

Summary

Examines the deep paradox that representative democracy systematically distances itself from the people it claims to serve. Over 70% of Australians believe the government looks after itself, not the people. 85% say some federal MPs are corrupt; 18% say most or all are. Trust in government has declined significantly since the 2000s. The lecture traces the tension between capitalism and democracy back to Plato and argues that the structural distance between representatives and citizens creates oligarchy risk – not as a conspiracy, but as an emergent property of the system's design.

Key Points

- Over 70% of Australians think government serves itself, not the people.
- 85% believe some federal Members of Parliament are corrupt.
- 18% believe most or all federal MPs are corrupt.
- Trust in government has declined significantly since the early 2000s.
- The structural distance between representatives and citizens is not a bug – it is a feature of representative democracy that trends toward oligarchy.
- The tension between capitalism and democracy is not new. Plato named it.

Relation to OMXUS Goals

- **Goal 1 (direct democracy) (direct democracy)** (Fire all politicians – you vote on everything) – this paper provides the institutional, survey-based evidence for why representative democracy fails. The numbers come from inside the system itself: the Australian Parliament's own lecture series, the Grattan Institute's

own research. When 70% of the population says the government serves itself, the case for direct democracy is not ideological. It is descriptive.

Key References

- `australianDemocracyOligarchy.txt` – full text in this directory.
- Grattan Institute reports by Danielle Wood and Kate Griffiths on political trust and institutional integrity.