Slow motion politics

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, too, Australian politics has not been able to free itself from its paralysis. Turnbull had squeezed his party-internal rival Tony Abbott out of office in 2015 and was initially quite well-liked by the population. However, Turnbull's popularity has long since vanished. For some time now, the political system has been wrestling with a debate on dual citizenship MPs. Several Members had to relinquish their seats and for an extended period of time stable and continuous governance was not possible. This has led to other pressing issues, such as the development of a growth and innovation strategy, taking a back seat. Meanwhile, at least the minimum wage has been increased and an urgently needed study of Australia’s largest banks has been completed. The Commonwealth Bank lost data from 20 million clients and reported more than 50,000 cases of money laundering violations too late. A commission condemned the bank to a fine of 700 million Australian dollars. The economic restructuring announced by Turnbull has not yet been tackled, but would be urgently needed in view of the fading mining boom.

Elections

Elections are fully open, fair and transparent. Rules for the disclosure of private party donations vary according to region and government level, a standardization is discussed. Plebiscitarian elements are weakly developed. A minus: Parties with anti-Islamic positions are gaining popularity.

Freedom of speech

Freedom of expression and of the press is guaranteed. The media are generally independent and very active. In addition, public broadcasters are required by law to report in a balanced manner. However, the anti-terror laws impose restrictions on journalists and whistleblowers.

Civil rights protection

Civil rights are generally well protected by legislation and the courts. However, some controversial anti-terrorism laws allow comprehensive electronic surveillance of the population. Human rights activists criticise the fact that asylum seekers remain imprisoned until their application has been processed.

Social inclusion

The catastrophic situation of the indigenous population is one of the biggest social problems in Australia. The life expectancy of indigenous Australians is about ten years below the Australian average. Equal rights for women have still not been achieved.

Corruption prevention

Corruption prevention is relatively effective. Federal and state governments have established a variety of bodies to investigate corruption by politicians and public officials. But significant potential for corruption persists. Allegations of corruption in the granting of mining leases have sparked public outcry, and tender processes are not always open.

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