Rennick talks on a number of other issues on which he has thought deeply, including taxation and US-China tensions, but it's his views on a national bank that most set him apart from his major-party colleagues in both the Coalition and Labor Party (although some other individual Coalition and Labor MPs are quietly of the same view). This is because the number one target of the neoliberal gang who took over Australia in the 1980s was Australia's public banks. The 1982 Campbell Financial System Inquiry Report demanded the privatisation of the Commonwealth Bank and all other public banks, as part of a suite of "reforms" that then-Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser rejected as too radical, but which Bob Hawke and Paul Keating enacted enthusiastically with the support of John Howard's Liberals on the key issues. This was the beginning of what Julia Gillard described in 2011 as the "post-1983 consensus on economic reform".

Keating started in 1991, and Howard completed in 1996, the privatisation of the Commonwealth Bank and its subsidiaries including the Commonwealth Development Bank, after which private bank profits skyrocketed, no longer having to compete with the public option. All state banks were also privatised, some under the cover of scandals blamed falsely on their government ownership to reinforce the new ideology against public banks. The ideology reached its ridiculous zenith in a 2009 Parliamentary debate, when then-shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey decided to blame the global financial crisis not on deregulation and unbridled financial speculation, but on government involvement in the banking system! "If there have been any lessons learnt, Mr Speaker, over the last 30 years in Australia, it is that government should not be involved in banking", he pontificated.

Australians should welcome the growing support in Parliament for national banking, which represents an opportunity to wrest control of Australia away from the private banking cartel and their cronies in the global cabal of central banks, and start investing in the economic development of Australia to

secure prosperity for future generations. Judging by the YouTube comments under Senator Rennick's interview, most of the people who've seen it do welcome his views:

- "He is very impressive he will be silenced by Liberal Party."
- "This guy makes sense. He'll never make it in Canberra."
- "Not a big fan of Liberals, but I must say Gerard talks more sense than Scott [Morrison] or any of the others."
- "That guy makes too much sense for a politician, especially for an Australian Liberal."

Honest politicians like Gerard Rennick have faced up to the inescapable fact about the neoliberal policies of the past three decades: in terms of improving the economy, they haven't worked. (Of course, in terms of enriching an elite few at the expense of the public, they have.) The Australian public arrived at this view far earlier than ideological politicians. Now is the time to demand our elected representatives take action to make the economy work for all, starting with a national bank.

Click here to watch ["Australia's Opportunity Knocks: With Senator Gerard Rennick"](#).

Click here to sign the petition: [\*Fast-track Australia to economic recovery and prosperity—expand the CEFC into a national development bank!\*](#)