

Looking Out For “Vested Interests”

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On March 1, an “opinion piece” penned by none other than Australian Treasurer Wayne Swan appeared in the magazine *The Monthly*. In it, Mr Swan indignantly claimed that a small number of “rich” Australians had the temerity to use their wealth to oppose good public policy. Mr Swan didn’t pull his punches: “*The infamous billionaires’ protest against the mining tax would have been laughed out of town in the Australia I grew up in*”, he wrote. Like (almost) all politicians, Mr Swan becomes very annoyed when he sees someone using their own money to put forward a point of view which clashes with his. He gets positively incensed when that point of view seems to be shared by an appreciable number of “voters”. Such “rich” people, to him, are doing no more than peddling their “vested interests”. On the other hand, when a politician passes a law or a regulation, he expects it to be obeyed - OR ELSE. He doesn’t use his own money to enforce this obedience, he uses the money he extracts from those (including the rich) who are to do they obeying. Mr Swan has no “vested interests”. He is above the fray. He RULES!

Now, just in case Mr Swan’s “vested interests” should get even more uppity, the Labor government has unveiled plans for a new regulatory body to “oversee” all news and current affairs media in Australia. Greens leader Bob Brown is openly delighted with this idea. Got to keep those “vested interests” in line!