

## We The People

### Program 87

#### Budget Comment 2013



The Australian federal budget is a document that demonstrates the Australian government's planned financial performance and the framework it intends to conduct its operations in the following financial year. The budget presented must comply with the Charter of Budget Honesty Act and that includes sound and transparent fiscal management.

Remember the great Shirley Bassey's song "Hey Big Spender" well this budget should have been delivered with Minister Emerson singing this in the back ground. This is just another big ticket budget where more debt is placed on the national credit card and where Australia's federal debt will breach \$300 billion or nearly a third of a trillion dollars. A balanced budget is still more than 4 years away according the Treasurer. This represents about \$20 million dollars a day in interest alone and all accomplished in just 6 years. Mr Swan blames Treasury for over estimating tax revenue but that's not good enough in my view and he is the treasurer and the buck stops with him. Blaming the bureaucrats is wrong on this occasion and cowardly.

It could be said there are winners in the budget and they include Defence, Health, NDIS and Education but let's take a look at what it broadly means. Last year Labor cut defence spending and in this budget they restore some of that like a cheap side show trick. Health has cuts on the ground at people level with some quiet time bombs in terms of funding for the private health rebate below real costs and pegged to the CPI at best which will catch up with us over the years. A new dental scheme is forecast but short on detail while education get's Gonskied and this is where I have a big problem. Our young adults leaving school are insufficiently numerate and literate. This is a basic measure of one's ability to function in society and Australia fails badly in this regard. In part this is because the educators are building monuments to themselves and have created a political curriculum frame work so utterly inefficient that a \$5 billion dollar upgrade is now promised by Treasurer Swan. The problem is not just money, it's a range of issues including poor teaching standards and too little output from teachers along with pedagogy empires in every State. It's a mess and throwing more money at education is not the answer until you fix the fundamental issues. Our kids can't read, write or speak properly and money won't fix that. The failure must squarely lie at the feet of the unionised politically driven dramatically over complex teaching culture in Australia and a University sector built on snobbery.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a very good initiative gaining bipartisan support. However because Labor have been on such a massive spending spree no amount of promises will convince me they can fund it properly or run it well for that matter. They have spent all our national savings and are now beginning to realise they have to rein in spending and fast. If the government changes after the election then the new lot inherit a poisoned economic chalice regardless of who wins and that's unforgivable. The revenue shortfall is because of the failed mining tax and the low carbon pricing and the like but even so tax revenue is still up 7% on last year. Regarding an operating surplus, it was Julia Gillard who said just a few months ago that failure was not an option. She knew then it couldn't be done and even with a \$43 billion dollar raid on the family budget they still can't do it.

So the budget is testimony to a failed government regardless of your political persuasion. At best Swan has tinkered at the edges and will leave this country in unnecessary debt for decades to come to the loss of our youth, the disabled, the armed forces and we the people. This time-bomb government has asked us to forget about their track record and want us to look to a rosy future and their promises of more nation building and other embarrassing clichés and inept socialist proposals. I don't believe a word they say and if I judge them on past performance I cannot believe in their future plans because it's laced with fairy dust. Put simply, Swan has lost the Goose that laid the golden egg and is out for a Duck.

**Until next time this is Kent Bayley**