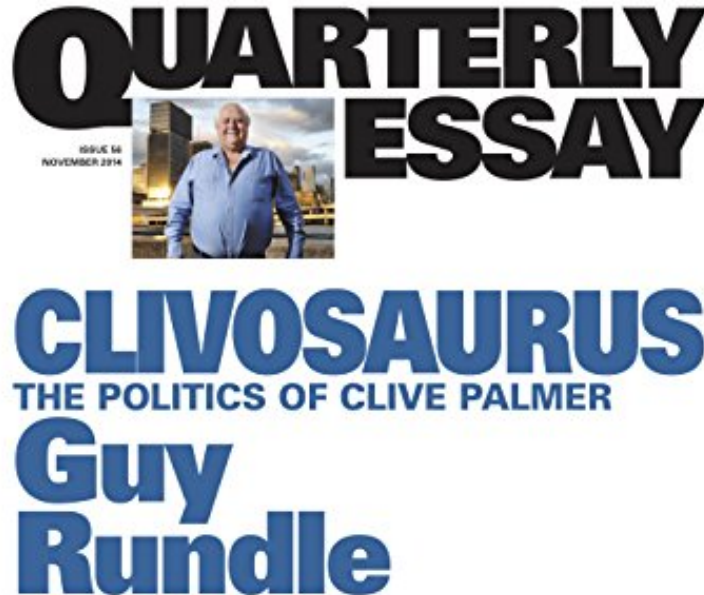


Quarterly Essay 56 Clivosaurus: The Politics of Clive Palmer

Guy Rundle

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Guy Rundle : Quarterly Essay 56 Clivosaurus: The Politics of Clive Palmer before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Quarterly Essay 56 Clivosaurus: The Politics of Clive Palmer:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Clive Palmer, like you've never seen him before. Well worth the read!By Steve SherryThis was a very funny and insightful essay about Palmer. It changes my view of him, but sorry Clive, still no vote from me. Guy Rundle is very easy to read and I look forward to catching up on more of his work. Guy's description of Clive's explanation for leaving the House early had me both laughing and gagging. Great stuff!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very good reviewBy Aaron R PollardA very good review of a man that (because no one has bothered to do a little research) everyone with an opinion writes off as a clown.0 of 0 people

found the following review helpful. an amusing and informative essay, exquisitely timed By Rosie It seems to be beyond chance that the topics of the Quarterly Essay intersect so often and so precisely with the focus of events in Australian politics. Rundle's experienced analysis and, in particular, his ability to see beyond the daily cut and thrust of public life enable to him to size up the phenomenon that is Clive Palmer and conclude that, like Madonna, had he not existed, we would have had to invent him. I consider Rundle's commentary to be balanced. Readers of his recent 'A Revolution in the Making' will detect a familiar political disposition but will also smile at his identification of a "political class", a disparate group of one-time student politicians from which almost all political aspirants will arise, and which "insider journalists (are) trying to pretend they are not part". Rundle introduces us to Palmer with an account of the shin-dig he arranged at his dysfunctional Coolum resort to introduce voters to ideas, and to warm the electorate and commentariat to the Palmer United Party. There was an awkward dissonance in these first few pages, well contrived by Rundle to introduce his central thesis. Journalists have always been reluctant to do their work on Palmer and only ever do so at the final post. Sloth and bias have shaped headlines to superficially characterise a force that would emerge as the perfect storm from the north threatening cosy politicians and commentators. Rundle will open many eyes when he recounts Palmer's formative years and collates events to better illuminate the uneasy politician's beliefs, motivations and methods. He contradicts the pronouncement that Palmer is "a man of no fixed character or beliefs, who rose to power through a rational political process. The reverse is the case." Rundle's argument is interesting, amusing and convincing. While he acknowledges he has been guided mainly by one biographical source, his analysis is singular in its directness and brevity for the Quarterly Essay format. This essay concludes with an historical analysis that is, again, atypical of and even scornful of the conformity and lack of scrutiny evident in the mainstream media. I wonder if Rundle dines on his own when working in Canberra. I hope not - his characterisation of an electoral system which can be manipulated to ensure the genesis and extinction of parties like the Palmer United Party is as convincing as is his suggestion that only calamity can reform such a system. Readers will nod their head at Rundle's cynicism with major political parties and their preference to woo clumsy political blocks to vote predictably on different issues.

Who is Clive Palmer, and what does his ascent say about Australia's creaking political system? In *Clivosaurus*, Guy Rundle observes Palmer close up, examining his rise to prominence, his beliefs, his deals and his politics – not to mention his poetry. Rundle shows that neither the government nor the media have been able to take Palmer's measure. Convinced they face a self-interested clown, they have failed to recognise both his tactical flexibility and the consistency of his centre-right politics. This is a story about the Gold Coast, money in politics, Canberra's detached political caste and the meaning of Palmer's motley crew. Above all, it is a brilliantly entertaining portrait of "the man at the centre of a perfect storm for Australian democracy, a captain steering his vessel artfully in the whirlpool." In the first half of the year we saw Tony Abbott treated with deference to his values and beliefs, as his chaotic and lying government slid from one side of the ring to the other, while Clive Palmer, ploughing a steady course on a range of key issues, was treated as the inconstant one. No wonder no one could tell what he was going to do next – they weren't even bothering to look at where he had come from. — Guy Rundle, *Clivosaurus* Guy Rundle is the author of the Quarterly Essay *The Opportunist: John Howard and the Triumph of Reaction*. He is a co-founding editor of *Arena*, a magazine of political and social comment. Formerly a theatre critic for the *Age*, he has written and produced a number of TV programs and stage shows, and contributes regularly to the *Age*, the *Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Spiked*, and is currently *Crikey's* global correspondent-at-large.

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