

We The People
Program 36
Over Governed



It's often said that Australia is over governed and with three layers of complex government and with around 23 million people it's easy to understand why that belief exists. Australia's three separate layers of government are made up of the Federal, State and Local administration. In fact there are 564 local governments to administer the service needs of local areas. Bear in mind too that in terms of Australia's place in population ranking we are number 56 on the world list, so we are not so small relatively. With government comes bureaucracy to deliver services and money for all kinds of projects, infrastructure, welfare, communications and the armed forces, so on the surface it seems reasonable and in truth it is but not in execution. What is damning is the inherent waste, as dollars are passed around by a system which has no idea of fairness, humanity, equity or prudence. The political overlay ensures that the bureaucracy is maintained and that popular policies keep the goal posts moving. I was raised to believe if you looked after the pennies the pounds would look after themselves but government does not see that as an end result rather it's the process of musical chairs they are concerned with each and every day.

Section 96 of the Constitution enables the Commonwealth to make grants to the states and that engages a series of events that has entrenched a political protocol which is highly biased and politically selective. It's not hard to see why local government under state control is suppressed and last on the list of worthiness. Yet local government is where services are delivered be it with massive State interference and frustration to the detriment of us all. According to Paul Barratt, the federal government has set up a massive parallel bureaucracy to micro manage every aspect of State and local government administration, thereby minimising the opportunities States have for innovation and the opportunities their electors have to make local choices about priorities or ways of doing things. This huge overwhelming bureaucracy has developed a life of its own in our country which seems to be the destiny of democracy unfortunately and with that the resulting system creates social engineering as a bureaucratic necessity. Remember bureaucracy will always grow to a point where it's self sustaining as freedom and self determination falls away. We are indeed over governed.

As a matter of interest 33% of Australia's annual government revenue is paid to social security and welfare while the oxymoron of government services account for 27% of the pie. That's 60% of all the money the feds have on our behalf which totals around a trillion dollars. A good deal of that pays the wages of layers of public servants who in many instances produce nothing. In the case of the Gold Coast city council 28% or \$256 million of the budget goes to paying the bureaucracy locally. The average cost per employee is about \$90,000 in total. So let's bring all this together in a monetary and governance sense. It's easy to see how massive amounts of money are stripped away each time bureaucratic hands touch it and the accumulation of unnecessary expenditure is colossal. Again on the Gold Coast we have current projects running which are manifestly wasteful and now a new mayor who believes his job is to get the Gold Coast working again. It is not. You can bet your life that one single statement, will create a new arm of bureaucracy and soon.

By any measure this country is a massively over governed nanny state where the multiplicity of bureaucratic layers eat away at society as termites eat timber. Over governance and inefficiency is sadly a by product of democracy when we are not vigilant about our country so the responsibility lies squarely with we the people.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley