

SUBMISSION - AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE TAX SYSTEM REVIEW

by: Ron Brons

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as follows:

1) THE APPALLING WAY AUSTRALIA'S LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED HAVE BEEN TREATED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS, WORK-ADDICTED FEDERAL POLITICIANS, EMPLOYERS, THE MEDIA AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL.

The long-term unemployed in this country have been treated APPALLINGLY by both the former Howard Liberal government and the present Rudd Labour government.

For extended periods of time, the long-term unemployed have been forced to exist on an unemployment benefit ("Newstart Allowance") that is WAY BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.

In addition, federal Labour and Liberal politicians have allowed the gap between the single age pension and the single unemployment benefit to continually widen over a period of years.

From 20 September 2008, the single age pension was \$562.10 per fortnight (including a pension supplement of \$19.30). From the same date, the Newstart Allowance unemployment benefit for singles was \$449.30 per fortnight. This means that single unemployed people received a massive \$112.80 per fortnight LESS than single age pensioners.

This is despite the fact that single unemployed people would usually have similar expenses to those of single age pensioners.

Many single age pensioners have complained that they can't live on \$562.10 per fortnight.

IF SINGLE AGE PENSIONERS CAN'T LIVE ON \$562.10 PER FORTNIGHT, HOW THE HELL ARE THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED SUPPOSED TO LIVE ON ONLY \$449.30 PER FORTNIGHT ??

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Treasurer Wayne Swan and Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard have all admitted that they couldn't live on the single age pension.

Single age pensioners get a number of additional allowances which the unemployed DON'T GET, such as the utilities allowance and the telephone allowance.

Single age pensioners have also had a number of other improvements to their pensions such as large cash bonuses, increased income and asset thresholds, pensioner cards, etc.

In contrast, single, long-term unemployed people haven't had ANY useful improvements to their appallingly low unemployment "benefit", other than the normal, miniscule, half-yearly CPI increases which usually amount to about \$4-\$6 per fortnight.

I call that DISCRIMINATION ! It's also VERY "unAustralian" !

Whatever happened to the so-called "fair go" ?

As part of the Rudd federal government's response to the current global financial crisis, age pensioners are getting LARGE bonuses. For example, single age pensioners are getting lump sum bonuses of \$1400 after the 8th of December of 2008. And age pensioner couples are getting an enormous \$2100. IN CONTRAST, THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED AREN'T GETTING A SINGLE CENT !

I call that DISCRIMINATION !

The WORST thing about long-term unemployment is the RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY exhibited by many prime ministers and federal politicians. They call themselves "Christians", yet they have no understanding, empathy or compassion for the situation of the long-term unemployed. This is shown by the fact that they CONTINUALLY refuse to increase the unemployment benefit to AT LEAST the poverty line (despite HUGE budget surpluses).

Well-known, politically-correct, "bleeding heart" journalists and editors at major left-wing and other newspapers in Melbourne such as "The Age" have continually refused to write about the plight of the long-term unemployed despite letters from me requesting that they do so.

"The Age" has been OBSESSED with articles about the luxury needs of well-off, middle-class, tertiary-educated radical feminist women and the situations of ILLEGAL immigrants who are so irresponsible that they take babies and very small children on very unseaworthy and leaky boats (why don't they stay in Indonesia ??).

And ABC Radio and Television has also pretty much ignored the plight of Australia's long-term unemployed, which shows an enormous lack of compassion.

Like "The Age", the ABC has been OBSESSED with the luxury needs of well-off, middle-class, tertiary-educated radical feminist women such as getting a tertiary education or a high flying career. In addition, they've also been OBSESSED with other politically-correct issues such as illegal immigrants and human rights (EXCEPT THOSE OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED !).

Many well-off, middle-class, tertiary-educated people have a variety of SELF-SERVING beliefs (eg. "the unemployed are just lazy people who don't want to work") for which there is a lot of EVIDENCE that they're WRONG.

Unfortunately, because of the Nazi-era-style censorship of the Melbourne media, one is usually not allowed to present such evidence.

Organisations such as the feminist-dominated VicHealth continually come out with "motherhood" reports telling us what positive conditions people need to have to live a healthy and long life, yet by forcing the long-term unemployed to live on an amount that's WAY below the poverty line, Labour and Liberal federal governments have ENSURED that the

long-term unemployed live lives full of extreme stress, stress which is likely to SHORTEN their lives.

Forcing the long-term unemployed to live on a pittance also ensures that they're very unlikely to be able to pull themselves out of that long-term unemployment, something I believe is done DELIBERATELY to help business drive down wages.

VicHealth is OBSESSED with reports about feminist issues and human rights, yet never produces any about the APPALLING conditions that the long-term unemployed are forced to endure.

In addition, Government and private-sector services designed to help the long-term unemployed are ATROCIOUS. This is because they're usually designed "top down" by extremely-well-off, upper-middle-class, tertiary-educated bureaucrats who NEVER consult the long-term unemployed.

It's a case of solutions imposed on poor, disadvantaged people by bureaucrats from on high.

One of the least attractive features of Australian society is the enormous amount of HATRED OF THE UNEMPLOYED that exists among large sections of the community, but particularly among well-off, work-addicted, middle-class politicians, business men and women, and tertiary-educated professionals such as doctors, lawyers and academics.

Calling people "lazy" is a favorite "sport" of such people, even though there is much evidence that that is LARGELY UNJUSTIFIED.

The situation is quite different in other advanced western countries !

For example, Tim Colebatch, writing in "The Age" dated Tuesday 14 October 2008, described the much more intelligent and favourable approach to the unemployed used in Denmark.

And a number of years ago, as reported on ABC NewsRadio, when the French government tried to take the HOLIDAY PAY (!!) away from the unemployed and the unemployed occupied government unemployment offices, the general community was very much behind them.

It's all very well for politicians to talk about "...with a view to improving incentives to work", but as long as EMPLOYERS remain as discriminating as many of them are, such incentives are USELESS. Age discrimination is rampant in this country !

After Aborigines and the homeless, long-term unemployed are the most discriminated people in Australia.

I BELIEVE YOUR INQUIRY SHOULD RECOMMEND AN IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN THE SINGLE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT (NEWSTART ALLOWANCE) TO BRING IT UP TO THE SAME LEVEL AS THE SINGLE AGE PENSION.

Many older, long-term unemployed have accumulated no or little superannuation. This fact was pretty much ignored by the well-off, middle-class federal politicians who conducted a superannuation inquiry a few years ago. They were more interested in providing superannuation

for WOMEN. I call that DISCRIMINATION ! These days, everything is WOMEN-WOMEN-WOMEN. Single MEN continually miss out.

I BELIEVE YOUR INQUIRY SHOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD START TO PAY SUPERANNUATION TO THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED.

2) I believe something should be done to greatly lessen the EXTREMELY HIGH and INEQUITABLE effective tax rate that the UNEMPLOYED face when re-entering the workforce (ie. tax plus loss of unemployment benefits).

3) I believe the 50% tax concession for capital gains should be DISCONTINUED immediately.

4) I believe *ALL* government benefits to families and others should be fully MEANS-TESTED, especially CHILDCARE SUBSIDIES such as family tax benefit B and the baby bonus.

5) I believe fringe benefits tax concessions (including those on cars) should be DISCONTINUED immediately.

6) I believe any special tax concessions for religious organisations should be DISCONTINUED immediately.

Those organisations should be taxed in exactly the same way as any other organisation.

7) To make this a more fair society, I believe there should be a large, additional tax on the GROSSLY-EXCESSIVE salary packages of high-level executives of Australia's large companies.

8) Strong consideration should be given to the situations of OLDER people who won't be able to accumulate enough superannuation by the time they retire.

9) I strongly believe that the GROSSLY-EXCESSIVE benefits that federal politicians enjoy AFTER they leave federal parliament should be taxed (if this isn't already the case) or taxed much more heavily (if they are already taxed).

10) I believe the GST should be DROPPED from public transport tickets. This would encourage greater use of public transport, lessen road congestion and pollution.

Yours sincerely,

Ron Brons