



Here Are the Names and Faces of Australia and New Zealand's Nudge Units

Description

AUSTRALIA: “When we first established in the heart of the UK government, there were vociferous concerns around the potential for widespread mind control, manipulation and skulduggery. These concerns continued as we expanded our work overseas, and as other [Behavioural Insights] Units have been set up around the world.” – Dr. Rory Gallagher, Nudge Unit

The above quote is taken from [an article written by Gallagher](#) who is the Managing Director for the Behavioural Insights Team's ("BIT's") Australian and Asia-Pacific ("APAC") offices. BIT is colloquially known as the Nudge Unit.

When Gallagher moved in 2012 from the UK's Nudge Unit to Australia to help the New South Wales ("NSW") Government set up their own team he was met with scepticism by the press.

He claimed one article started with the opening line: “A REALLY bad idea is being imported to Australia.” Gallagher bravely declared he “tried not to take this personally.” But maybe he should have done as it seems whoever wrote that article was correct.

In April 2021, dozens of psychologists accused the UK government, acting on the advice of behavioural experts, of using “covert psychological strategies” to manipulate the public's behaviour.

They were so concerned that the British public had been the subject of a mass experiment in the use of strategies that operate “below their level of awareness” that they made a formal complaint to their professional body to rule on whether government advisers had been guilty of a breach of ethics.

[SAGE](#) is the body that has been advising the UK government in their Covid response and one regular attendee said:

“The British people have been subjected to an unevaluated psychological experiment without being told that is what’s happening.

“All of this is about trying to steer behaviour in the direction an elite has decided, rather than deciding if it is the right thing or the ethical thing to do.”

(Read more: [State of fear: how ministers ‘used covert tactics’ to keep scared public at home](#))

In January 2022, UK Members of Parliament launched an investigation after psychologists criticised the totalitarian tactics of ‘deploying fear, shame and scapegoating’ over the last two years.

A group of 40 psychologists had written to the UK Parliament’s Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, warning that civil servants and Government scientists used frightening imagery to change public behaviour during the pandemic, in a way they say was unaccountable and unethical.

The letter’s signatories blamed the involvement of the Nudge Unit for the tactics.

Additionally, the co-founder and leading figure within the Nudge Unit, Simon Ruda, has described the use of fear as ‘egregious’ and warned of long-term consequences. Deploying ‘nudge’ tactics during the pandemic may have amounted to ‘state sanctioned propaganda’, said Ruda. Although he said that the propagation of fear had more to do with government communicators and the incentives of news broadcasters than with behavioural scientists themselves.

(Read more: [Government used ‘grossly unethical’ fear tactics ‘like China’ to scare public into following Covid rules, psychologists say](#) and [Will nudge theory survive the pandemic?](#))

Green technocrats have long relied on behavioural science to bypass democratic debate. The environment was the first area where behavioural interventions were designed and adopted in Britain. So, what’s next. Will we be ‘nudged’ into Net Zero?

A [2021 report](#) by Counterpoint advises the EU how to sell the European Green Deal to the public. Acknowledging that ‘there is little public consensus on climate policy’, Counterpoint claims that the Covid pandemic has ‘revealed citizens readier than they once were for profound changes’, and that ‘attitudes are most easily “refashionable” in people whose attitudes and emotions are “up for grabs”’.

In the “pandemic,” the corporate media not only failed to ask critical questions but also amplified the fear messaging. The same is true with climate change: the media have adopted the government’s ‘Net Zero’ agenda as their own. Broadcaster Sky even commissioned a report from BIT on ‘nudging viewers to decarbonise their lifestyles’.

(Read more: [Will we be ‘nudged’ into Net Zero?](#))

The Nudge Unit in Australia and New Zealand

Below are the BIT staff as [extracted from their website](#). Following the images is a little more detail about two: Rory Gallagher and Alex Gyani.

Image not found or type unknown

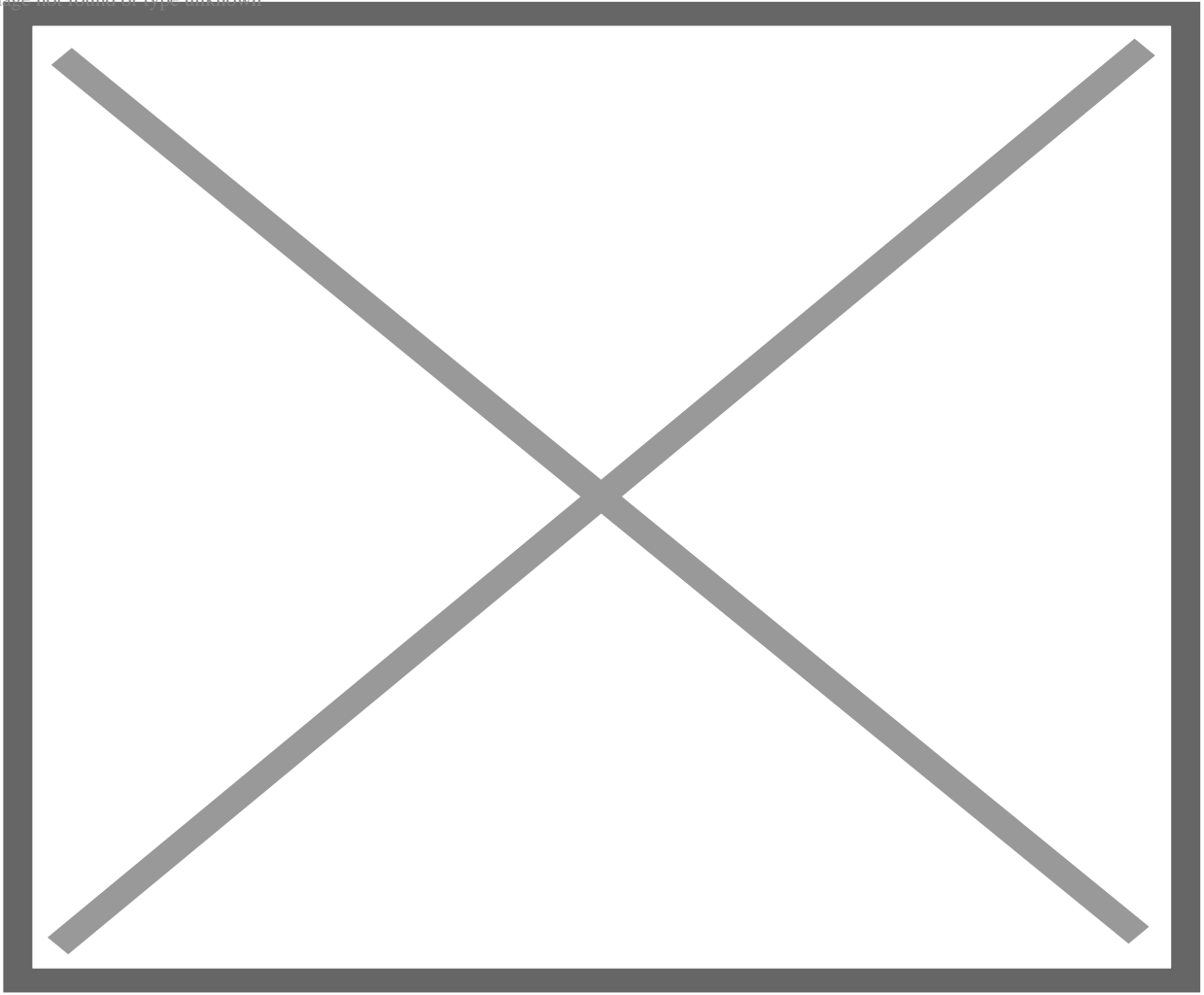
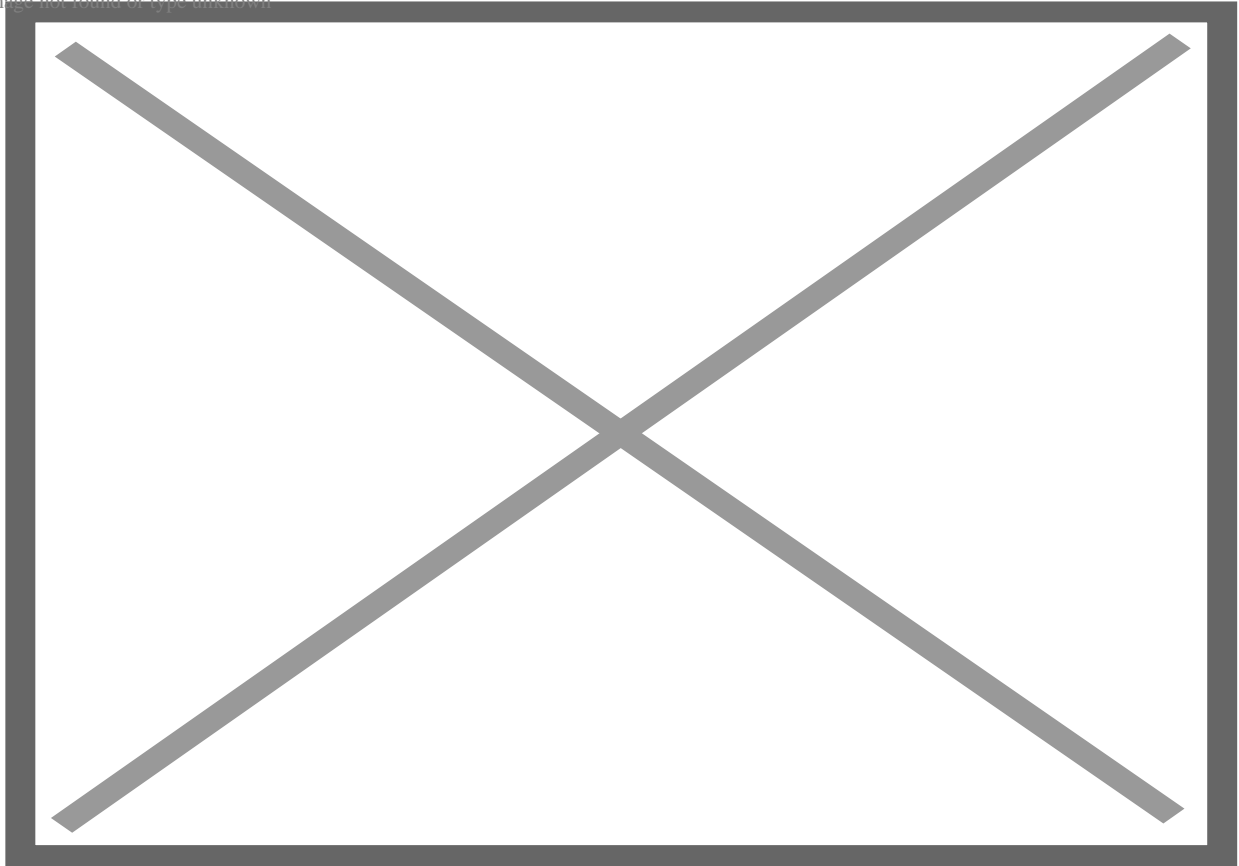


Image not found or type unknown



Dr. Rory Gallagher

[Rory Gallagher](#) is Managing Director of BIT's work across Australia and APAC, and has been with BIT since its inception in 2010. Prior to joining BIT, Gallagher worked in the UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and the UK Department of Education.

Gallagher led the establishment of the [NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet's Behavioural Insights Unit](#), the first Australian agency dedicated to applying behavioural insights to public policy.

NSW also hosted the first [Behavioural Exchange Conference in 2014](#). In a somewhat confusing opening speech the then NSW Treasurer, [Andrew Constance](#), began with the statement that "the breadth of expertise and experience in this room and the ability to drive more innovative solutions for the way in which our community can respond, particularly to public policy, is incredible."

Considering it is a behavioural insights conference, this statement would imply he is referring to methods of psychologically manipulating the public to support or follow government's decisions.

Then Constance spends sometime explaining what is important to him: the individual. The individual being at the heart of decision making, the individual being able to participate and contribute in the way that he/she wants.

However, he then returns to the idea of manipulating the public which to some extent negates our individual free choice:

“As a result of technology, we are increasingly seeing government by smart phone and smartphone applications. And therein lies the challenge ahead in terms of, again, how behavioural insights can be applied through the use of technology development to, again, engender the outcomes which we want to see from a public policy perspective.”

NSW Treasurer Andrew Constance, Behavioural Exchange 2014 (8 mins)

Dr. Alex Gyani

Alex Gyani joined BIT in 2012 as, according to [a paper he co-authored in 2013](#), Policy Advisor at the Behavioural Insights Team in the UK Cabinet Office, London.

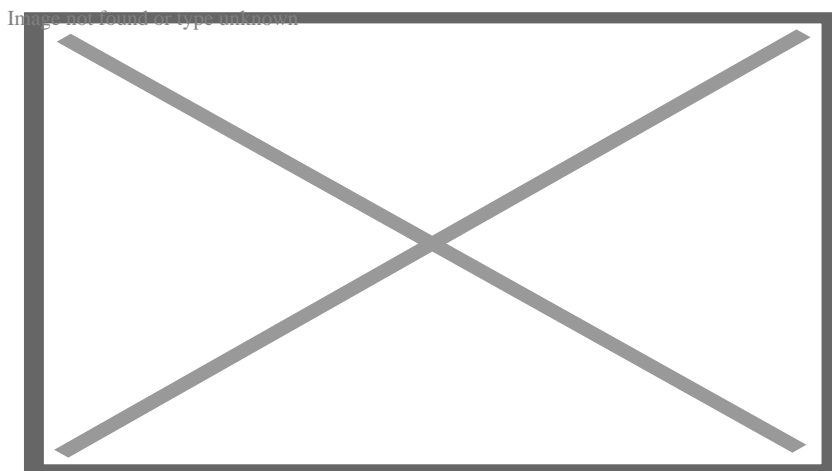
He has been based in Sydney since 2014 and is now the Director of Research and Methodology for APAC at BIT. He oversees the team’s research and evaluation work across Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

In 2018, he was named one of Apolitical’s [100 Future Government Leaders](#), “these young leaders are ones to watch, who will continue to transform governments far and wide for years to come.”

In 2021 Gyani gave a presentation to the [Australian Health Promotion Association](#) (“AHPA”). The presentation, ‘[Applying Behavioural Insights to Health Promotion](#)’, was designed for policymakers, health, public health, research and advocacy professionals.

AHPA: Alex Gyani upcoming event, Applying Behavioural Insights to Health Promotion, 4 November 2021

After the event [AHPA tweeted](#): “Thanks @alexgyani for sharing many case studies of @B_I_Tweets work including communications to support the UK #COVID19 response.”

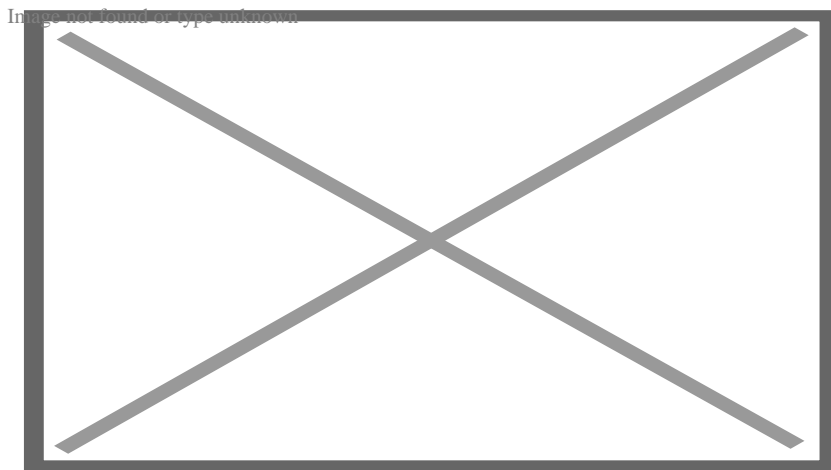


AHPA's twitter thread continued:

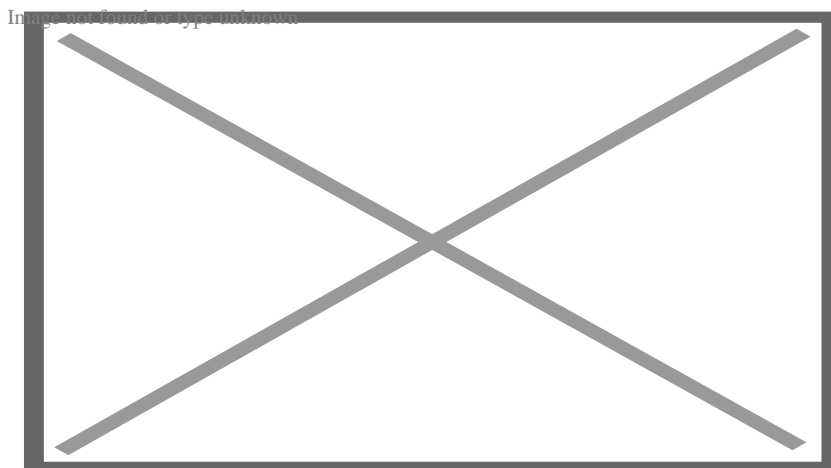
"A contemporary issue: #COVID19 vaccination. See @AHPA_AU Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Position Statement:

["AHPA encourages all people engaged in the practice, research and study of health promotion to be vaccinated against COVID-19," AHPA, Covid-19 Vaccination: Position, 24 February 2022]

<https://healthpromotion.org.au/news/advocacy/2333-covid-19-vaccination-position>



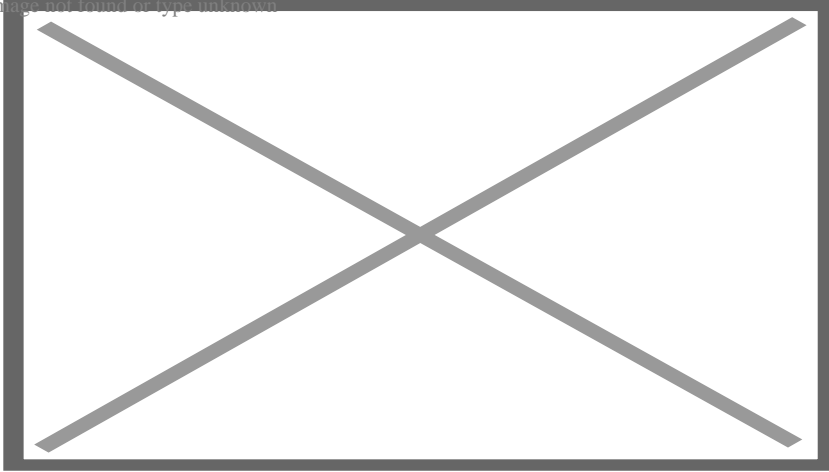
"The 'Tested by Thousands' message to emphasize the rigorous development process tested strongly – @alexgyani @B_I_Tweets #AHPAEvent



"How can we use behavioural insights (BI) to improve public health policy?

@alexgyani @B_I_Tweets #AHPAEvent

Image not found or type not supported



“Big thanks @alexgyani for your excellent presentation and partnering with @AHPA_AU to support & develop the health promotion workforce in Australia. We look forward to collaborating with you again soon! #AHPAEvent”

Gyani responded:

by Rhoda Wilson

Category

1. Freedom-Free speech-Resistance & H-rights
2. Health-Wellness-Healing-Nutrition & Fitness
3. Main
4. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events
5. Science-Tech-AI-Medical & Gen. Research

Date Created

03/23/2022