

## We The People

Program 3 (Revision 3/3.5 minutes)



### The Mining Boom

Australia once thought of as a dry hot isolated country with little to offer has emerged as a country of great resources. It seems we have minerals in abundance and provide a safe and secure nation to export from to the rest of the world. Things look pretty rosy according to the government. However the question is does all this activity and wealth generation flow through to, we the people, to make our lives better.

The politicians will tell you it does as the world clamors for our natural resources but there is a sting in the tail of this huge mining industry. Much is said about a two speed economy and now a three speed economy and finally a patchwork economy. All those phrases should alert us to the fact that the plundering of our natural resources does not necessarily improve our lives and almost guarantees a poor future. The return is not spread evenly amongst us and in fact Queensland like NSW and the Federal government is broke.

I know when I go to the supermarket it costs more and more to buy the groceries and let's not forget council rates and the appalling rising charges for electricity and water. As far as I am concerned the mining boom has not done a thing for most of us in suburbia apart from creating more bureaucracy in all its glory. The more the country earns federally and by state the more they spend and on the wrong things.

The mining boom in Australia will be relatively short term and then when it's over the country will have an enormous problem in that all our resources will be exhausted. This will affect us in about two generations and the shame will lie squarely at our feet. Let me give you some examples of the estimated maximum lifespan from of the precious material we excavate. Bauxite and coal about 95 years, crude Oil 10 years, Iron ore 70 years, natural gas 60 years and zinc just 40 years. You see the party won't last long so what's the plan for Australians in the future? Well, none, that I can see.

Coal seam gas is a ticking ecological time bomb and its right here on our back door step. This form of mining is particularly dangerous and once toxic chemicals leach into the water table it's anyone's guess what will happen. Don't forget Chernobyl, OK Tedi, Exxon Valdez, Nigerias lead poisoning and the Gulf of Mexico and the Deep Water Horizon catastrophe. The list goes on and on in every country in the world as we pollute and cheat and greed reigns supreme.

"More is better" is the mantra but history tells a very different story. Australia should be the clever country and not the world's quarry and we should live within our means. We need to be world leaders in medicine, science, clean energy and so on. The Australia of the near future should tread lightly on the earth and encourage a respectful society and stops worshipping the golden idols of money and power. With a modest population and living within our means we can have a good life without plundering the earth and measuring everything by GDP. Mining is not the best trajectory for us and a total reliance on mining to generate wealth is just burning the furniture to stay warm.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley      End