

The Big Picture

Issue 41
23rd May 2009

"News to use & amuse"



Editor: Mike Bolan

www.abetteraustralia.com

ALP's punitive policies

Given the lack of any cap placed on the total costs of government, Australians take home budgets are constantly under attack in areas in which they are forced to pay – the non discretionary portion of their budget.

If governments continue to raid Australians' remaining discretionary funds, the situation is ripe for both a massive backlash against government profligacy and for any new political direction that protects Australians from their own governments while giving guarantees of real service.

As it stands ALP governments are continuing to ignore the plight of communities and taxpayers, hitting them with charges and exposing them to problems without any reference to their ability to pay or to the difficulties that they will face.

In Tasmania we learn that a new scheme to have water managed by 3 new authorities instead of local councils will suddenly impose a massive new cost load on renters

RENTERS could be slugged up to \$2000 more a year as the controversial water and sewerage reforms start to flow.

Renters will be billed for the services from 2010-11 - a move that will collect more than \$23 million based on 10 per cent of the state's homes being rented. [Mercury](#)

It's becoming clearer that the ALP controlled governments of Australia do not consider, or possibly even care about, how the population is going to be able to pay for such increases.

With many renters already skipping meals or not buying essential items such as medication simply to pay rent, Anglicare housing officer Kathleen Flanagan said the hardship would increase.

She said the new charges for water and sewerage would also affect the state's 11,500 Housing Tasmania residents as well as university students.

She said the \$130 concession on offer to offset the new charges would do little to help. About 80,000 Tasmanians are expected to be eligible for the concession rebate.

The 2006 Census found 38.2 per cent of Tasmanian renters, or 11,113 households, were in housing stress - that is, paying more than 30 per cent of household income on rent.

This is a case of an ALP government shifting costs of essentials onto the population without any reference to affordability, or social dislocation. It's also clear that community consultation is no longer considered a part of 'representation' by our paid political representatives.

In Queensland, Brisbane councils propose to increase rates by up to 8%

UNPRECEDENTED cuts to community programs are likely as Queensland councils finalise budgets that will hit most ratepayers in the hip-pocket.

Rates and water-charges increases and reduced park maintenance schedules are also under review as council finance experts try to fill budgetary black holes.

The [Local Government Association](#) tips state-wide rate rises of 6-8 per cent. [CourierMail](#)

Here we are, in the throes of a recession with an unknown number of businesses and others set to lose huge amounts of income and ALP governments are slugging the people, or allowing Councils to slug people, for more money...money they do not have, neither is the government doing anything whatsoever to help them get that money.

The effect is to drive Australians broke after first driving them into more household debt as they struggle to meet government demands under threat of severe penalties, like having their property seized and being dragged through the courts.

Surely Australians should have the right to a cap on the proportion of their income that can be taken by governments. If no more than (say) 40% of income were to be available to governments via their coercive powers, there would exist an incentive for governments to control their expenditures.

Australians also have no right to participate in key planning and other processes that affect their lives.

In Victoria, the effects are eloquently described in a letter to the Age by some residents.

HAVING spent...many hours preparing a submission in support of our council...

We argued that kitchens with no natural light and, in some cases, no space for a fridge, were not acceptable; that bedrooms with no direct natural light were not acceptable; that apartments requiring large inputs of energy to keep them liveable in summer and winter were not acceptable in this age of climate change; and that a basement car park on flood-prone land was inappropriate. We argued that the loss of privacy to neighbours, the lack of open space and myriad design faults had undesired social consequences.

And yet all this developer has to do is declare the least desirable unit as "social housing" and the plans will be rubber-stamped by the Planning Minister.

And who has to live with the fallout? Not the developer who walks away with his rich profits, not the Government ministers and bureaucrats who allowed this "development", but the local residents who have to share their overstretched or non-existent community support services... signed **Residents** [TheAge](#)

The entire system in Australia leaves the citizens at the mercy of greedy, incompetent and corrupt governments. The dangers of this are now being highlighted as government receipts drop and recipients of taxpayer largesse (government mates) become frantic to protect their sources of easy money.

This Government's communications problem can be summarised in one question: does anybody believe that a Prime Minister and Treasurer too frightened to announce the deficit and debt numbers on television have the fortitude to wage a six-year-long campaign that keeps growth in government spending to below 2 per cent in real terms to achieve a budget surplus by 2015-16? [Australian](#)

In this issue

ALP's punitive policies	1
In case you missed it.....	2
Never volunteer?.....	2
By the way.....	2
Sorting out the locals.....	3
A relevant experience.....	3
Private Clarity, Public Confusion	4

In case you missed it

Financial mess

Most bets off in US casino economy [Australian](#)

Borrow and ye shall prosper [TheAge](#)

Governance & spin

Spun out federally [Australian](#)

Old councils raise rates to cover lost revenues [CourierMail](#)

Melbourne constructed behind closed doors [TheAge](#)

Bruby's planning laws by-pass [TheAge](#)

Tax office efforts found wanting [SMH](#)

NSW govt betrays volo firefighters [Telegraph](#)

Bikie laws another giant step backward for freedom [SMH](#)

Yes Prime Minister, here are the forecasts [Australian](#)

Forestry/Food/Agriculture

Great Southern MIS mess [WeeklyTimes](#) [Stock&Land](#) [Australian](#)

Climate/water/energy

China will have to help save the planet [TheAge](#)

Tas renters to pay up to \$2,000 a year for water [Mercury](#)

Obama unveils tough car emissions policy [Australian](#)

E-coli in Brisbane water supply [CourierMail](#)

Treasury models ignore ETS impacts [Australian](#)

Acidic water appears in Murray Darling [Australian](#)

Health/education revolution/communication/defence

Hospital juggled wait lists [TheAge](#)

Thousands in Vic wait in parked ambulances [TheAge](#)

Teachers and schools to go on performance pay [TheAge](#)

Economy/social/shelter/transport

Homelands plan confirmed [TheAge](#)

World

How MI5 blackmails Moslims [IndependentUK](#)

New US mortgage crisis to hit banks and owners [MoneyNews](#)

A new global currency: Roubini [NewYorkTimes](#)

Never volunteer?

ALP members must swear loyalty to the ALP that oath supercedes all others including loyalty to the taxpayers who pay them. What are the risks and how do they play out?

In NSW, in a case rushed through the courts (!) people who lost homes in the 2003 fires have sued the government.

In a David and Goliath fight, Brindabella farmer Wayne West is suing the Government over the failure of the RFS to attack the McIntyre's Hut blaze in NSW early enough.

It burned for 10 days before melding with three other fires in the ACT, creating a firestorm on January 18 in which four people died and 500 homes were lost, among them Mr West's home on Wyora Station. [Telegraph](#)

As if to demonstrate their loyalty to Australians, the NSW government's defence was made clear to the court...

Government lawyer, John Maconachie, QC, told ACT Chief Justice Terence Higgins responsibility was not that of government but of firefighters, as they were volunteers not employees.

There you have it. Because they're volunteers and not paid operatives, they are liable at law, not the government that creates and maintains the volunteer system.

In this case, the NSW government expects firefighters to risk their lives in return for nothing while at the same time accepting liability for any problem created.

"This is bloody amazing," Volunteer Firefighters Association president Peter Cannon said yesterday. "I can tell you now that if they are going to go down that track, they are going to be fighting every volunteer firefighter in the state."

Mr Cannon, group captain of Parkes Shire RFS and a firefighter of 40 years, said volunteers would be worried.

"Who wants litigation when you are serving the community, protecting them against fires?" he said.

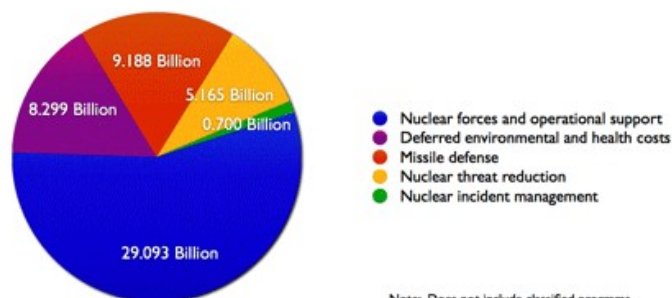
A Better Australia believes that this is more than 'bloody amazing', it's a grotesque, blatant and inexcusable betrayal of the people of Australia and total disloyalty by government.

The only two lessons that we can take from this...don't volunteer and don't trust Labor.

By the way

U.S. Nuclear Weapons-Related Appropriations for FY 2008 by Category

Total - \$52.4 Billion



Note: Does not include classified programs, air defense, antisubmarine warfare, or nuclear weapons-related intelligence programs.

Sorting out the locals

Isn't it great to see white authorities sorting out the locals?

First we had innovations like the 'stolen generation'. More recently we've had the intervention, a combined army and bureaucratic initiative to save the locals that coincidentally is driving up child anaemia rates exponentially and creating huge problems for diabetics who couldn't buy their food locally as they have to travel hundreds of kilometres to use their food stamps.

In the six months to December 2006, 20 per cent of children were anaemic. A year later the figure had increased to 36 per cent, and by June last year it had reached 55 per cent, where it stayed in the last six months of 2008.

Now, more than half the area's children face big threats to their physical and mental development. In two years, 18 months of which was under the intervention, the anaemia rate nearly trebled. [SMH](#)

It seems that the locals have had it wrong, they shouldn't be living out in the bush, they are more properly housed in towns, so the NT government has decided to give the locals a boost...

The Northern Territory will spend \$160 million to develop 20 regional towns in a controversial strategy aimed at lifting the participation of indigenous people in the economy. [Age](#)

All done for that noblest of motives – participation in the economy.

"Towns in the bush will have proper town plans, private investment, targeted government infrastructure and commercial centres," NT Chief Minister Paul Henderson said.

Not just any old town plan, of course, but 'proper' plans...

"They will be towns like anywhere else in Australia, and, like elsewhere, they will service the surrounding areas of smaller communities, properties, outstations and homelands," he said.

All done with participation from community representatives...

The government's approach contradicts a report it commissioned from indigenous leader Patrick Dodson, which recommended homelands of more than 100 people be serviced and financed to the same level as similar territory communities.

As reported today the plan faces a 'massive backlash'....

THE precariously balanced Northern Territory Government is facing a massive backlash from indigenous groups over a decision to curb future funding for homelands communities where Aboriginal people enjoy traditional life largely free from alcohol and drugs...

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma described the Government's homelands policy as an assault on the world's "oldest continuous surviving culture". On outstations, Aboriginal people could maintain their language, customs and cultural practices, he said. [TheAge](#)

Once more we demonstrate the primacy of the Western way of doing things and the importance of living in urban centres.

To put to rest the fears of any doubters [TheAge](#) reports...

The Arnhem Land study finds that Aboriginal people participating in customary and contemporary land and sea

management practices, particularly those living in traditional homelands, are much healthier than those in townships. The report's authors note that "pressure to centralise remote indigenous populations and services into townships has increased, despite evidence suggesting this would lead to worse health outcomes". Townships promote inactivity, malnutrition, social dysfunction and other social disadvantages.

The researchers from Charles Darwin University reveal that health outcomes associated with living on and managing traditional country include major reductions in risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other chronic diseases. These diseases not only severely disrupt indigenous society, they also require large public expenditure for treatment. [TheAge](#)

Is this evidence based policy in action - ALP style?

The key criticism from those of us asking questions was why all the evidence of what is known to work to make communities safer and to improve education and health was ignored in favour of expensive, untried, top-down, heavy-handed policy approaches. [SMH](#)

An [Age editorial](#) brings the federal government into the picture...

The homelands have given their residents pride in themselves and their culture, staving off the social disintegration that in the towns has too often generated a destructive cycle of alcoholism, violence and sexual abuse. If the Henderson and Rudd governments wish to shift support away from the homelands, they must demonstrate that the new hub communities will also be able to nourish pride and self-respect. So far, nothing they have said gives assurance that this will happen.

A relevant experience

A new temptation in Tas for gentle readers...

Near New Norfolk, is the perfect spot for a break away from it all, while learning something entirely relevant to our times...



Here's a teaser from [their web site](#)

Set on five acres, The Agrarian Kitchen incorporates an extensive vegetable garden, orchard, berry patch and herb garden, grown using organic principles. Also in residence are two Jersey cows, Wessex saddleback pigs, Barnevelder chickens and a flock of geese.

The Agrarian Kitchen grows and uses heirloom varieties of fruit, vegetables and rare breed animals in its cooking classes and also sources ingredients from local farmers, fishermen, gardeners and artisanal producers.

Cooking classes are led by Rodney Dunn, former food editor of Australian Gourmet Traveller magazine and one-time apprentice to Australian Chef Tetsuya Wakuda, as well as a supporting cast of Tasmanian cooks and producers.

There's even a week end class where they show how to use all parts of a pig in cooking. It's currently fully booked so I guess the secret's out.

Sounds great in, and for, every sense.

Private Clarity, Public Confusion

Brenda Rosser. Tuesday 19th May 2009

Every week I discover new things about the world that I didn't know before. I thought it might be useful to share them in a bullet format that's quick and easy to pass on.

- (i) Henry "Kissinger was the "most frequent visitor" to the George W. Bush White House as an unofficial political advisor on Israel and the Middle East—including the invasion and occupation of Iraq." [1] (The Australian Labor Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, continues to meet regularly with him).
- (ii) Walmart is China's fifth-largest export market, ahead of Germany and Britain. [2] "Wal-Mart is responsible for approximately 10 percent of the United States' trade deficit with China.... Hillary Clinton, whose husband championed "free trade" deals like NAFTA, sat on the Board of Wal-Mart between 1985-1992....[The US] deficit with China has ballooned ...contrary to the promises made by politicians of both parties at the time....According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute [3], America's balance-of-payments deficit with China (of which approximately \$18 billion dollars is created by Wal-Mart) was responsible for the loss of 1.5 million manufacturing jobs [in the US] between 1989 and 2003." [4]
- (iii) The huge trade imbalance between the US and China is a relatively recent phenomenon and began to make itself alarmingly apparent the year China joined the WTO (in 2001) [5]
- (iv) A recent New York Times article, that describes the emergence of the above huge trade imbalance, fails to point out the very significant role of US and other transnational corporations in this global dilemma. [6] With one single company representing 10% of trade between the US and China this is a very significant omission
- (v) China "and other exporters"(large TNCs exporting from China I presume) kept the value of the Chinese currency low by sending much of their profits back to the US buying investments in Fannie, Freddie, and U.S. Treasury debt. These funds helped to keep interest rates low, which stimulated both consumption and speculation....Bloomberg later reported "A failure of U.S. mortgage finance companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac could be a catastrophe for the global financial system, said Yu Yongding, a former adviser to China's central bank. 'If the U.S. government allows Fannie and Freddie to fail and international investors are not compensated adequately, the consequences will be catastrophic,' Yu said in e-mailed answers to questions yesterday. 'If it is not the end of the world, it is the end of the current international financial system'." [7]
- (vi) A board member of the Reserve Bank of Australia - Roger Corbett - is a Member of the Board of Directors of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc as well as Fairfax Media Limited (one of Australia's oligopoly media empires). He is also Deputy Chairman, Non-Executive Director of PrimeAg, a corporation established in December

2007 and that has set its sights on a massive land and water grab in Australia using a lot of investor money from overseas. [8]

(vii)"Between 1986 and 1989, U.S. Treasury Secretary .. Timothy Geithner was employed at Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft, and Lawrence Eagleburger's Kissinger Associates influence-peddling firm." [9]

"It may be discovered that the Human Race possesses an ignorance which is far superior to any intelligent life form in the Universe." So said 'jN Hodges'. (Who is jN Hodges?)

References

[1] Henry Kissinger From Wikipedia on 19th May 2009

Many Australians are alarmed with the far right leanings of the new Labor Government under Kevin Rudd. Both the current Rudd and the former Howard administrations have used billions of dollars of taxpayer funds to transfer vast amounts of land to a selected handful of transnational corporations and to subsidise their corporate agribusiness operations. The latter include native forest destruction of a vast scale.) Now a company called PrimeAg whose Deputy Chairman is Roger Corbett (see below) is set to buy up these failed and heavily-subsidised landholders. One of these is Futuris. It owns a major stake in Forest Enterprises, my tormenting neighbour! Futuris has grabbed 1.4% of Australia's land mass. This could represent around 10% of Australia's agricultural land!

See: Sowing the seeds of a northern farm stampede

Matthew Stevens | October 27, 2007

Article from: The Australian

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,22655071-5001641,00.html>

[2] The Economic Crisis: A Wal-Mart Economy Dimension. Michael Perelman. Econospeak 18th October 2008

[3] U.S.-China Trade, 1989-2003 - Impact on jobs and industries, nationally and state-by-state

A Research Report Prepared for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission

By Dr. Robert E. Scott, Director of International Programs, Economic Policy Institute. January 2005

EPI Working Paper #270

http://epi.3cdn.net/c523ff01bec5bc1e25_7nm6i278j.pdf

Economics\China\China-US\China-US-trade-1989-2003.PDF

[4] Wal-Mart's 'China Price' By Joshua Holland, AlterNet. Posted November 7, 2005.

<http://www.alternet.org/workplace/27829>

[5] The China Puzzle by Bob Dinetz

By DAVID LEONHARDT

Published: May 13, 2009

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/magazine/17china-t.html>

[6] The China Puzzle by Bob Dinetz

By DAVID LEONHARDT

Published: May 13, 2009

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/magazine/17china-t.html>

[7] The Economic Crisis: A Wal-Mart Economy Dimension

Posted October 17, 2008

<http://michaelperelman.wordpress.com/2008/10/17/the-economic-crisis-the-wal-mart-economy-dimension/>

[8] Sowing the seeds of a northern farm stampede

Matthew Stevens | October 27, 2007

Article from: The Australian

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,22655071-5001641,00.html>

[9] <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/blog/2008/11/geithner-and-kissinger-associates-pt-1.html>