

The Strange and Peculiar Australian Disease of Overcompliance

Shôn Ellerton, September 14, 2026

Sure, the Australian people are generally laid back, but they're sure the heck as over-compliant as ever!



I always wondered this.

After watching a movie in a cinema packed with customers, all edging their way out like sardines when the last credits roll, I would be the one who makes it down towards the bottom of the theatre room and then escape by the back door.

The same thing with congested roads.

I would, usually with success, find an alternative route that seemingly nobody bothers to use or, oddly, even know about. Having an in-built atlas in my head *does* tend to help because, let's face it, the navigation options on smart phones these days are not necessarily all that smart.

Generally speaking, most people tend to follow in groups and feel more comfortable in conforming what other people do.

I, on the other hand, do not like conforming on the basis that, because, the majority of others tend to perform an action as such, that, I must be compelled to do the same. I don't want to break the law or act in a way that puts someone into an inconvenient situation or worse, in jeopardy. However, if acting on the basis simply because others are doing it when it is beyond the bounds of common sense, than I simply will not conform.

I've lived in three countries.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

Each country has a different general mindset.

Americans can get rowdy if they're upset. If they're not happy, they tend to make it clearly so. For example, if they don't like the service in a restaurant, they're tell it so directly to the manager. If they like the service, they will tell others.

The Brits are somewhat different. If they're not happy, they won't say anything to the manager, but they're certainly tell others about their bad experiences. I guess this explains quite a lot about the differences between American and British service as a whole. However, the Brits, if cornered, will snap back when they get angry.

The Australians are different again. If the service is great, they'll tell others, which, of course, is a commendable thing to do. But if the service isn't so good, most won't say anything, *but* this is the outlier. If someone *does* say something negative about the service, they'll be, without a shadow of a doubt, a whole platoon of trolls who will 'put you in your place' for daring to shame the establishment you did business with.

You see, Australians seem to take an issue when conformity is broken, regardless if common sense is involved or not.

Australians are, in general, a very laid back sort of people. They'll go on about the footy results, talk about their next holiday to Bali, or explain in the minutest of detail how to barbecue shrimp and steak. They're also very trusting people as well. The government, the judicial system, the police, and even the rather over-bloated civil service which we had acquired during the years.

You would have thought the absurdities of some of the measures that were taken during the COVID years would have broken this trust, but I fear not. The *majority* of Australians *still* put all their trust in an establishment that wanted nothing more than to take away your freedoms almost completely based on scant research which proved, in later years, to be an utter farce. No wonder these days you don't hear much about all the needless lock-ins and all the masking policies.

Shhhhhh! They *want* you to forget all about that!

A lot of us will never forget. Me included. Reading some of my earlier pieces just accentuates how mad we became during those years. For most, those little comments posted in social media just get forgotten but when you write about them in long-form. Oh yes! It's not forgotten, and when my son reads about these when he grows up, he'll know as well!

And this is why Australia suffered possibly the worst overreach of governmental intrusion on their lives during COVID, particularly in Victoria, a state ruled by, literally, mad and deranged dictators.

Being laid back, like most Australians are, is an invitation for *others* to capitalise on that and take control of their lives. And that's precisely the perfect recipe for our government to pass sneaky bits of legislation which, in turn, gives greater powers to the police to keep you all *nice and safe*!

Australians are grossly and overzealously over-compliant. They have become afraid of the authorities. The once dressed light-blue police but now draped in black near-riot gear is a damning indictment of how this trend has prevailed.

Our ever reducing road speed limits, *all in the name of safetyism*, is another perfect example of ludicrously high levels of overcompliance with Australians. I guarantee you, if you post a complaint that the speed limit is far too low for a wide stretch of road garnering thousands of dollars of expiation fines from sneaky white van mobile speed cameras, you bet your bottom dollar that you'll get a veritable array of Kevins and Karens who will again, *put you in your place*, by either denouncing your driving skills, or openly declare that if you just kept to the speed limits, there would be no issue.

Common sense is thrown out of the window because even if the speed limit was reduced to horse-and-cart speeds, the same lot will state again that if you stuck to this much reduced speed limit, you wouldn't get a fine.

Simply put. The Kevins and Karens don't take common sense into account, never take a reality check, blindly follow absurd orders, and most importantly of all, *never ever* fight back or challenge the establishment.

Of course, I am generalising on how over-compliant Australians are, but there are demographic differences. Most of the zealously over-compliant are those who are seated in the middle class and live in urban environments. Those who

live out in the regions. Yes, those who the current government tend to view as the *proles*, are normal everyday people, most who see common sense, but feel entirely ignored and inconsequential.

If I had my way, I'd give a regional voter *ten times more voting power* than an urbanite!

But that's a fantasy and probably a little unconstitutional and unrealistic. But, you know, hey, maybe we should introduce an electoral college of sorts to add a little more weight to those farmers out there who produce vast quantities of produce that go onto our tables rather than those sat on the dole playing games on the Roblox platform.

Just to cap this little piece off, I came across, what I consider to be an extraordinary sight.

On a Sunday morning, I was in the city of Adelaide. There was a small intersection and there was literally *no* traffic at all.

I saw on each corner of this small intersection, a bunch of people at each corner calmly awaiting for the little green man to turn on giving them the explicit permission to cross the street.

There was not a car in sight coming from any direction and yet, there they stood awaiting the little green man.

I walked nonchalantly across the street, of course, observing if there were no policemen looking for jaywalkers beforehand.

Clearly, if we got to the point that we are afraid to walk across a road with no visible traffic as far as the eye can see, this is a clear sign that Australians are suffering the disease of over-compliancy.