



Federal Republic of West Papua, 211/838 Collins St, Docklands 3008 (VIC)

## OMG! Only 1 senate-candidate out of 421 talking about West Papua

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Independent Dr Joe Toscano is the only one of 421 Senate candidates talking about West Papua in this federal election cycle. The veteran Political Activist and Public broadcaster (who is also a practicing GP) believes that it is in Australia's best interest to support West Papua's independence, especially now that it is on the agenda of so many international organisations and governments.

Dr Toscano has long championed a suite of socially progressive domestic policies (see attached), but for the past few years has also cast his gaze across Torres Strait and the Arafura Sea—Australia's border with West Papua through which seeps the detritus of Indonesia's colonisation of the Melanesian territory. He believes an **Independent Foreign Policy with a Regional Focus** illuminates 'West Papua' in terms of Australia's WWII story, and its readiness or not to uphold international law and enmuscle the moral fibre of our regional politics. It might also show good old-fashioned concern for our closest neighbour.

Economic, moral, ecological, and defence dilemmas hover over occupied West Papua. For instance, what happens at the Freeport gold-and-copper when Indonesia defaults *again* on its repayments to China (of the \$US3.85 billion borrowed to buy 51% of the mine in 2018)? What of the waste Freeport dumps in rivers that wash through the Arafura Sea onto Australian beaches? What if Muslim extremists in Merauke set up camp in Torres Strait? What of Australia's Responsibility-to-Protect if in 2030 indigenous West Papuans are "a rapidly dwindling minority of just 28% of the population ... down from 99% in 1962, and 48% in 2010".<sup>1</sup>

Jacob Rumbiak from the West Papua Transitional Government believes that "With a **Regionally focused independent Foreign Policy** Australia can legislate its support for our self-determination and help us at the United Nations to liberate our Green Melanesian State from Indonesia, firstly by forcing Indonesia to allow the UN Fact-Finding Mission that it agreed to in 2017, and secondly by supporting a UN General Assembly motion to insert West Papua on the UN Decolonisation List."

**The West Papua Transitional Government** is a sophisticated amalgam of resistance and nation-making formalised on 1 December 2020 with a Constitution, President, Prime Minister, Cabinet, 7 governors of traditional states, and 12 bureaucracies. Its Green State vision was launched during the UN Climate Summit in 2021. "Now we have a Government-in-waiting, Constitution, Cabinet, and a policy-framework to restore balance between the human and non-human beings in our homeland" (President Benny Wenda).<sup>2</sup>

The West Papua Transitional Government's agenda has the support of the Africa Caribbean Pacific Group (79 UN member-states); The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Poland, Spain, the Basque Parliament, European Union (27 countries) and the Pacific Islands Forum (that includes Australia and New Zealand).

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### References

1. *Papua: arrests over alleged plot to attack archbishop and police*, Radio New Zealand, 2 June 2021 [www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/443910/papua-arrests-over-alleged-plot-to-attack-archbishop-and-police](http://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/443910/papua-arrests-over-alleged-plot-to-attack-archbishop-and-police)
2. *Islamic State-linked Suspects Arrested in Indonesia's Papua Region Allegedly Targeted Bishop*, Benar News, 1 June 2021, [www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/id-papua-06012021143121.html](http://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/id-papua-06012021143121.html)

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Elmslie, 2010, Sydney University, *West Papuan Demographic Transition and the 2010 Indonesian Census: "Slow Motion Genocide" or not?*

<sup>2</sup> Our Green State is a framework for us to codify, as modern state law, our custodial responsibilities for our sacred land, air and waters, and our kin the plants and animals. It is buttressed by a clause in our constitution about Ecocide ('to kill one's home'), a crime about to be listed alongside Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity, which are all applicable to Indonesia's sixty-year occupation.