

# Along the track

## Now is not the Time

We live in an extraordinary time. We live in a time of enormous change, in a time of the greatest movement of people across the globe, a time of amazing medical and scientific advancements, with communication techniques only dreamed about not so long ago. It is a time of extraordinary prosperity for some, a time of peace for many nations.

But now is not the time, we are told, to discuss the causes of fires that have devastated our nation and changed it forever. No, we have always had such fires, we are told. And now is not the time to talk about the failures of our most trusted institutions, the pillars of our society – the church turning a blind eye to the abuse of the most vulnerable in her care and working to protect the abuser to keep her reputation unsullied. Now is not the time to talk about the greed and avarice of the banks and the financial sector and what that says about us. Or our fractious politics unable to think long term. And while so many enjoy peace and prosperity, now is not the time to talk about those who are fleeing from war and poverty to seek refuge and safety, a new life on our shores. Put them out of sight, don't give them an identity and we will forget about them. Much of our media has become clever at vilifying the refugee, the radical, those who are different, those who question and confront the issues that are best left for 'another' time.

Now is not the time to raise important issues. Our land is aching, parched and dry and now devastated further by fire and persistent dryness. But now is not the time to look for solutions, we are told, to search for causes, to listen to those who warned us. And warned us. And warned us. Now is not the time to speak about sexual abuse, but to remain quiet and trust. It might hurt the church. Now is not the time to talk about gay or LGBT people and domestic violence as it is best not to get involved.

But now is not the time to simply hope you are okay. Our hearts go out to those experiencing abuse, violence, loss and devastation. But that is not enough. Their lives have been changed forever. You and I can do something about that. Now is not the time to remain quiet, to trust in those who, frankly have not earned our trust. Now is not the time for anger, rage, for fear. It is not the time to just sit with the sorrow, the tears, the horrible images, the worn out faces of those fighting the fires, embrace the devastated who have lost everything.

On the other hand, now is not the time to look for the simplistic solution, to find a scapegoat. "It's celibacy", "It's clericalism", "It's the Greenies", "If only we'd left the cattle in the high country." "Its coal".

Now is the time, we are told, to get back to business as usual as soon as possible. Donate, rebuild, clear up the mess and people will soon forget.

Then we can keep our heads in the sand.

Now is not the time to make radical changes, we are told. Just stay the course. We will get through this. That's the Australian Way.

What is this time revealing to us? That now IS the time to question, to embrace the changes that are so sorely needed, to work for further change. Now is not the time for denial, to be quiet.

This is not a time for us to sit in fear and live small. It is not a time to walk away, to say it is all too hard and it is someone else's problem. What can one person do anyway? That is not our history or tradition.

I can make a difference. Together we can make real and lasting change so find like-minded people who are committed to the same cause.

It is the time to stand up for causes you care about. It is time for confronting every action, every decision we make on a daily basis and asking: how will this help our environment? How will this benefit others? How will this restore trust and credibility? Every act of service you do can add up to lasting change. Ask what can I do to ensure that all people are treated fairly and with dignity. Don't be taken in by soothing words and clichés used by leaders, politicians and some media commentators. Ask the hard questions – what does this really mean? Why is this fair, just and right? Ask those leaders how will what you are doing (or not doing) make our future safer, cleaner, more tolerant?

This is the time for hope and for action. It is not the time for despair and surrender or for complacency. We live in a beautiful country with enormous potential - free, generous and welcoming. But we have to make the decisions that will keep it that way.

*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor 6 2*

Regards  
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