

THE SPECTATOR

Australia, a failing state

Our institutions are clearly failing our citizens

[Andrew Urban](#) / 28 April 2018

According to the UN's definition, 'failed states' are political entities that demonstrate little or no ability to provide their citizens with basic security.

American political scientist William Zartman argues that, in most cases, the process of state failure is gradual and prolonged, rather than sudden, as in a coup d'état or revolt. He notes that states that suffer from internal disintegration (primarily because of identity politics—religious, ethnic, etc.) and simultaneously are characterised by weak or non-functioning institutions are liable to become failed states. In such states, failure intensifies in a kind of vicious circle. The weakness of the state's institutions reinforces the fragmentation, which in turn further weakens the institutions and their legitimacy. (From an article in *Middle East Forum*, by **Kobi Michael** and **Yoel Guzansky**.)

I don't know about you, but to me this comes frighteningly close to describing the UK and Australia these days. Before you harrumph and ridicule me, take note of this from the above: 'in most cases, the process of state failure is gradual and prolonged, rather than sudden'.

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For full article, see:

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/2018/04/australia-a-failing-state/>