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INTERNATIONAL
White House
Admissions of Covid
Deceptions

LAB
LEAK

PAGE 2

ECONOMICS
Is the Great
Australian Dream
Dead?



PAGE 3

POLITICS
Australian
Election Disaster
2025



PAGE 4

FILM
The Dimming
Documentary



PAGE 10

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A WIND TURBINE:
CRADLE TO THE GRAVE - See pages 8 & 9

Stopping Australia's Digital ID Takeover

By PAUL G CONLON

Paul G Conlon is a former Australian army officer, senior engineer, and author.

"It does not take a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men." Sammel Adams might well have been describing Australia's fight against digital ID.

A modern, tireless minority among us sees digital ID's officially voluntary nature becoming unavoidable in practice and is building cultural safeguards guaranteeing essential services when technology or policy fails. Our urgency must focus on blunting its enforceability, buying time for lasting political, technical, and social change. I see four tiers to this goal.

First, identification must become taboo. Requesting personal details should feel as off-limits as



Illustration by Frank Maiorana

reminding them of their social obligation to customer privacy.

Australia's under-16 social media ban, effective by year's end, offers a clear target. It requires platforms to selectively deny access using age-assurance technologies. As specific methods aren't mandated, consumers and advertisers can boycott those choosing digital ID.

Third, we must vote for candidates willing to repeal digital ID, especially in the Senate. Voting is no panacea but remains essential – especially since digital ID supporters vote too.

The last tier lies within. Each of us must decide the difficulty we'll shoulder for a future where being Australian doesn't require constant digital approval from elites. Just as an irate, tireless minority once sparked brushfires of freedom to defeat the Australia Card in the 1980s, so too must we now practice what we preach.

Every action should affirm the value of that which identifies us. The battle will be won in the details, from declining emailed receipts to disabling smartphone facial recognition. There are moments in history that call upon ordinary people to perform feats of the greater purpose. Let's embrace the discomfort that resistance demands as an act of national service.

Find Paul G Conlon's new book *Citizen One: The Case Against Digital Identity* at paulgconlon.com



Paul G Conlon (pictured)

commenting on a lady's weight, warranting justification or apology. We must condition those asking us to unreasonably identify with uncomfortable responses that encourage self-policing. "Why do you need that?" or "Who are you to ask?" communicate disapproval of the everyday behaviour required to normalise digital ID. Treating anonymity lightly must provoke the same level of exile so

effectively used during Covid.

Second, this ostracism must extend to businesses. Experience from the world's largest biometric digital ID system, India's Aadhaar, shows that business adoption dangerously entrenches this technology. These potential state-enforcement arms are perhaps our greatest point of leverage.

Existing successful movements punishing cashless and Diversity,

Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) businesses must now target those adopting digital ID. Bud Light reversed "woke" marketing after boycotts slashed sales nearly 32 per cent. Harley-Davidson likewise shelved DEI goals, with CEO Jochen Zeitz specifically citing consumer backlash. Digital ID-friendly businesses must join those already surveilling us with cameras and face market consequences,