



They say that comedy is tragedy plus time. There is certainly plenty of tragedy currently surrounding us, what with mounting case numbers, New South Wales into its fourth week of lockdown and counting, plus Victoria and South Australia just starting theirs. However, it is difficult to know if, by the time *Bar News* goes to print, this will be a passing phase and therefore something to be made light of, or whether it heralds something far worse in which case any humour will be in poor taste. Luckily, this is a serious column earnestly dispensing ethical advice with zero attempt at humour. But even now, as Australia holds its collective breath, how do we, the Furies, know our advice will hold true once circumstances allow us all, collectively, to exhale? The simple truth is, we do not. And so, to future proof our advice, we have envisaged three scenarios, each as likely as the others, with the hope that our advice may remain relevant in the event that just one comes to pass.

Scenario One: Australia has undergone a prompt and orderly vaccination programme which sees us achieving herd immunity to the envy of the world. We open up the country to international travel and, joyfully, life and work soon resemble the 'old' normal. COVID is but a distant memory as we reminisce, around the workplace water cooler, about sour dough, zoom and pyjamas as workwear. The only thing never mentioned again is home schooling as humanity collectively represses its memory about the more traumatic aspects of the pandemic.

Scenario Two: Having failed to keep COVID under control, each state secedes from the Commonwealth commencing with the Republics of Danandria and Gladysvillia. For a few weeks, Western Australia maintains that the 6-foot fence it has constructed along its border is for keeping out the rabbits until large signs of Rugby League players, wan intellectuals drinking macchiatos and removalists appear on it emblazoned with the words 'shoot on sight'. The Federation, as we know it, is no more.

Scenario Three: Having continued its investigation into the origins of COVID, the WHO inadvertently discovers and then unleashes a new strain originating in the White House under the Trump administration. At first, only those displaying signs of arrogant exceptionalism appear to be susceptible to the new Epsilon strain as it rapidly spreads to certain South American and European dictatorships. However, just as Australia congratulates itself on being immune, the strain mutates to infect those merely exhibiting *smug* exceptionalism. It is not long before most of New South Wales is wiped out, followed by Victoria, Queensland and then Western Australia. Those that are left descend into a dystopian, Mad Max style existence fighting over diminishing food and resources.

Having now set up the (realistic) parameters upon which we will advise, we now turn to an urgent issue which has been presented to us in one form or another from many people and, in relation to which, and for efficiency's sake, we select just one question to answer.

Question: *We are all now accustomed to complying with the requirements of various registry staff and associates to ensure that all household pets and children are out of the room while attending online court. Does this embargo also apply to our family rabbit? He is noiseless, great company and rarely exhibits his nether regions to the camera unlike some cats I know (although I admit he can sever a computer cable in seconds with his teeth). Similarly, if I inadvertently replace my own face with that of a rabbit while appearing in online court and say 'Your Honour, I'm not a rabbit', will it bring me immediate global fame and notoriety?*

Assuming Scenario One applies: You are obviously one of a sad, delusional rump of WFHers who refuse to accept that the pandemic is now over. It is time to take off your ugg boots, squeeze your feet into some uncomfortable leather shoes and take the first step outside to re-join your colleagues. Your continued attempts to appear online in court do your clients, now stranded at court and defenceless, as well as yourself, no favours. Your inadvertent use of the rabbit filter face while in full robes does the rounds of twitter for a few hours before being added to the growing pile of evidence for your disciplinary proceedings at which you also fail to appear in person. In your stead, the rabbit appears and, thanks to its regular appearances with you online, musters passable submissions in your defence resulting in it, but not you, holding a practising certificate.

Assuming Scenario Two applies: After a long and bitter civil war for which Western Australia seems to have been suspiciously well prepared, Viceroy McGowan takes control of the Federation. The rabbit becomes the symbol of resistance among the south-eastern states. Your repeated rabbit friendly online appearances mark you as a sympathiser. Good luck!

Assuming Scenario Three applies: What? Are you crazy? Taking up the precious, dwindling energy reserves to advertise to the world that you have a ready, available plump source of fresh meat? Have you not read Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, which is now peddled on the underground as a survival handbook? After a mob threatens to beat down your door, you escape with your precious rabbit along the back roads to warmer climes where you hope to find sanctuary. Using up the last of your strength, you get as far as Byron Bay where you find a commune which assures you that they are vegan. As you take your dying breath, happy in the knowledge you have brought your rabbit somewhere safe, the unmistakable aromas of a pinot noir reduction reach your olfactory senses which, too late, you recall is an excellent accompaniment to pan-seared rabbit.

Advice: In no scenario is it advisable for your rabbit to be in the same room with you in your online court appearances. The registry staff and associates are correct. We advise you to follow their prescient and sage instructions at all times.

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