

## Limp language masks a tough budget

By Neil James

Updated Tue 20 May 2014, 1:14pm AEST

***The budget speech could have been open about the need to break promises, but instead it evaded the issue through soft euphemism and weasel words, writes Neil James.***

It's no surprise the Treasurer is having some awkward moments selling his Budget. A quick look at the language reveals little that is likely to persuade.

The 2014 budget speech contrasts strongly with the aggressive

language the Government used in the lead-up to the last election. None of the attack verbs are there, even though the 'Economic Action Plan' certainly does plenty to cut, stop, end, pay and scrap.

Instead, we have the softening language of euphemism. The keyword is 'contribution', highlighted at the outset in a riff on 'if we all contribute now'. This neatly switches the focus from the government's negative cuts and taxes to the softer sounding 'modest contributions' we will all be making.

Only slightly less mild were the metaphors around lifting. The corporate sector, we were told, will be doing the 'heavy' lifting, although Hockey clarified to ABC's 7.30 that 'heavy lifting comes down to individuals' because the corporate sector is merely a vehicle that represents us as individuals. And as a nation of individuals we are 'lifters not leaners'.

This is hardly in the rank of the most memorable budget language. There is no killer line to distil the Government's message in the way that a Keating could 'bring home the bacon' or a Costello could defend 'tough but fair' measures to fix a 'budget black hole'.



**PHOTO:** There is no killer line to distil the Government's message in the way that a Keating could 'bring home the bacon' or Costello could defend a 'tough but fair' budget. (AAP)

Hockey uses few metaphors throughout the speech, and they're mostly clichés about firing up, being watersheds, targeting assistance, repairing budgets, setting sights, moving shovels and stopping bucks. The speech's climax of 'everyone making a contribution now' is not going to end up in anyone's dictionary of quotations.

To his credit, the Treasurer had a go at lifting the speech with some Obama-style rhetorical sentences.

There were some neat contrasting parallels such as: 'not with an age of austerity, but with an age of opportunity' and '... this Budget is not about self interest. This Budget is about the national interest'. And he delivered them well on the night.

These devices work best when backed by persuasive argument, supported in a clear chain of reasoning and evidence. Yet the arguments Hockey offers are revealingly narrow.

When you break down the logic, the Treasurer's most common type of argument is an appeal to principle. We are a great country, he says, so we must face the facts together in the national interest and exert our fair share of personal effort so that we do not leave our children worse off because that's not fair and that's not our way.

In Budget 2014, we apparently don't have an increase in income tax: it's a 'Temporary Budget Repair Levy'. Among the 'modest contributions' we will make are a 'Fuel Excise Indexation Adjustment' and a 'Medicare Co-payment'.

Principle arguments can be effective, but they operate at a level of assertion, appealing to underlying community values rather than the cold logic of reason.

Principle arguments are also easy to counter. We could equally argue, for example, that it is neither fair nor the Australian way to ask our most vulnerable individuals to 'contribute' so much of the 'heavy lifting'.

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## Rhetorical rampage



Labor should tone down the hyperbole and focus on the argument if it wants to find support from voters, writes Neil James.

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This is why principle arguments are best used in a supporting role to more robust arguments of consequence, comparison and example.

Of course, comparison and example arguments would have been hard to mount given Australia's 'debt and deficit' crisis actually compares favourably to most OECD countries. While there was a clear consequence argument surrounding the 'pain now for prosperity later', this was asserted more than reasoned in the budget speech.

Instead, the most lasting lines of the 2014 Budget are likely to be the weasel words. It's no surprise they emerge to soften the core problem Hockey has with his sales pitch: the taxes.

We had a hint of this well before the election, when funding for the paid parental leave scheme tax was spun as 'an investment in human capital' rather than a 'new tax'. Now in Budget 2014, we apparently don't have an increase in income tax: it's a 'Temporary Budget Repair Levy'. Among the 'modest contributions' we will make are a 'Fuel Excise Indexation Adjustment' and a 'Medicare Co-payment'.

A tax is a tax is a tax. These weasel names play down the broken promises that there would be 'no new taxes' from a no-surprises, grown-up Government that says what it means and means what it says.

The budget speech could have tackled this head on and been open about the need to break these promises rather than evading the

issue through soft euphemism and weasel words. Instead, we are served up sophistry such as the Coalition keeping its 'most significant' or 'solemn' promises and not wanting to 'spend the whole conversation talking about the process of promises'.

It is clear that the Government is in a bind. Having come into office relentlessly pursuing the previous prime minister over a broken promise, it is hard-pressed to own up to its own. So the Budget instead offers a limp language that contrasts clearly with the tough measures it is actually introducing.

It was always going to be a hard sell.

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  - Matt Grudnoff: Budget hacks at our principles
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*Dr Neil James is executive director of the Plain English Foundation and the author of Writing at Work. View his full profile here.*

**Topics:** languages, federal-government, budget

*First posted Fri 16 May 2014, 6:47am AEST*

## Comments (204)

Comments for this story are closed, but you can still have your say.

**the yank:**

16 May 2014 6:58:10am

'contribution', whose contributing the most? The answer is the favourite whipping boy of the conservatives the people that can least afford it.

What cowards conservatives are. Abbott's plan was always to hit the disadvantaged that is in his DNA. If you are out of work its all your fault. If you are on a pension you should have planned better. If you want a clean environment well will plant a few trees.

Abbott out in out lied big time. Yes Gillard told one whopper but everything Abbot said during the election was a lie. And now it is up to the opposition to force him to take these lies to another election.

Alert moderator

**the nose:**

16 May 2014 7:29:23am

Yank, The, did she or did she not lie, is being flogged to death, all I know is Gillard is basically a decent honest person who was vilified and bullied by the msm and the misogynistic populous, unlike Abbott, who put his arse on the line to become PM in the last election and then when he lost, became a pathological liar to become PM and got away with it, with the help of the msm, who supported him anyway they could, they are a disgrace!

What a low life Hockey turned out to be, he wants those boozing smoking pensioners, to give up some of their vices, so they can afford to go to the doctor!

Alert moderator

**the yank:**

I agree that Gillard stands miles taller than Abbott but she did admit she lied about the carbon tax in a recent interview. I understand the circumstances but I've had enough of lying no matter what the reason.

If our leaders can't tell us the truth then something is terribly wrong.

But that was then and this is now. Let's have another election and let's demand the truth. We now know what Abbott is all about so let's see if that is what people really want.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 8:36:04am

**Bill:**

Yank, a 'lie' is something deliberately said to mislead another person. A 'broken promise' is something that is said in good faith, but later changed, for whatever reason. Abbott is truly a liar, as can be plainly evidenced by his false rhetoric leading up to the election contrasted with what he actually intended, now that the cat is out of the bag. Gillard, on the other hand, I believe did not ever intend a "carbon tax", but rather a price on carbon via an ETS. What eventuated was labelled a "tax" - and she may even admit that is the case - but that does not, in my view, make her a "liar". Do you agree?

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 9:21:22am

**whogoesthere:**

It's semantics. She said 'no carbon tax under a govt I lead' and there was. Lie/broken promise doesn't matter so much. She should have told the Greens to shove it.

She was wrong, and was punished, Abbott should be to.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 11:48:10am

**Andrew Thomas:**

Whogoesthere,

Thankyou for making your balanced contribution. Hopefully others will follow your lead.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 12:08:30pm

**Sotopanna:**

"She was wrong, and was punished, Abbott should be to"

Gillard was victimized by a shrewd Abbott who may now become a victim of a PUP.

There is little value in looking in a rear view mirror, the road we travel will have many sink holes from where Abbott may find it challenging to get out of.

The Senate will become the arena where Abbott's political guile will be tested. It is obvious that he has no respect for "have nots", but the cloud of secrecy has been burnt off by this punitive budget. The people whom no longer respect politicians have lost any fears they may have had about changing governments led by liars?

Alert moderator

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**Peter of Melbourne:**

16 May 2014 12:24:26pm

exactly whogoesthere.

your barking up the wrong tree if you think you will get a lot of the sheeple to just put the useless bloody spin aside. my guess most of them have done part-time legal courses since that is the other profession which abhors the use of the plain old english language.

@Yank

nice to see you are sick of the lies from all sides. the main problem this nation faces now is that there is no one to actually replace abbott except those same people who betrayed this nations trust in the last few electoral cycles. labor needs to clean house as they have a major trust problem of their own with the electorate and I would hate to see us end up like the Italians with PM changes ever few months.

Alert moderator

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**GraemeF:**

16 May 2014 1:41:00pm

It wasn't just the Greens. Tony Windsor was demanding a carbon price as well. Check the clip on the web titled "Tony Windsor tells Tony Abbott some home truths".

If Abbott had got power we would have had a carbon tax anyway.

Alert moderator

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**Dandelion :**

16 May 2014 2:35:22pm

Agree it is/was semantics. I think there's a difference though.

When your having a discussion about carbon pricing mechanisms, a tax is

very different to an ETS (even if it has a fixed price. Gillard might not have cared about semantics, but in this case, she should have. She was punished accordingly.

A levy vs a tax, is basically semantics.

Alert moderator

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**Sotapanna:**

16 May 2014 10:45:38am

This is not all about who is worse than who. As they both have not shown themselves to be incapable of "spinning for the winning".

This, now, is about who controls the narrative. The weasel words further diminish a politician.

Shorten's speech last night was in the vernacular of the people. It could be regarded as a seminal moment. Shorten left no doubt as to what he thought about the government. Mirroring and exposing Hockey and Abbott as being un-Australian.

Framing the debate, in the present sets up the future.

It could be a turning of the tide if the applause is indicative of all in the Parliament as evidenced by vision.

What is evident is that the government is not in control of its budget, ask Clive?

Alert moderator

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**Pert:**

16 May 2014 9:27:44am

Every single person or organisation that left out the conditional part of Gillard's infamous carbon tax sentence and refused to acknowledge the context in which it was made is a liar by omission.

In hindsight, thank goodness Gillard did lie to form minority government. She saved us from suffering the last three years under an Abbott government.

Alert moderator

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**whogoesthere:**

16 May 2014 9:37:46am

you say 'thank goodness Gillard did lie'

and now others say 'thank goodness Abbott did lie'

Both are wrong.

Alert moderator

**Sotopanna:**

"She saved us from suffering the last three years under an Abbott government."

That seems to be so.

But we won't be saved from the happenings in the Senate where a few, maybe one person, will determine the nation's future.

Should Clive target those issues that affect the "have nots" it may be that this budget has manifested an opportunity that Clive can utilize to entrench the power he has purchased.

He needs to decide whether POWER is better than PROFIT?

Since Abbott has no vision, only irrational economics, he is vulnerable to the manipulation of emotions Clive is capable of.

Should Clive be seen to not focus on his own interests, he would disarm his opponents, from there he could attract those disaffected by Abbott's ludicrous behavior?

Alert moderator

**Ted:**

Yes. The budget talk was filled with spin and I include lying in the term. They leave Gillard for dead in the lying stakes.

Alert moderator

**GraemeF:**

When Abbott and Gillard went head to head in getting the support of the independents were were poised to get either Gillard with a carbon tax or Abbott with a carbon tax ( search for, "Tony Windsor tells Tony Abbott some home truths"). Neither would have shown an intention to deceive so there was no intentional lie and I bet Abbott wouldn't have been labelled a liar by the right wing media if he had gained government. We would have heard a lot more of "I also think that if you want to put a price on carbon, why not just do it with a simple tax?"

As for weasel words, it is totally acceptable to claim that the legislation that Gillard brought in was a fixed price on pollution leading to an ETS. The 'fixed price' can also be called a Pigovian Tax.

This mob do not have the excuse of a hung parliament. Even after attempting to fiddle the MYEFO figures to artificially create a convenient 'black hole' they can not ignore the fact that they claimed the economy was in a mess before the election (lie) but still made a raft of promises that they have since reneged on. They lied clearly and openly with no excuses.



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**virgil:**

16 May 2014 7:33:44am

Gillard broke a promise when the situation changed; Abbott straight out lied in full knowledge of the situation.

Alert moderator

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**the yank:**

16 May 2014 7:59:09am

No argument there but a lie is still a lie.

Look I don't think Abbott should ever have been PM. I never trusted him an inch but many people did. And what he harped on and on about is not lying well in my opinion he has told some absolute monsters and should be held accountable for those lies.

Alert moderator

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**Theos:**

16 May 2014 8:11:53am

Exactly. What Gillard originally said was politically foolish, and "Honest Tony" beat her over the head with it over and over, repeatedly calling her a liar. Tony Abbott's deliberate and intentional lies prior to the election make an absolute mockery of his alleged religious beliefs (Thou shalt not lie) and would make him a potential gold medalist in the 2014 world hypocrite championships.

Alert moderator

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**Jim McNabb:**

16 May 2014 7:06:21am

I am a pensioner and it?s my only income.

I have a number serious health problems, I have to take 9 prescription in the morning and 4 prescription at night, now I will have to pay a min of \$6.80 for each prescription that is \$88.40 a month. I will now have to pay to see the GP \$7.00 each time, according to the news paper I will have lose \$876.00 a year, that is 1 in 26 cut to my income, My wife is also not a well person and we have to pay for her 12 prescription a day, that will cost \$81.60 a month to get her prescription, that is about \$170.00 plus \$14.00 for GP (one each a month) that makes \$184.00 for us to find, even if we get to the scrip free prescription fresh hold very early in the year we will have to pay for the first lot. If you look at it I will lose a about \$184.00+ in my first month of the year.

I will also get slapped with that charge when we visit out-of-hospital pathology and imaging services, such as getting an X-Ray or an MRI.

The cost is unknown but I will have to find it or say no I don?t have the money so I will

die!

The Government say that we all have to pay then why do I have to pay about one fortnight's pension income (and this is my only income) that is 1 in 26.

The high-end only pay 2.5% that is only 1 in 40 less than ? of what I have to pay out of my sole income.

The question I ask you what do I give up to cut my costs?

- 1/ Food
- 2/ Rates
- 3/ Power
- 4/ Gas
- 5/ GP visits
- 6/ Drugs
- 7/ Higher fuel tax
- 8/ X-Ray or an MRI Tests.

If I stop the food I die!

If I stop the Rates I lose my home and live on the street that should kill me!

If I stop the Power I cannot run my C-pat that will give me a stroke! And kill me!

If I cut the Gas I will get cold and very sick!

If I cut the GP out I will die!

If I cut my Drugs I will die!

If I cut my fuel I cannot get to the GP or the chemist so I die!

If I say no I cannot afford the pathology, X-Ray or an MRI I will die!

I think that this budget is a hidden Youth in Asia Policy.

Alert moderator

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**rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 7:52:10am

GDay Jim

Please don't worry Jim. There is little chance of the measures mentioned getting passed though the senate.

I truly don't understand how an so called "Adult government " could scare people as much as this government has.

It really is disturbing what they have done and the way they have done it, but so far it's just words and there are people in parliament that have compassion and will protect you.

Expect to see a lot of MP's cross the floor and stop most that has been proposed in this foul, uncaring budget.

Alert moderator

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**john1:**

16 May 2014 12:15:57pm

It's not the Government scaring people it is the opposition.

Don't listen to them it is no-where near as bad as what they are making it out to be.

Alert moderator

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**rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 4:37:35pm

GDay john

Other Australia governments government leaders have had a emergency meeting, this not because of the actions of the federal opposition scaring them.

Do you really understand whom takes the most burden caused by this budget, John ?

We are a first world country with one of the best performing economies in that world not a 3rd world country.

Can you inform the last time State/Territories government leaders call an emergency meeting?

When was the last time ambassadors were withdrawn ?

When was the last time Australia has had to defend itself in the IJC ?

When was the last time UNHCR questions have been ignored by an Australian government ?

I believe only ignorance could be the reason people are not scared by the actions of this federal government and are blaming the federal opposition for the reason they are scared ? Sorry John I'll listen to people whom aren't ignorant and what they say make sense, thanks.

Alert moderator

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**john1:**

16 May 2014 5:51:13pm

"Other Australia governments government leaders have had a emergency meeting"

Of course, they are going to lose money, no one likes losing money, especially State Premiers. They always have a whinge.

"Do you really understand whom takes the most burden caused by this budget, John ?"

Yes I do, I'm not sure you do though.

"We are a first world country with one of the best performing economies in that world not a 3rd world country."

I don't know anyone who has made an argument otherwise, your point is what? other than stating the obvious!

"When was the last time ambassadors were withdrawn ?"

Are you referring to the Indonesian ambassador?

Do you not believe the Indonesian Government displayed the most appalling megaphone diplomacy on the matter?

I know you are very partisan but surely there comes a time when you would have to show your allegiance to your own country.....no? Deary me!

"When was the last time Australia has had to defend itself in the IJC ?"

I assume you mean ICJ. First many countries have had to, 2nd, You seem unfamiliar with concept of the presumption of innocence.....or perhaps you only afford that courtesy to the left?

"When was the last time UNHCR questions have been ignored"

Don't know, don't care. The government is doing an excellent job as far as I am concerned in relation to border security and I would not care if they gave certain international organisations the bird!

"I believe only ignorance could be the reason people are not scared"

Well you would have to believe that, if you didn't you would need to re-evaluate your own thinking and beliefs. This is not something people often do and it is not a pleasant task, particularly when you start uncovering evidence that goes against long held beliefs. It is much easier for you to continue to implement the logical fallacy known as "confirmation bias".....it's not correct, but it just might make you feel better!

"Sorry John I'll listen to people whom aren't ignorant"

You mean you will continue to listen to people who tell you what you want to hear, or those who agree with you.....yes I have already deduced that.

Enjoy your evening, they do say that ignorance is bliss!

It

Alert moderator

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**rusty cairns:**

Gee john

You have ignored answering the question of when was the last emergency meeting.

16 May 2014 6:31:25pm

Those on incomes over \$12000/year loss very little in % to those struggling to survive by this budget.

3rd world countries haven't the monies to help the poor, not first world countries.

I'm talking about any countries ambassadors, yet again you have ignored answered my question.

I show allegiance to my country and expect it to respect other countries sovereignty to address other friendly countries concerns not ignore them.

I didn't ask how many countries are defending themselves at the ICJ and didn't ask if they by doing so they are guilty or not.

Yet again you have ignored to answer the question.

UNHCR question you have answered with "don't know, don't care".

That answer poses one more question for you john, do you know the definition of ignorance ?

Every night and day I will listen to people whom aren't ignorant and attempt to be inform by asking questions, which I expect to get answer from people whom are not ignorant.

Alert moderator

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### **rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 6:48:26pm

GDay Again john

just in case my other reply doesn't make it through moderation.

Are you aware that you ignored answering most of my question?

E.g. When was the last time State/Territories leaders called and emergency meeting?

Please reread you answer john, does it mention a time or date?

Alert moderator

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### **whatif:**

16 May 2014 7:57:41am

Know exactly where you are coming from, much in the same boat myself, while hockey was smoking his cigar and dancing to the best year of his life the rest of us will be looking at ordering our coffins.

Alert moderator

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### **Huboo:**

16 May 2014 7:57:50am

Sadly, not just aged pensioners but it seems they also want to send our Youth to Asia as well.

When will the government be releasing the Caliber Test to determine who stays and who goes?

Alert moderator

**mick:**

I'm so sorry you made poor life choices

but that's life isn't it, you're sadly not entitled to any more than you have

look, life's not about entitlement, it's about making do with the decisions you made and what you got out of it

it's not my fault, and I don't feel I need to prop up everyone in the community, only those in need the most and not to the point of making their lifestyle equal to mine either

I agree we should sustain people, but at the minimum level, and we do that already

health problems, years ago, you would not have had a choice, in almost any other country, you would have no choice

it is what it is .. and it is not what you want, that's life

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 8:40:58am

**whatif:**

Mick,

what poor life choices, there was no super in my day, there were no family benefits in my day, I worked hard, raised a family, paid my bills and yes paid my tax's from the day I started work at the tender age of 14 years old. I didnt have the opportunity to go to uni as my mum couldn't afford it. Tell me what poor life choices did I make??????? I will be 70 years old come Monday. It was me and my comrades that gave you the Australia you have today, We worked hard so the ones who followed would have a better life, why should we have to pay now so that you can sit back and justify your claims we made poor choice's , We didn't we did what we had to do.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 10:26:49am

**mick:**

rubbish there was super in your day .. I know because I'm in the same age group

are you saying you stopped working before the Hawke/Keating years, compulsory super?

One poor life choice I suspect you made was not to save, or invest anything for your future, you, like many others, relied on going on the pension so didn't worry about the future and just blew your money every

time you got it and now it's everyone else's problem boo hoo

your choice

I invested, went without, didn't get a uni education either, but worked hard and saved

so why should I be concerned about you? why should my choices be taxed so you can be propped up?

Alert moderator

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**whatif:**

16 May 2014 12:30:06pm

rubbish there was super in your day .. I know because I'm in the same age group

where, because I didn't get it, so please tell me where it was. There are quite a few others who want to know also as they didn't get any either, so PLEASEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE tell me where it is.

Alert moderator

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**whatif:**

16 May 2014 12:34:15pm

By the way Mick, I did save and looked to the future, the biggest poor choice I made was to marry a man, who in turn was happy to spend my money, and then to lazy to work.

Alert moderator

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**mick:**

16 May 2014 2:44:19pm

"the biggest poor choice I made was to marry a man, who in turn was happy to spend my money, and then to lazy to work."

No one can help you, it is no one else's fault .. you have to take responsibility for your situation

life can be tough, I've had a tough life, made lots of tough decisions and taken risks, some worked out, some did not

you are what you are

Alert moderator

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**john1:**

16 May 2014 12:21:53pm

I sympathise whatif.

However, we are at a point that we simply cannot afford the amount of subsidies being given.

There is no money left, Shorten and his merry band spent it all over the past 6 years or so, the cupboard is bare.

Realise the government (ultimately us) is in debt and has to BORROW money. This can't continue.

At present we are paying \$10 Billion in interest per year alone. You can thank your Labor mates for that.

The fact of the matter is that if we don't do something now, there will be even less for myself and my children than what you have when we get older.

I understand how some people are feeling, but if the spending is not arrested, my kids will be paying for the entitlement you received long after you are gone.

Sorry, no disrespect intended, just debating the topic.

Alert moderator

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**Peter of Melbourne:**

16 May 2014 12:56:55pm

john

dont just blame labor since this current fiasco started under howard after he tried to bribe the electorate after the WorkChoices writing was on the wall.

both the LNP and Labor have proved to be mainly incompetent over the past 30 or so years.

Alert moderator

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**john1:**

16 May 2014 2:56:13pm

Peter, there is no doubt Howard did some things particularly in the last term that were less than ideal.

However, it is certainly up to the Government of the day to GOVERN and adjust the levers as necessary.

This is where Labor let us down.

As hard as it is, to this point, the current government seems not to be



shirking their responsibility of governing and are attempting to adjust the levers.

This is not popular because people don't like having things taken away from them, but something needs to be done sooner or later.

And the fact is that the later it is left, the harder the thud will be.

Better off doing it now.

Our big problem is that Bill Shorten seems hell-bent on trying to convince people that there simply is no problem.

Whats the saying?

The greatest trick the devil ever performed was to convince everyone that he didn't exist!

Don't let Shorten fool you. Don't let him use partisan politics and greed to convince you there is no budget problem.....there most certainly is and it will get worse if something is not done!

Alert moderator

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**DiogenesNT:**

16 May 2014 6:16:28pm

Let's get rid of the diesel fuel rebate, limit negative gearing to only 5 years and only on new dwellings, tax superannuation over \$1 million, increase income tax rate for everyone by 1%. That will earn more money than the last budget cut by a HUGE factor.

Alert moderator

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**Sir Trent Toogood:**

16 May 2014 3:30:22pm

I understand that the big miners are quite happy with the budget.

Funny that.

Alert moderator

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**Peter of Melbourne:**

16 May 2014 4:27:10pm

I understand the same Trent. Whilst Australian citizens are paying over \$1.50 for diesel, the big multinational miners are paying around \$0.06 after their rebate....

Another handout of billions of dollars per year to what are effectively foreign entities.

**Dazonthecoast:**

16 May 2014 8:55:42am

@Mick,

Yeah, sorry you made some bad choices.

Sorry you took a job with James Hardy that ultimately gave you asbestosis.  
Sorry you served your country in Vietnam where you were poisoned by Agent Orange.

Sorry you bought a house in an area built on contaminated ground and were slowly poisoned.

Sorry you were gullible enough to trust our politicians and business leaders to act in your best interest.

I sincerely hope there is a virus out there waiting to infect those with the ultra-conservative gene. Then I can say "sorry - bad choice"

Final suggestion Mick. Since you obviously imply you make all the right choices and the rest of us are fools, possibly you could write a book about the right choices. That should set you up for the rest of your life.

Alert moderator

**mick:**

16 May 2014 2:49:42pm

No I don't imply I made the "right" choices

I'm just happy to live with my choices .. right or wrong, I take responsibility and don't expect anyone else to feed, clothe or look after me

"I sincerely hope there is a virus out there waiting to infect those with the ultra-conservative gene"

There you go, there's a choice you made to be nasty and bitter at someone who offered their opinion

It's on the internet now forever, you must be very pleased that the ABC chose to publish on their site such a poisonous comment.

Happy days eh?

Alert moderator

**Dazonthecoast:**

16 May 2014 5:13:56pm

Mick,

I'm not displeased.

Not sure I directed the comment at you. Do you class yourself as an ultra conservative?

I must say I am tired of the comments over the years such as:

The gays have aids - it's their fault!

The poor have little hope - it's their fault!

Refugees drown - it's their fault!

People make choices and sometimes the wrong ones but you don't set out on a bright and beautiful morning saying "what a lovely day, might stuff my life up today"

I , like you have had to make hundreds of choices over my lifetime. Some worked out well, some not so well. One thing that clearly marks many of the not so well is experience (or lack of it). I certainly do not want to be condemned because of a poor choice made at 23. Usually a contributing factor is the bastardry of someone pursuing their own agenda.

I am currently back studying at uni at 57 due to someone's poor business strategy. I am not putting my hand out or crying poor, just getting on with it!

I will note the experience bank has been added to, now knowing when / how to spot an incompetent MD.

Didn't affect me too badly but many of my previous colleagues are doing it tough.

I would simply ask that you consider the external factors we all have no control over when saying someone's situation is simply down to them.

Have a happy day.

Alert moderator

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**Algernon:**

16 May 2014 9:15:01am

So jim made wrong life choices mick, what do you know of his life from one post. What heartless gated enclave do you live in.

Jim appears to be no different to any other person who is getting older. Heck even I im my 50's have to take certain medications daily more to do with getting older than anything else and none of those have to do with lifestyle choices.

Tell you what mick grow a heart and a spine whilst your at it.

**Greeny:**

16 May 2014 9:50:59am

Now we see the ultimate conservative mindset... not only is it a matter of personal choice to be poor or sick, but its also a choice to get old!

Alert moderator

**mick:**

16 May 2014 10:55:27am

bah .. I stared voting Liberal in 2000, after I saw the Labor party I voted for all my life filling up with union hacks who had only their interests in mind, they betrayed the ideals of Labor and are only a shadow of themselves

to make it worse, they adopted the spendthrift attitude and the begetting of everyone on government funding to get a bigger voting base and to hell with the future of the country

It's not a personal choice to get sick, but it is personal choice to look after yourself to stay fit, to not eat crappy food, to remain alert and not vegetate into a TV watching couch potato

sure there's people who are genuinely ill and we all get old, but my response was to Jim and my opinion on his life choices that led to his current position

he didn't save for his future, that 's a choice he made .. and there's many like him who frittered it all away because they knew they would get the pension, now they regret it and want more .. well, that's life, there are consequences

What's up?

Don't you like hearing that there are people out there fed up with people who are now struggling with the consequences of their past actions?

If there are no consequences, then there is no responsibility and we will end up with a nation of moochers?

Conservative mind set, of course it is?

Alert moderator

**JWS:**

16 May 2014 1:16:23pm

JWS

To Mick

I to am of ages with you and Jim. I worked hard, married brought up 4 children at a time when there was no PPL, baby bonus or childcare. My wife stayed at home and we lived on the one wage till our youngest child started high school. The only time I was unemployed was when my boss at the time done a runner leaving 3 employees without jobs. 2 weeks later I found work at the local hospital as an orderly, not a highly paid job but it paid the bills with a little left over for a modest family holiday once a year. I worked there till retirement. It wasn't till 1992 that superannuation, other than having the where with all for a private fund was made available to all workers, employers put into a fund the equivalent of 3% of of a workers annual income. In 1994 workers were given the choice to contribute up to 5% of there wages to their fund and after discussing the benefits of this with my wife we made some lifestyle choices to enable us to do this. Now that we are retired, the 16 years of contributing to super has made our lives a little easier by not solely depending on the age pension. I look back an my life and the realistic choices that I made with no regrets.

Mick I ask you this question, if everyone had the choice and were successful to have high powered and high wage jobs where would we find the workers to do the menial jobs?

Alert moderator

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**Forrest Gardener:**

16 May 2014 8:04:44am

Ask about a reverse mortgage on your home.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 8:26:38am

... and then also lose your home, Forrest.... Great advice!

Alert moderator

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**the yank:**

16 May 2014 9:25:00am

He is a conservative he doesn't care if a person loses their home it will be their own fault.

Alert moderator

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**Forrest Gardener:**

16 May 2014 6:42:08pm

Yank, reverse mortgages are an option for people with assets but no cash flow. With cash flow, people often mortgage their homes to buy more homes.

The only thing which won't get this fellow out of his problem is bleating that the government must meet his income regardless of his assets.

Give up the hate. It is doing you no good.

Alert moderator

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**Gregory:**

16 May 2014 9:49:07am

You can set up a reverse mortgage which safeguards the home while you live.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 10:10:03am

Thanks Gregory, that will be reassuring to the children.

Alert moderator

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**mick:**

16 May 2014 11:04:59am

so you want the benefits of capitalism, owning a home and leaving it to people who didn't work for it, but you want the state to pay for a pension?

Seriously, that's just an entitlement mentality

Alert moderator

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**Sir Trent Toogood:**

16 May 2014 3:38:13pm

An entitlement mentality?

Do you mean like wealthy women who are entitled to a huge PPL scheme payment?

Or farmers and miners who are entitled to keep their diesel rebate?

That sort of entitlement mentality?

Alert moderator

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**John51:**

16 May 2014 11:37:16am

Gregory, are you so sure? Do you really trust the financial industry that much. People may think they get a good deal than quickly find themselves out on the street.

One of the other problems with such deals is other family members have been know to force or convince their parents or relatives to sign up to such deals and than suck it all out of them leaving them destitute.

Alert moderator

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**Dugong1995:**

16 May 2014 10:42:14am

While I agree with you Alpo that a reverse mortgage is the loan of last resort, you are not exactly helping either.

There are only a few choices:

A) live within your means (and if the Age Pension is all you have, that is tough: Jim doesn't state if he is single or part of a couple, but if the latter, it only gets worse when one partner dies); or

B) use a finance vehicle like a reverse mortgage to live a better lifestyle today, at the expense of tomorrow; or

C) live off charity/friends/family

I sympathise with Jim: none of the choices are great, and with no disrespect intended, that is why we should all try to save money when we can: it gives us more options in future years.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 11:18:21am

Hi Dugong,

I had an exchange of ideas with somebody else some time ago here regarding the family home, and I agreed that given the current housing bubble, if an old person is living in a now quite expensive house (the value we were thinking about was around 2 million), but that person was cash poor, then I would agree that s/he should be asked to use the value in the house and refrain from requesting a pension. For example, that person could sell the expensive house, downsize and use the difference as a source of a pension. I am not concerned about people (and their children) in such a situation, but that's not the case for everybody.

Alert moderator

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**Dugong1995:**

16 May 2014 11:34:42am

It's a tough one, isn't it?

I think I would rather see people selling their \$2 million houses (which, as people age, tend to require more and more maintenance anyway), move to a cheaper suburb (and yes, that is not a perfect outcome for those with

strong social links to the area, but sometime a change really is as good as a holiday) and realise the asset value in their home that way, rather than through a loan product.

In that way, they can choose the level of financial assets they want available (and consequent loss of pension), as well as having a possibly smaller, certainly lower-cost house to live in.

I think we are seeing a demographic shift among younger people that sees them less attached to the "family home" and more prepared to sell and buy elsewhere, but that of course will take a long time to have an effect.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 12:17:10pm

"younger people that sees them less attached to the "family home" and more prepared to sell and buy elsewhere"... That's probably true in many cases, but let's not forget that you are assuming that there is still a family home left to sell.... which was my point in the post above. Downsizing is fine, losing the whole lot is not.

Alert moderator

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**Forrest Gardener:**

16 May 2014 6:36:48pm

Quote: ... and then also lose your home

Very Labor of you Alpo.

If you want to draw on 20% of your equity you can. Then when you die, the bank is repaid from your estate.

If you want to spend the entire value of your home before you die, then on your death it will all become the property of the bank. Your choice.

Where does this lose your home thing come from?

Try thinking first and responding second!

Alert moderator

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**Ben the lawyer:**

16 May 2014 8:10:17am

'The question I ask you what do I give up to cut my costs?'

The question I ask you is how much of my money do you feel you're entitled to?

Alert moderator



**whatif:**

don't want you money Ben, would like a bit of respect though for the 56 years of hard labor I did so you could have what you have today

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 10:22:13am

**Ben the lawyer:**

'hard labor I did so you could have what you have today'

What is it that you think you have provided for me? Most people take out more from the public purse than they bring in over their lifetime.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 2:41:15pm

**Applaudanum:**

"Most people take out more from the public purse than they bring in over their lifetime."

Particularly those on high incomes. Where would people on high incomes be if there weren't so many who had the requirement, necessity, or ability to pay for the services of those on high-incomes?

The salary of a high-income earner is garnished by the conditions of the surrounding society. These surrounding conditions are overseen by the government. Imagine for a moment, Ben, a society where people are intelligent enough, various bureaucracies that were made intelligible enough for the vast vast majority of people to navigate, a situation where crime was very very low, that the members of society were overwhelmingly responsible and honest in their interpersonal dealings, and that businesses had little to no need to seek independent adjudication over the particulars of their business dealings. The question I put to you now, Ben, is that what are you suddenly going to do for a crust? Seeing as lawyers have now been made superfluous in a society that it mature, intelligent and honest, there'll no place for the likes of you in this imagined scenario. How are your personal talents and skills going to be turned into a high income?

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 5:59:03pm

**john1:**

"Particularly those on high incomes"

No, they are the ones who pay the taxes that support the needy.

"The salary of a high-income earner is garnished by the conditions of the surrounding society"

As are all people in society, so what is your point?

"Imagine for a moment"

Oh dear, an idealist without the wit to distinguish the practicalities of reality.

Alert moderator

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**Applaudanum:**

16 May 2014 6:32:21pm

Oh dear, a supposed realist without the wit to discern the basic premise of a plainly written text.

My imagined scenario, John, was not a hope of what may be if we all pull together a little more. Rather, it was an example that aimed to show that Ben's income is dependent upon the conditions of the surrounding society. If the conditions of the surrounding society were changed, Ben, and anyone else for that matter, may find that he has difficulties in making ends meet. Sorry if the premise flew by you.

You are indeed right about all incomes being garnished by the surrounding society, and that is an excellent contribution to the discussion, thank you. What then remains is to determine which part of any income band is 'garnish' and which part is 'undeniable talent and determination that absolutely must be rewarded at that rate'. I'd say that it's pretty good odds that high income earners have a higher percentage of garnish in their salaries than low income earners. After all, if one's salary depends on customers or clients who need products and services, and that these customers are few and far between because they don't have the education, inclination, need or ability to pay for the services of the high income earner, then that high income earner is going to have to find something else to do.

How do individuals gain the education, inclination, need and ability to pay for a product or service? Where does all that come from if not the surrounding society?

Alert moderator

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**Chris L:**

16 May 2014 4:24:34pm

It's often a refrain from the wealthy that "I made it without any help", but not an honest one.

One's start in life comes from parents and immediate family, it helps if they aren't poverty stricken or abusive. Education is a big factor and good teachers lead to successful people, along with worthwhile extra-curricular

activities to shape the burgeoning adult. Fellow students help with developing an understanding of people and attitudes and viewpoints as do other friends and acquaintances.

Even if going into one's own practice upon completing study there must be beginning capital, possibly via loan from a bank. One needs to advertise, probably through an agency. Above all, one needs customers who pay via a mutually agreed upon currency following laws established by society and enforced by the police.

Along the way one benefits from the clothing people craft, food grown, books written, computers assembled, programs written. It's difficult to get through life without the services of doctors and dentists. There is infrastructure used such as roads and electricity. There are so many more things society provides it couldn't be listed here.

You may have paid for most of these benefits but the point is you can do all this because our society made it possible. If you benefit from society it seems only fair you return a little something to that society. If you benefit more than most it is fair to contribute more than most.

Alert moderator

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**john1:**

16 May 2014 6:00:25pm

"It's often a refrain from the wealthy"

Looks like playing the class card is working for Bill Shorten.

Alert moderator

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**lone ranger:**

16 May 2014 6:15:55pm

Hey Ben when you say most take more out than they put in do you include the ridiculous "entitlements" available to MPs, former MPs and former PMs?

That's where the gravy train is never impeded.

Alert moderator

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**Steve\_C:**

16 May 2014 8:51:00am

"The question I ask you is how much of my money do you feel you're entitled to?"

Your money?!! You printed it? Forger!!!

You never 'own' money.

You merely have temporary custodianship of it.

Any money you receive is given to you as a representation of what another individual deems what you or your effort are worth to them.

It seems in certain cases - especially when it comes to remunerating those who claim to be within the field of the law; that representation of worth is obscenely over-rated!!!

Alert moderator

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**rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 9:00:55am

GDay Steve

My reply is "Here Here"

Alert moderator

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**Where's Tony:**

16 May 2014 9:39:05am

Love your post, Steve.

"Obscenely over-rated" cuts right to the heart of matter.

I pay my council rates to ensure that I have Essential services, water, sewage, garbage collection, safe roads etc., The people who provide these services are all lower paid workers, take them away and it's like trying to make a Rolls Royce run without oil. Thank heaven they all made "The wrong choices"

Take away a few thousand Bens however and the world wouldn't even notice.

The Bens, Peters, Brads etc., and their bloody superiority make me better understand the French and Russian revolutions, so I guess their mindless rants against the peasants serve some purpose.

Alert moderator

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**bide and fecht:**

16 May 2014 10:10:07am

Well said...very well said....The noise factor and value of his ilk far outweigh the benefit to society they think they make.

Alert moderator

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**Dazza:**

16 May 2014 12:24:45pm

Agree wholeheartedly!

That's the trouble with the Conservative mindset?

It's "their" money and they want more and more of it!!

Alert moderator

**the yank:**

We have elections to decide what people are entitled to that is why it is so critical that politicians should be held accountable for what they promise and what they actually deliver.

Abbott lied. There should be another election held now that we know what he really stands for.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 11:23:48am

**Ben the lawyer:**

'There should be another election held now that we know what he really stands for.'

That's fine, provided you admit that Gillard should have gone to an election as soon as she backflipped on the carbon tax. I personally don't think either of them justify it (so I am consistent), but you seem to chop and change depending on who is in government. Strange that, no?

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 4:41:42pm

**Chris L:**

Ben, even Andrew Bolt in his blog quoted Gillard's promise of carbon pricing prior to the 2010 election. You can still find it online (My attempts to post links always vanish). Of course later he pretended no such promise was ever made, I'm sure he simply forgot.

Bolt actually vindicates Gillard!

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 10:57:13am

**madmax:**

How much money? Good question ben the little lawyer. If you want to live in Australia you should pay your fair share. Or we the people who have nothing will take everything you have

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 11:43:08am

**Dugong1995:**

The concept of "fair share" is an interesting one, and while no-one would disagree with the concept, everyone is likely to disagree with what "fair share" actually means.

According to the ATO, the bottom 25% of people by taxable income don't

pay any tax, and the next 35% pay 10% of all net tax.

The top 3% pay 31% of all net tax, and the top 9% pay 49%.

Those statistics seem to me to show that many people are not paying their "fair share": though as I said, many will no doubt disagree. I have no problem with people with higher income paying more tax, but it seems to me that these figures are a bit top-heavy to be considered "fair share".

As ABC probs won't post this with a link, google "ATO tax statistics 100 people"

Alert moderator

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**madmax:**

16 May 2014 1:37:00pm

Well ok if you want the bottom 25% to pay more then they will need to be paid more. But i guess you would like to keep then on as wage slaves. Just managing to feed cloth and house themselves.

Alert moderator

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**Punk:**

16 May 2014 2:10:19pm

Max I never thought of it this way, you have a great point made here.

Alert moderator

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**sdrawkcaB:**

16 May 2014 1:43:50pm

The lowest 60% do not enjoy the job market.

They are held down.

Remember 457 workers. They were brought in because it looked like the median wage worker might have been able to enjoy scarcity market conditions.

Remember threats of wages blow out.  
Remember?

Now, are you suggesting its ok to hold them hold them down and change industrial relations law to do so but then complain they are not footing enough of the tax bill?

Youre not are you?

Alert moderator

**Punk:**

The top 1% own over 50% of the world wealth. The top 5% own 80%.

Alert moderator

**Applaudanum:**

Why does your statistic, Dugong, measure the bottom 25% not paying ANY tax, yet everyone else pays NET tax? Can't the bottom 25% afford any nets?

Of course people on low incomes should receive more from the government, thus affecting the status of their net. Who else do you think should be getting welfare?

Yet those on high incomes, while perhaps not receiving welfare, do benefit from having a stable, ordered, society around them from which they personally can make a profit. Take that stable, ordered, society away and those high income earners suddenly go straight to the scrap heap. If fewer and fewer people can afford or require your services, or those of your employer, what's going to happen to your salary? Are you just going to command such as salary because you're you, and 'you' deserve it?

The benefits for high income earners are their high salaries. That is the metric of their benefit. If you don't wish to have the obligation associated with the high salary, just put yourself on a low salary and live it up on easy street, like those on the bottom 25%. Perhaps we all should drop to a salary equivalent of the individual currently at 25%, and see who loses what.

Alert moderator

**Noel:**

"The question I ask you is how much of my money do you feel you're entitled to?"

Your money? How did you come by your money? Between 2004-5 and 2006-7 Howard and Costello provided \$20,000 in tax cuts to people like you, that amounts to \$140,000 over the past seven years. Is that your sense of entitlement coming out, that you think you are entitled to an extra \$140,000 whilst people can no longer afford to see a doctor?

Where does your money come from? It comes from the distribution of wealth in society. You think people are not entitled to universal health care and education. Well most Australians think differently. You are a liberal. You believe in freedom. So do I. Give me the freedom to vote on this budget of the

Coalition. Send us to an election. Lets have a referendum on budget cuts. let the people decide, the majority of the people, not you and your selfish entitlements.

Alert moderator

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**john1:**

16 May 2014 6:04:00pm

Noel, you don't seem to get the point that the higher incomes are actually paying tax. In some cases LOTS of it.

The vast majority of people whining about the budget actually don't pay any income tax.

Alert moderator

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**Henry the Moose:**

16 May 2014 8:24:57am

Jim: This weekend I have the unpleasant task of visiting my grandmother who lives alone with her cat, and with the pension as her only source of income. She has recently been diagnosed with cancer.

I know that she will have watched Abbott and Hockey's budget blather on television and been absolutely terrified that they're going to cut off her pension and raise fees to see her local GP to unaffordable levels. My grandmother was a nurse during the Blitz, came to Australia after the war, and worked hard all her life. She has no beer or cigarettes to give up, and she lives in a very small one-bedroom flat.

When the government frightens the socks off little old ladies like my gentle grandmother, making it sound like they're a national burden, then I start getting angry. Talk about a bunch of idiots.

Alert moderator

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**OUB :**

16 May 2014 11:36:44am

Very hard to imagine your grandmother losing her pension, unless perhaps she has an enormous penthouse one bedroom flat. I am sure you will do your best to reassure her (some here might not). Hopefully your family is in a position to provide extra support if necessary. Of course the welfare budget is a large part of the national budget and a burden on the treasury. I don't begrudge people their age pension but it can't continue to out-accelerate revenues without some checks.

I wish the old lady well. Cancer can be very difficult to treat in the elderly. They didn't want to risk an operation for my old aunt. A very hard time for her. She was in a nursing home at that stage but had some savings. Managed to save on the pension but she wasn't in a state to hit the shops.



16 May 2014 8:31:03am

**Alpo:**

No worries, Jim. This Budget has the survival chance of a snowflake in hell... The PUP will oppose key measures as well, so either Abbott wrecks his budget plans and betrays his own side showing that he is weak and ineffective, or draws the Battlelines and meets his fabled warrior destiny at the ballot box.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 12:12:10pm

**Yorker:**

"The PUP will oppose key measures ..."

I'm afraid that's a fantasy, PUP will demand (and be given) concessions for big business in order to pass the measures.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 1:17:55pm

**Alpo:**

I agree that that's a possibility, Yorker. But let's not underestimate Palmer. Palmer is not there to represent "big business"... he doesn't need their money. It is the Liberal Party that does. In fact, Palmer Hyper-Populism is more targeted at the middle classes and the so called "Howard battlers".

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 8:48:39am

**Bruce:**

Jim, you have set out the problems of Australia, of each of the State governments, of Councils, and of the large majority of the population: needs 20/6, income 19/6 - woe. In Queensland we are being bombarded with the Government's version of your propositions.

Yet compared with perhaps 95 percent of the people on the planet, you, they and I are privileged.

What is even more challenging is that a high proportion of those less privileged than us are relatively happy. That arises because they live quite differently from us: the happier ones live sociably.

Their sociability is not principally threatened by the lack of resources - they haven't got much to start with and they attuned to periods of having even less. It is threatened by folk like drug gangs, and white slavers of different kinds - people who have 'power' and who apply it to their ruthlessly selfish ends. People who use them and their alternative opportunities for economic advantage.

So too is yours, ours and mine. But our crack barons include people who misuse their positions of privilege egregiously to suck the marrow out of the possibilities of most of the populace.

You, we, and I still have freedoms to trump these people. The main one is to improve our sociabilities.

I hope you can find opportunites for happy sociabilities.

But I would say it is a very strange proposition from this Government that a health research fund should be financed at the huge relative cost to people like you.

Maybe they could cut it back by a third and leave you with your status quo, or find 'your share' of the money elsewhere.

It is unlikely they will embrace sociability any time soon - they think they have the answers now. The budget is just the latest example of the litany of delusions that politicians, of every ilk, have foist on us all according to the way they view how the world must be.

Alert moderator

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**awake:**

16 May 2014 9:02:25am

Hi Jim, our service is gearing up for the fallout of this disgusting budget if it passes the Senate. People will not be able to pay their rent for even public housing - forget going to the doctor for the disabled, aged or those with mental health issues.

The sooner we have a DD the better. Even PM Howard was not amused by the cuts. Abbott must go the rubbish about PM Gillard and the carbon tax and the "lie" is just about done to death.

It becomes minor compared to Abbott and the lies and spin. I cannot believe anyone would cut education - it is the future of this nation. Medical research - but only private companies not the CSIRO or government funded research.

Abbott's ideology is showing and it is not a pretty picture.

Alert moderator

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**barsnax:**

16 May 2014 9:41:49am

Unfortunately Jim you are not on your own. There are old and frail people all over the country who are worried about these cuts to pensions and health. I know my elderly mother is, but she's lucky to have a supportive family.

I can't imagine how frightening it must be if you're on your own.

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**Lance Kennedy:**

16 May 2014 9:48:50am

Jim, sell your house.

You could rent and have a better lifestyle. Surely your health is more important than owning property?

Are you keeping it to pass on to your children, as a legacy?

Alert moderator

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**Dugong1995:**

16 May 2014 10:46:12am

Or alternatively, sell the house and buy in a cheaper area: you keep a home (which means you don't have to pay ever-increasing rent) and you crystallise some equity which can be invested to provide additional income.

Alert moderator

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**peter of mitcham:**

16 May 2014 1:45:47pm

A bit of the old social engineering there, Dugong? Construct a society where the lesser people fail and the rich swoop in, buy their assets for a song (or a cigar and a dance?) and then kick them out to Caroline Springs or somewhere? As Shorten said last night, that's not a picture of the Australia that I want. It might be the tea party wet dream, but real Australians will reject it.

Alert moderator

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**Punk:**

16 May 2014 2:15:03pm

Lance, this is one real result that we who have a home now have to keep in mind. My biggest investment is my home. that is a big way is my and my wife's retirement. It makes helping my daughter get her own investments difficult but even more vital.

Alert moderator

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**Stu:**

16 May 2014 10:35:22am

You will also find that the states will now want to claw back some money so when the GST goes up or it get's added to your Food bills you will be in real trouble.

Power, fuel and gas bills will go up despite the removal of carbon tax. You watch.

**OUB :**

16 May 2014 11:12:24am

Try not to worry about it too much at this stage Jim. We only have the bare bones of the policy. I would be shocked if there was no safety net for people with chronic conditions, and if the GPs had no leeway on when to charge the \$7. It can't hurt to write a politish letter to your local MP, or even Hockey himself, acquainting them of your situation and getting something in writing from them on how it will work. If you live in an electorate with an opposition MP they will be glad of some case studies to support their arguments. But make sure of your facts as best you can first. Good luck.

Alert moderator

**dean:**

16 May 2014 3:03:11pm

Jim

One must marvel at just how remarkably lucky we are in this country.

You have described in intricate detail the fact that you are receiving 12 prescriptions a day which are fully funded by the tax payer, to keep you alive.

You are also being fed and provided with everything else ....by others.

The tax payer is paying a small fortune to provide you with a raft of medications and on going treatments which could amount to literally hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Of the 7 billion people on this earth, you must truly be one of the luckiest ones around.

A huge proportion of your peers don't ask for a single cent yet the massive cost that you place on the rest of the community is clearly taken for granted.

Truly remarkable.

Alert moderator

**jack:**

16 May 2014 7:24:29am

I think the body language of the Government's front bench told so much during last night's Budget reply, fidgeting, legs and feet bouncing, nervous smiles and crossed arms. Mr Shorten was blunt and kept Mr Abbott in focus. Mr Abbott and his bench also couldn't help but notice the overwhelming partisan crowd, as it cheered and applauded Mr Shorten's speech throughout its delivery. Even the Honourable Madame Speaker was cowed into a mutter when rebuking the gathered for their outbursts. And with the States caught offside with the budget particulars, it looks as if the Federal Government has

picked a battle with many on many fronts, with few soft options. They have of course two and a bit years to get us all onside, but they sure bit off a big apple, for no real gain to be seen thus far.

Alert moderator

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**Brian:**

16 May 2014 7:46:13am

Then there was Pyne with his gutter language and did you also note how he 'instructed' the speaker to stop the deserved applause for the budget reply. This government is lurching from one mistake to another ?'adults' hahahaha what children

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 8:49:37am

Finally Shorten has joined Ludlam with a pure, strong, unambiguous and unmistakably Progressive speech. It's time for the Progressive side of Australian politics to join forces to build a broad, common platform for the Future of this Country. Space will be left for individual differences, but there must be a broad common sense of purpose. The challenges of the future are too significant to adopt the usual selfish attitude of the past.

Alert moderator

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**Theos:**

16 May 2014 8:53:14am

"Even the Honourable Madame Speaker was cowed into a mutter when rebuking the gathered for their outbursts."

I have to admit that I enjoyed that.

Alert moderator

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**The Skeleton Inside:**

16 May 2014 9:28:06am

I thought Shorten was magnificent last night. I didn't expect that.

The light on the hill has been turned back on.

Alert moderator

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**James 2:**

16 May 2014 7:28:52am

What the right leaning conservatives fail to acknowledge is the fact a society is much more than economics. It is made up of PEOPLE whose lives rely on thoughtful social consideration by our elected representatives - not for some, but for EVERYONE! If they could conceive a world where the mighty dollar is not GOD perhaps a generosity of spirit may develop.

16 May 2014 8:09:39am

**mick:**

"It is made up of PEOPLE whose lives rely on thoughtful social consideration by our elected representatives - not for some, but for EVERYONE!"

That's a recipe for people who don't feel like contributing to cop out, and they do if they feel they can.

Unfortunately, life is not full of well considered and thoughtful people, it is full of greedy people who only care about themselves, to the point they want everyone else to support their sense of entitlement.

Seems the gravy train has stopped and you need to understand that.

We cannot afford to keep everyone in the lifestyle they prefer, and we are going back to an age where you either work, or starve, the free ride is over.

You want social conscience from the very people you castigate and pour hateful spite on, you expect generosity from the very people you despise

We have choice too you know, and we choose less and less to pander to the intolerance and self entitlement of the lazy braying mob

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 8:37:58am

**sleepykarly:**

Hey, mick,

Your little rant here was addressed to the big miners, big bankers, developers and other capitalists, wasn't it?

I'm sure it was. They are the greediest of people who care only about themselves, they are the ones who live on the gravy train, they are the ones whose lifestyle we cannot afford to sustain, and it is their spokesman, Joking Joe, who demands 'contributions' from the very people he despises, they are the braying mob with the backing of Big Media to make their brays into a saturation advertising campaign whenever their sense of entitlement is threatened.

It is good to see you have now seen the light, mate!

Alert moderator

**Henry the Moose:**

16 May 2014 8:27:23am

This mob are not classic conservatives. They're ideological neo-cons with a package of beliefs imported from the U.S.

Their views are far more extreme than the comparatively benign policies of Menzies, or Frazer, or even Howard.

Alert moderator

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**Theos:**

16 May 2014 8:55:02am

With the obvious exception of Malcolm Turnbull I would add.

Alert moderator

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**monotonehell:**

16 May 2014 11:16:43am

I wouldn't exclude Turnbull any more. He's more than toeing the party line. Look at the hatchet job he's done on the NBN.

Alert moderator

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**Serendipitous:**

16 May 2014 10:26:48am

Amen to that James 2. I couldn't agree more.

Alert moderator

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**Freedom of Speech:**

16 May 2014 7:30:53am

what the LNP really want is for some of us to 'move on' and help 'repair' the budget bottom line. For those of us who require an education the Government wants to liberate the Universities into being more competitive ... hey these weasel words games are really good - you can say really nasty things in a positive way. Perhaps someone should create a lexicon to translate these weasel statements

Alert moderator

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**Kerrie:**

16 May 2014 10:10:03am

There's a few other weasel words/terms that may not appeal to everyone. What about "career flexibility" where people with careers must limit their time in a career to a certain time frame (eg 10 years) to promote "career fluidity" , whereby more people start at the bottom, move up through the ranks before "flexing" out.

Or "life-time work-life balance" so that everyone spends at least 2 years (or part-time equivalent) without employment before reaching retirement. This includes time out for study, ill-health and caring responsibilities.

I know on the face of it that these measures seem harsh and unfair to those people who have good, stable careers. Some will argue that it's not fair that they get pushed

out of their job (and the income and sense of purpose it brings) when they have worked so hard and made so many sacrifices to gain and maintain qualifications and experience. However, I believe that many, many unemployed and underemployed Australians have worked just as hard and sacrificed just as much. Everyone deserves a turn at paying taxes AND living on welfare: "career flexibility" and "life-time work-life balance" makes this a reality.

Alert moderator

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**Henry the Moose:**

16 May 2014 2:22:58pm

Frankly, that's about the dumbest idea I've ever heard. Limit people to 10 years in their career in order to make room for people at the bottom of the pile?

Every decade we'd dump immeasurable experience down the gutter - say goodbye to skilled surgeons or police officers or teachers with 15, 20, 30 years of experience - in order to make room for less experienced people.

We need longer-term employment not short-term stop-start employment. Long-term stable employment produces stable communities and stable families. Your idea is a recipe for continual upheaval, perpetual expenses, and endless stress-inducing change for the sake of "giving everyone a turn at paying tax".

Talk about cutting off your nose in order to achieve an objective that makes absolutely no sense.

Alert moderator

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**Nova4avr:**

16 May 2014 7:37:39am

It looks like the Abbott govt. are not going to be able to get their draconian budget through the senate. I suppose the horse trading will start & all sorts of promises will be made to the independent senators, which on Abbott's record so far will probably be broken after they agree to them.

Listening to Shorten's budget reply last night I was glad to hear the gallery clapping & supporting his attack on Abbott & Hockey. If Abbott took any notice of that he will realise that a double dissolution election will very likely turf his lot out.

So the LNP do not have the option of a double dissolution unless they are on a suicide mission, so they will just have to rewrite the budget in a much fairer way & start to include some tax measures on the big end of town.

There are a lot of tax options available that would not cause problems with confidence, such as an inheritance tax, imputation credits tax, family trust taxes etc..

Alert moderator

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**sleepykarly:**

16 May 2014 8:39:26am



But didn't Abbott promise a DD if he was blocked? And we all know that Abbott takes promises very seriously!

Alert moderator

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**cameco96:**

16 May 2014 8:55:19am

Ah the inheritance tax. Accumulate something over your lifetime and then hand it over to the state to redistribute to those more deserving than your own family. Such original thinking.

Alert moderator

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**Nova4avr:**

16 May 2014 10:11:07am

@cameco96. We used to have an inheritance tax & it was pretty severe. I am old enough to remember it, but it certainly spread the wealth about far more than anything we have today.

One of our biggest problems is the concentration of 99% of the wealth being owned by 1% of the population. An inheritance tax would do a lot to rectify this. Most countries have one, so I think we should too.

Alert moderator

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**emess:**

16 May 2014 11:53:48am

Death duties were abolished because study after study showed that the top 1% of people used various tax avoidance tricks and paid very little.

Most revenue round the world from death duties comes from middle income earners, not the wealthy.

Wealthy people and lawyers love death duties because they don't have to pay them.

Alert moderator

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**Dugong1995:**

16 May 2014 10:49:41am

An inheritance tax only encourages people to hide wealth within family trusts.

It is a highly inefficient tax.

Like it or not, GST is much fairer that way: rich people pay GST on all their purchases, and basically it cannot be legally avoided.

Alert moderator

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**Bridget:**

16 May 2014 7:42:04am

Here's plain language: people who don't hesitate to spend money on junk food, smokes, dope and booze shouldn't complain about paying to go to the doctor. Subsidising double income couples to breed is BS.

Alert moderator

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**Henry the Moose:**

16 May 2014 8:31:11am

Ah, so doctors are visited only by junk food eating, cigarette smoking, weed inhaling, boozers who have never contributed a cent to the national health budget and thus do not really deserve affordable healthcare.

Or perhaps you are suggesting affordable healthcare is only for the slim, trim and athletic crowd?

Alert moderator

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**Ursus Augustus:**

16 May 2014 9:03:07am

Bit of an extrapolation their Mr Moose.

Bridget actually wrote about taking some responsibility for health outcomes you contribute to not about exclusion from healthcare.

I would wager that, leaving aside the elderly who cannot be blamed for being old or starting to have some health issues, the "junk food eating, cigarette smoking, weed inhaling, boozers who have never contributed a cent to the national health budget" make up a more than a statistically representative segment of doctor's patients.

The health outcomes of such persons is well appreciated by the medical profession and is why there is such concern about excessive consumption of junk food and booze. Cigarettes cause cancer it seems and weed can lead to schizophrenia in some people besides being a segue into other illicit drug use and thus some really awful health outcomes.

Mr Moose, lift your head up and have a look around. You don't seem to be able to see the wood for the grass.

Alert moderator

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**Salient Green:**

16 May 2014 8:32:13am

Bridget, junk food, smokes and booze are very addictive products which are produced and promoted by large corporates who have influence on the government. Addictions are usually a sign of entrenched disadvantage which has come about by offshoring most of the jobs suitable for the less able with the resulting long term unemployment and poverty.

Good social policy seems to have been shoved out by the economics of greed and self interest. Subsidising local industries and tariff protection should be seen as part

of good social policy as social problems are probably a larger drag on the economy than industry assistance.

I agree with your second comment.

Alert moderator

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**Paulh:**

16 May 2014 7:46:32am

In comparison the shortens budget reply speech ,the budget speech from hockey was real and genuine, shortens reply was deceitful deluded and dangerous.the man lives in denial, he was part of the gov that caused this economic mess and record debts mostly spent on mismanaged failed policies, his answer is more of the same, we have a triple A rating so let's borrow more.basically he hasn't a clue

Alert moderator

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**CJB22:**

16 May 2014 8:32:01am

Face reality, it was the GFC along with the structural deficit, caused by regular and overly generous tax cuts, regular middle class welfare handouts and upper class legal tax avoidance schemes associated with superannuation and the 50% cut to CGT that caused the current situation. If only we had saved more during the once in a lifetime mineral boom. The much hyped \$20 billion surplus only represented less than 6% of government revenue received during the boom. That rate of saving is even less than the 9% compulsory superannuation rate imposed on the masses.

Alert moderator

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**OUB :**

16 May 2014 1:07:49pm

Labor had six years to address structural deficits CJ. Too hard. Swan talked a tough budget and squibbed it every time. Now Shorten wants to maintain middle class welfare rather than rein it in. Rather than admit there is a problem held over from the Labor years (however much Howard may have contributed to it) he wants the present situation with a slow drift into indebtedness to continue simply for political advantage. What will he do if he wins government? Heaven only knows. Shorten certainly doesn't. He hasn't thought that far ahead.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 8:58:13am

"the gov that caused this economic mess and record debts mostly spent on mismanaged failed policies"....

What "economic mess"?

What "record debt" compared to most OECD countries?

What "mismanaged failed policies"?

.... If you have a brain, I invite you to use it, please.

Alert moderator

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**Forrest Gardener:**

16 May 2014 7:58:54am

Quote: So the Budget instead offers a limp language that contrasts clearly with the tough measures it is actually introducing.

As any expert in plain English will tell you, precision and meaning should be enhanced and not sacrificed by the use of plain English.

It is disappointing then to read an opinion which refers to the capitalised "Budget" when the author appears to mean the budget speech. It is disappointing to read about "offering a limp language" rather than "used limp language".

Above all, it is disappointing yet again to have Labor propaganda here on their ABC dressed up as an objective article by an expert.

Alert moderator

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**Theos:**

16 May 2014 8:59:36am

"...it is disappointing yet again to have Labor propaganda here on their ABC dressed up as an objective article by an expert."

A conspiracy! Please wait as I grab my tin foil hat to block the mind control rays.

Alert moderator

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**mortan:**

16 May 2014 9:19:07am

FG: you of all would understand the ABC is a leftist enclave.

How ever what I find it a little disappointing is how vehemently people are apposed to reducing our debt levels Shorten by his own admission does not see an issue having deficit governments

Not an issue for me but the next generation will not look back fondly at labors approach to borrow and spend politics.

Alert moderator

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**Dazonthecoast:**

16 May 2014 9:39:15am

Mortan,

From your response I would conclude you are a supporter of the current government. Given that fact you probably support the historical leaders of the same party.

One Robert Menzies, in power for a quite a long time ran successive deficits over the course of his tenure.

Are you saying Liberal Deficit GOOD, Labour Deficit BAD?

16 May 2014 11:07:01am

**mortan:**

I am sorry to disappoint I don't support any particular political party I support Australia. And to try and equate the actions of a liberal leader in the middle of last century when the Australian population was under half what it is now is superfluous.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 10:25:29am

**rusty cairns:**

GDay Mortan

We must have watched different budget reply speeches

I heard a budget reply speech which pointed out that the governments budget has truthfully only penalised the wealthy for 4 years yet the disadvantaged are penalised for lot lot longer.

I saw a budget reply speech that wanted Advance Australia Fair.

I heard a budget speech that place the most impost on the most disadvantaged and shifted an \$80 billion cost onto others with the words, tough luck, we don't care it's your problem now.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 11:45:57am

**The Skeleton Inside:**

An attack on the budget is not necessarily an attack on 'fixing the deficit'.

Although there are arguments that it is not such a terrible thing to have, it seems that if we don't do something, we will eventually end up up the brown creek with neither a paddle nor a pottie.

However, there are other ways of fixing the so-called 'budget emergency' than attacking the poorest members of our society. Negative gearing; capital gains tax; mining tax; increasing the highest marginal tax rate; I'm sure there are experts on this who can suggest other things.

This budget focuses on short term gain and ignores the consequences of further marginalisation of the already marginalised. Those consequences will be more people fronting up to emergency; more hospitalisation for people who put off seeing the doctor; more prisoners and prisons; more policing costs; a less educated community, to name just a few;

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 2:26:28pm

**Punk:**

Morton, it's the next generation who will get old, get sick and will need support from society. Sit back and just imagine yourself fall into any of the groups targeted by this budget. I am fearful because I am doing very well, but the thing

is life is tough and things can change very quickly and most of the time the change is difficult. Shared risk, a vital concept in my view.

Alert moderator

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**Ted:**

16 May 2014 9:49:59am

Mr Gardener, it would be more to the point if you listened to what people are trying to say rather than trawling thru articles looking for technical breaches so that you can demonstrate your intellectual superiority. It's a very low form of debate.

Alert moderator

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**rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 9:59:04am

Forest people are scared about this budget, really scared.

The leaders of the States and Territories are having an emergency meeting because of it's budget decisions.

I stress "An Emergency Meeting"

I think the last time Australian governments called an emergency meeting was because of world war 2.

Forest this Federal government is toxic

You've read Jims comment, if you believe this budget is a good one where is your reply to his comment showing him the benefits.

No, you would rather criticise the medium he has used to express his worry.

This article by Neil James rightly point out that the chest beating like talk of "we will " before the election has now become "sorry but "

Alert moderator

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**Forrest Gardener:**

16 May 2014 6:54:17pm

RC, some people are scared of everything, but most of the Labor Fan Club are simply being hysterical. What's new?

Hopefully sooner rather than later, the Labor Fan Club will realise that its groupthink, fear and hate is counter productive.

Alert moderator

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**rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 7:59:16am

With regards Jim McNabb comment Mr, Ms, Miss, Mrs moderator please publish this plea. For the first time in our lives my brother and I would like to join a protest march against this Federal government'

Could someone inform us of how to find out about them?

Alert moderator

**virgil:**

16 May 2014 8:39:48am

Would like to know this same information rusty. I have heard of a March in May but no other details.

Alert moderator

**rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 9:08:37am

GDay virgil

I true believe if the information we ask for is made well known, Marches in protest of this government will make Vietnam war protest look like they were family picnics.

Alert moderator

**macca:**

16 May 2014 9:01:31am

Of course the moderator will publish this plea, it supports the socialist mindset but if I dare post an opposing view it will be removed as mine has been, so obviously someone has complained. The only good thing about this is that in the end the drum will be reduced to a bunch of whinging socialist complaining to one another as no one else will be allowed to express an opinion. If this is the moderators idea of fairness perhaps it is time for the ABC to go. Surprise me and post this.

Alert moderator

**rusty cairns:**

16 May 2014 9:21:08am

Surprise.

I think you should read a little of China's long well documented history, you will learn that those that tried to control the wealth with little regard to the poorer people often wished they had given the poorer people more regard.

Alert moderator

**whogoesthere:**

16 May 2014 9:43:49am

Someone wants to protest against the Government and that automatically makes them a socialist ?. I've heard everything now !.

Alert moderator

**virgil:**

16 May 2014 9:58:34am

I noticed the removal of your earlier post macca and the whole thread that went under it. I don't like censorship. If an unacceptable post was received by the mod then don't upload it, but don't put them up & then take them down please!

Alert moderator

**Morestone:**

G'day Rusty if the message about deliberately encouraging a bitterly divided country and a govt going out of its way to ensure a growing underclass doesn't change, I think you will have plenty of choice about what march to join. And many first time protestors. Maybe Abbott and his advisors think this is the way of making Australia more competitive by ultimately driving down wages ?

It was interesting looking at the body language of LNP back-benchers during Shorten's budget reply last night, some of them seemed to be squirming.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 8:01:12am

**VetTeacher:**

The rising level of invective directed on these opinion blogs against people questioning the direction and more importantly efficacy of the Abbott Government's budget is revealing in its air of desperation.

Personally I do not believe the "budget emergency" line justification for the document but given the system we have if they think it is correct let them justify it. Seems the major problem for the government is that simply repeating that the world is coming to an end does not make it true.

Among other politicians who have based their entire case on a stated belief not argument I can think of a few especially in the 1930s on both on the left and right of politics.

There also seems to be a parallel in the way the case for reform is being prosecuted. Demonise sections of the community and then hope this carries public opinion with you when you carry out your policies.

Selecting the young people of Australia for special treatment is a good example of where the rhetoric far outweighs the common sense. People up to the age of 30 lose their right to unemployment support for 6 months. What then will occur to the members of the Public Service who lose their jobs and are under the age of 30.

Gets a bit more complicated than slamming those sections of the school age community who are leaving school without qualifications or skills. I interact and teach some of these people everyday. The VAST majority of the young people want to achieve NOT sponge on the community.

Look around the budget and the glaring lack of logic becomes even more stark. Why the hell would you pull \$80 Billion out of Health and Education, two areas critical to the future of Australia. They have not thought it out and are simply living on ideology.

Hawke and Keating were prepared to look at all options including some that were directly



opposed by their support base the Trade Unions. The government is driven purely by ideology and no spin deflects from the fact that the pain has been selective and in some cases simply vindictive.

Canberra crying poor and then pushing the blame on everybody else is NOT the same as justifying what you are doing. Improved education and improved levels of skills training have been required for a long time. Duck shoving the real priorities is not the same as realistically addressing them.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 8:21:01am

The budget speech and its weasel words of betrayal are nothing. To listen to a real speech of Passion, Principles and Vision you have to refer to Shorten's. I am sure that the Budget Reply by the leader of the Labor Party is already going viral. Gloves are off, the Neoliberal Liars have been called to meet their political destiny.

Labor will oppose \$13 billion worth of cuts in the Budget from Hell. \$13 billion that Abbott will have to negotiate with the PUP and the other minor parties or start the accounting from scratch.... or call for a Double Dissolution!!

.... We are ready!

Alert moderator

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**Theos:**

16 May 2014 9:01:23am

I have to admit I was pleasantly surprised by Bill Shorten's speech. Quite frankly I think he ripped Tony Abbott a new one.

Alert moderator

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**Huboo:**

16 May 2014 10:17:29am

Sadly Alpo, I think there was only two out of three attributes in his speech. Shorten may have expressed some socialist aspirations, but I would suggest that this was the most lacking in vision budget reply speech I have ever heard.

I am a socialist leaning individual and was disappointed that he did not take the opportunity to outline a new Australia, especially when there is an outside (remote) chance of a DD election.

Our national economy is in need of repair and neither side has offered a real plan to fix it.

Alert moderator

**Alpo:**

Hi Huboo,

Shorten didn't use the word "socialist", but the expression "Social Democracy", which is a very specific and different political beast. The broad vision for this country was already laid down by the previous Labor Government (that was just 8 months ago, not 8 years ago) and that is what Shorten explicitly emphasised in his speech, alongside the traditional pure-Labor policies such as Medicare (currently in peril of being dismantled by this Neoliberal Government). More specific, budgeted, costed, explicit policies will come in due course as they always came when Labor was in Government. This wasn't the occasion for such details, this was the occasion to draw the Battlelines between two world views: The selfish inward looking Neoliberal view of the current Coalition Government, and the progressive, forward looking, socially inclusive, triple-bottomline oriented Social Democratic view of Labor (and dare I say Greens) Opposition.

The Battlelines are drawn, it's now time to ask the People to prepare for a double dissolution and early elections, because at the last election what was on offer by the Coalition was insidiously hidden from view and scrutiny.

Alert moderator

**Kitty:**

Words are powerful but the message has to have meaning and has to hit home.

Abbott centred himself as not that lying woman who broke A promise but a man to trust. He has not broken A promise but has lied many times over. In attacking those on the low rungs of the ladder, in a society already divided and angry, he has given unrest a common voice. Every one of his lies is now the focus.

No government should attack education and health as they are the very basis of a good society and economy. He now has no economic credibility and is seen, as Shorten pointed out, as the Tea Party PM working for the top end of town.

Trust is gone, no one will believe or listen to this government or their slogans.

Alert moderator

**FlapDoodle:**

It is always difficult to defend the indefensible. The Conservatives know they have been hoisted on their own petard. Exposed for telling lies and/or rank incompetence ? any way, it is not a good look. Mr Hockey?s performance relied on a number of now well-worn distractions which appear to have exceeded their use by date in the community. It is now time to stand and deliver. It is never an easy task but the budget speech revealed that the Conservative cupboard is bare except for the dusty skeletons of ideologies out of time and out of place for a country that needs to come to terms with the fact that relying on digging up natural resources but not adding value to anything is just a slippery slope to economic ruin in the modern world.

Alert moderator

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**CJB22:**

16 May 2014 8:25:43am

There are a lot of liberal backbenchers who are hoping the inevitable happens and Malcom becomes PM before the next election. Many will still lose their seats but it will be fewer than would be the case if Tony is still there.

Alert moderator

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**Questionable :**

16 May 2014 8:27:40am

I question when Australians will actually have some power to hold the Government to account when they deliver lies and discriminatory policies?

I question the agenda behind the arrogant attitude of Tony Abbott and his cigar smoking merry men.

I question what they are hiding from us with all this bs in focus, if they openly disregard decency and get away with it, whats really going on behind the scenes, ?

It seems we need a transparent and accountable Government which would mean they can't just make far reaching changes without proving its in the best interests of all Australians.

Its time for a two party system to go, so we can have real democracy and a balanced representation of all, not this situation where the Government can dictate whatever they decide without approval of all of us.

We all have a right to fair and equal representation and we are not getting it, we are getting ripped off and stood over,

There must be a law against this, if not we need a referendum to get new laws limiting the power of the few to dictate to the many, accountability needs to be paramount, then we might get some genuinely courageous politicians who really are there for the people and the country, and really mean what they say and say what they mean.

If this was America someone would have shot these guys by now, this is no way to treat the people of Australia, its really a disgusting shameful disregard for democracy and lets hope it gets better soon or it can only get so much worse from here if we don't stop these Abusive Bullies once and for all.

Alert moderator

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**Dugong1995:**

16 May 2014 11:02:45am

"I question when Australians will actually have some power to hold the Government to account when they deliver lies and discriminatory policies?"

The answer to your question is simple: you have that power every three years.

Alert moderator

**southpaw:**

An Federal level ICAC needs to be established for a start. Ditto one for each of the States and Territories like the one in NSW.

The very fact that polities are saying that we don't need them is a sign that we should have them.

Least that will do is hold ALL the Parties and their elected members to some semblance of transparency and accountability.

Who knows? Maybe such commissions would shake things up a to a point we'll get some integrity in our politicians - but that's probably just wishful thinking.

Alert moderator

**yourvoice:**

Fair comment, the government is never accountable, we need to change this. Currently if we are unhappy with a government in power we vote them out in the next election. But who do you think the angry voting public will vote back in power? That's right the other team!

Personally I would like to remove the party system altogether and replace them with a house full of independents who represent the people not team A, B or C that have agendas of their own.

Let's face it these parties collectively have just about shut down Australia. Despite this, they appraise themselves for doing such a great job. Then they get their pay rises which are quite substantial and justified of course (well that's what they tell us any way) on top of their premium pensions we can only dream about. Then they tell us, 'Australians every where, must take their fair share of pain', cut backs in welfare spending, and tax increases to come.

But hang on they do have a plan; you see they haven't quite sold off the rest of Australia's yet. More privatisation, more foreignisation and more sell offs on the way. Team 'A' is quite good at doing this type of thing while team 'B' excels at wasting it. Together they really make a great team!

As far as the parties are concerned, they have a mandate to legislate what ever they damn well want when elected. The senate is our only safe guard, but what good is this if these parties control this area too.

We need to have a voice that is not limited to the least worst party, above all we need a voice that is legally binding on parliament. Of course you can sign petitions, you can even demonstrate but if the media is not on your side it will mean nothing. Even if you get this far the chance of getting our voice in parliament is almost zero.

We need to understand that the running of parliament has been corrupted by the party system and in order for the people to have their say in the running of this country we need to make some changes.

There is a process now that exists, that will allow the people a say in their own country. This voice is called (CIR) Citizens Initiated Referenda. All you party people are not going to like this proposal!

With CIR in place the people could initiate referendums when needed to block unpopular legislation from becoming law. The parties in power will have to rethink about rushing new legislation as they know it will be repealed by the people if proved unpopular. Not only will you have a voice but you will have a chance to protect your freedoms.

Think about it! Instead of removing parties on issues and selecting another useless party we could voice our thoughts through CIR that are binding on parliament. It's time to stop the crap.

Alert moderator

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## **Ursus Augustus:**

16 May 2014 8:41:56am

Plain English? What language is that? Shakespeare's use of language was anything but plain, thank the Gods for that. But to some specifics..

Medicare Co Payment - in what way would that be a tax. That is the same as calling your 'co-' payment for medicines a "tax". In any medical practice that does not bulk bill you effectively pay a co-payment because they charge more than the rebate amount. What utter drivel. To call such a co payment a tax is not Plain English it is Newspeak.

Fuel Excise Indexation adjustment. That is exactly what is proposed. It reverses the opposite measure taken by the Howard Government. It is not a tax it is an adjustment of the indexation rate on the tax. The tax itself has been in for decades as I recall. More Newspeak from Dr James.

Temporary Budget Repair Levy brings more squeals from Dr James. Has the gentleman heard of the Medicare Levy? It has been around for a while now, introduced by the Fraser government nearly 40 years ago. It was recently increased to help fund the NDIS. Squeals of TaxTaxTax Increase from Dr James? I don't recall.

Reviewing Dr James previous offering here at the Drum it is clearly a segue into this petty effort. It is Dr James language that is as much a giveaway as Tony Abbott's. I don't see any Plain English in evidence in Dr James's article, I see Newspeak dressed in cheap undies. Is that plain enough?

Alert moderator

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**AJS:**

16 May 2014 10:04:41am

Well said - time the Drum contributors were held to account for their consistent spin.

Alert moderator

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**Ursus Augustus:**

16 May 2014 11:11:50am

That is precisely what just gets on my pip, AJS, the almost constant spin by The Drum article writers and also on the TV version's "guests". It is plain as day that most of them are just trailing their coats like streetcorner tarts and advertising whatever intellectual fetish has currency in the marketplace. It is easier and easier to look at the author and just not bother, especially the ones from "think tanks". My operating thesis is that "think tanks" are just drunk tanks for people completely pissed on either their own self importance or ideological kool-ade. Last night I just walked away from The Drum and read a book. The ideological trenches and pillock box heads were so bloody obvious, utterly predictable and the fare just plain boring.

Alert moderator

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**VoterBentleigh:**

16 May 2014 11:20:42am

You're comparing Hockey with Shakespeare? Ye gods!

Medicare Co-payment: the public who can afford it already make a co-payment via the Medicare Levy. Hockey could have increased the Medicare levy/ tax/ thing-y, but knew that this would mean the rich would pay the most cost. The Dutton co-payment falls disproportionately on the sick, not the healthy, whereas the Medicare levy does not punish the sick.

Fuel excise: when a tax is increased, then it is not fulfilling a promise that taxes would be lower under the LNP, as the Coalition promised in the LNP policy brochure.

Debt levy/tax/thing-y: the author does not say he opposes the proposed tax, but Mr Abbott claimed no new taxes and there was no debt tax until this budget, so it is a new one. Medicare levy pays for hospitals and health outcomes for the general community which the public supports; the debt tax pays for an excessive PPL and cuts to taxes for billionaire miners and polluting energy corporations.

As a playwright Shakespeare was entitled to literary licence. If Hockey wants to write fiction and be an actor then he can, too. Mind, you, Mr Hockey's defence of his budget is fiction and he is a ham actor!

Alert moderator

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**mortan:**

16 May 2014 9:08:01am

It does not matter if Australians except or reject Abbott's rhetoric at the next opportunity to vote the simple fact is Australia is carrying an inordinate amount of debt.

It's human nature for people to find problems in the conservative governments at times ham fisted approach to what is a real problem unlike Greece Australia has no common market to bale it out and the longer you leave debt the bigger it gets.

Hockey is insensitive and Shorten showed in his reply he has no idea how to manage debt he thinks it doesn't exist and Abbott will not play games if his reforms are rejected he will call an election and move on there would be many opportunities in the corporate sector.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 9:27:09am

"Australia is carrying an inordinate amount of debt."... Public debt as a percentage of GDP was slowing down under Labor and it was kept under perfectly reasonable limits as compared to other OECD countries. The myth of the runaway debt is just one of the many Neoliberal Lies used to achieve two things:

- a) Win Government at the 2013 Federal election
- b) After gaining government, deceive the Australian People by introducing ideological Neoliberal policies that the vast majority of those who voted for the Coalition actually didn't know they were voting for.

Stop aligning Australia with Greece, that's a total nonsense used to deceive the naive and the gullible. We are a world apart from Greece, and not just in geographical distance.

Finally, apart from the usual blinkers, you obviously pressed your hands hard against your hears as Shorten was speaking.... did you also shout: La, la, la, la....?

Alert moderator

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**mortan:**

16 May 2014 11:26:19am

MMMM. I usually allow comment like yours to go through to the keeper but I do become concerned that lefties don't understand the levels of debt for instance carping on about a veritable such as GDP as a KPI for debt renewal is ridiculous.

Debt to fund assets as in infrastructure is acceptable however Labor used debt to fund domestic expenditure just like Greece I am afraid. It's obvious you are politically blinkered and do not except the reality that is Australian debt.

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 12:34:05pm

Debt expressed as percentage of GDP is not ridiculous, but Neoliberals love to repeat the nonsense that it is. Although they never justify it... funny, isn't it? For your information, debt expressed as percentage of GDP is a measure of debt relative to your capacity of repayment. As I have written a million times here already, and I am confident you have read it: James Packer borrowing \$1 million is not the same as Alpo (and dare I say mortan) borrowing the same million. It's exactly the same million, but for James it is just peanuts, and for me at least would be a pretty serious concern.

Labor incurred debt to save the Australian economy, jobs, social stability from the debacle of the Neoliberal GFC that unfolded, apart from the investment in the infrastructure virtually neglected by Howard (how could he otherwise produce the surpluses?).

Alert moderator

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**Artful Dodger:**

16 May 2014 1:51:56pm

I responded to you on Greece before mortan but it seems the moderator has called it a "no ball" so I will try another bouncer.

Greece does not have any resources or a China. As for debt to fund domestic expenditure -hell- the Howard LNP Government presided over a debt driven economy which saw our household debt rise from 48% of disposable income to 158% to fund domestic expenditure on stuff they did not need from China with money they did not have.

So what we did was, we sold our dirt to China and allowed most of the wealth from that to go out of the country- then we borrowed to the hilt to buy the stuff the Chinese made from our dirt and became debt slaves to the banks.

Think you had better duck for cover.

Alert moderator

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**Kerrie:**

16 May 2014 10:52:04am

I'm sorry to disabuse people but the fact that Tony Abbott lied would be insufficient for me to want a DD or go to a protest march. Everyone knows politicians lie, offer spin and fail to state the clauses of their election promises. This is a good reason to vote against them at the next election, if you remember the lies.

I want a DD because I think Tony's budget is unfair to the most vulnerable members of our society, damages many of underlying social conventions (eg that people are adults at 18, not 30, and entitled to the safety net from that age) and will damage small businesses who rely on many people spending, not just the rich few.

Does the budget need work? Yes, it does. Whilst I liked many aspects of Bill's speech I did not like his avant garde approach to spending or lack of details.



However, it is early days. I'm hoping that by the time the next election is called that all politicians have a coherent plan for dealing with the budget, the ageing population and the problem of labour force underutilization rate.

I also hope that the politicians face reality that they are our leaders and that it is their job to encourage most of the population to accept the need to find and embrace new ways of doing things.

For the microparties and independents their policies should focus on how they will contribute to innovation through collaboration.

Alert moderator

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**Jay Somasundaram:**

16 May 2014 9:42:47am

"The budget speech could have been open about the need to break promises,"

"need to break promises" is itself a lie. Caught between a rock and a hard place.

Taking of promises, I wonder if promises were also made not to claw back shelters for the super wealthy?

Alert moderator

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**anote:**

16 May 2014 3:05:26pm

Precisely; hence the change of language.

Also, it is all very well to apply this to the budget but it is not as if the Coalition did not already employ this double act of giving an impression and weaselling out of it later. They just exposed themselves so much more with much more explicit pre-election lies.

Alert moderator

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**James 2:**

16 May 2014 9:43:04am

Just a thought....

The conservatives believe in smaller government with the states taking on more responsibilities... right?

No need for useless Govt programs and red tape eh.

Sounds to me like lazy 'ol Joe is and his ilk are trying to make changes to government to give themselves less work to do for us.

So just to be clear: they will be taking a pay cut surely as their workload will become lighter! Right?

Alert moderator

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**VoterBentleigh:**

16 May 2014 10:11:07am

The commentary about the "need" to break promises and that perhaps the public should not expect politicians to make promises is not only astounding, but ludicrously inane. The promises that politicians make before an election are part and parcel of their policies. Commentators have actually argued that the public go to an election with no idea how the policies of a party will affect the electorate!

Mr Hockey's claim that the budget response is politics, not policy is ridiculous, given the Treasurer himself is a politician in the game of politics. Hockey has given Australia an ivory tower budget without any understanding or concern for its impact upon the lives of the most vulnerable in society. Instead of the "hope" his policy promised, he gives the unemployed young another three-word slogan ("Earn or learn").

The criticism of the Hockey budget goes to the unfairness of the economic measures and the falsehood of an economic emergency/sovereign risk nonsense to justify creating a "winners" class and a "losers" class. Mr Hockey claimed that there was a crisis before the election, so there are no "changed circumstances", apart from the added expenditures in the LNP's policies. If the LNP regard the budget as so dire as to hit the least well-off in society, then the PM should cancel the newest "lazy" asset - the PM's new jet.

Alert moderator

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**blax5:**

16 May 2014 11:03:49am

Quite frankly, I don't believe any of their talk any more, budget speeches, 10 second grab etc. When Hockey came back from the IMF meeting he beamed: "We are going for growth!"

Is this a growth budget? Some parts drive up inflation (petrol prices, higher costs for university degrees). Increased gas prices (which haven't even fully filtered through yet) and medical costs are further pushes for higher wages. At the same time purchasing power is reduced through unemployment (car industry and public servants) shrinking the domestic economy. Then they shrink science and innovation. Shrinking the development of alternative energies is especially troubling as it reduces the long-term possibilities of cheaper energy for industry. We do not know yet how many from the car industry and the public service will stay unemployed for a longer period in a phase of reduced purchasing power.

That is not growth, but salvation is only 7 years away. I will still listen and watch - always with two grains of salt.

Alert moderator

**Noel:**

There was certainly a contrast between Hockey's stoic and at times troubled delivery and Shorten's powerful oration last night.

Hockey new he had a hard sell. But what is most shocking is the things he did not own up to in his budget speech, not one mention of eighty billion dollars ripped out of schools and hospitals, not one mention of the elephant in the parliamentary room, the GST, that he knows must increase if the states are going to continue to provide universal health care and education.

These are the most radical cuts to the fabric of our nation since i have been watching the political cycle. And yet, not one mention in Hockey's speech. No wonder he didn't want to talk about it, it is an attack on Australia's way of life. And no wonder he didn't want to mention the GST, no need to let that cat out of the bag just yet...

The insincerity of this Government boggles the mind. But we have seen their agenda now, we know the platform they stand on, so bring it on, let's have a vote in the polling booths of Australia, if Abbott and Hockey are so confident they have kept trust with the Australian people, let them come to us for our vote of confidence in them.

I'm all for it, freedom, liberal democracy, voting for what is right. In the words of Bill Shorten, BRING IT ON.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 11:48:04am

**Damage:**

Must have missed your outrage during the six years of lying, dysfunctional Labor Government when 90% of the population were screaming for an election. Well, we had one mate - September 7 last year - Liberation Day. Try again in 2016.

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 3:05:01pm

**Noel:**

Well, as you say, liberation day, so let's let the people tell you directly how they feel about being liberated. Tony Abbott told Holden workers they were being liberated when they lost heir jobs. I love this word liberation. I want the liberation of voting directly on this budget, dont you?

Alert moderator

16 May 2014 11:12:01am

**Smoranean:**

"Principle arguments can be effective, but they operate at a level of assertion, appealing to underlying community values rather than the cold logic of reason."

As demonstrated in the article, there's no need for principles either. Just good community

spin for working dynasties can do it without the extra need for principles or logic. BS is another colloquial explanation. Works like a charm on hard working true blue multicultural communities.

Alert moderator

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**John51:**

16 May 2014 11:15:31am

Dr Neil, it was always going to be a hard sell because it is a pig of a budget. And as the saying goes it does not matter how you try to frame it it can't be made into a silk purse, let alone one filled with a lot of money.

It was not just the explanation and defending of this budget that was so clumsy. The budget itself was about as clumsy an attempt at a budget that you could get. If you look at government, taxes and revenue, and spending as well as the the economy and growth there are a thousand better ways of framing a budget. There are a thousand better ways of making a more equitable budget.

But they didn't do they. They instead made a very ideological budget with clumsy attempts to cover that up and make out it was good for us and what we all needed.

Alert moderator

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**MJLC:**

16 May 2014 11:30:54am

"It was always going to be a hard sell"

A statement of the bleedingly obvious.

Why anyone would think I'd pay for something I can pick up (with my hand inside a plastic bag) for free after my neighbour's dog has decided to visit our front garden is beyond me.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 12:14:59pm

I may not be a parent. But no government is going to tell me that my kids are not good enough. I'm sorry Liberal National Party, but I'm pretty sure they are.

Alert moderator

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**john1:**

16 May 2014 12:28:25pm

I wholeheartedly agree that the PM and the treasurer should just have said the following;

" We have come to realise that we are unable to keep all the commitments we made at the last election if we are truly going to govern in the best interests of the country as a whole. We made a commitment to get the budget under control, and since seeing the enormity of the problem faced, we can no longer keep our commitments of no new taxes or no reductions to welfare. We understand that some of these things will be unpopular, however we truly believe this to be the best thing to do. Governments are elected to

govern and that's what we are doing. We believe that when faced with conflicting election commitments, we should keep the most important ones at the expense of the others, rather than taking the easy way out and keeping them all, which would not provide the budget outcome required for Australia in the future".

Alert moderator

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**MJLC:**

16 May 2014 1:22:14pm

Meanwhile, back in the real world, a more accurate rendering of the situation would be as follows;

"We have come to realise that we went to the Australian people at the last election either not knowing what we were talking about, not caring whether what we said was truthful, or indeed most probably both. We spent three years obsessing about "lies" and "broken promises", but neglected to add the caveat that all of that stuff doesn't apply to us. We think anyone who didn't have the brains to work that out is a mug. We treat the Australian people with utter contempt, and really couldn't give a toss what you think about it because we're here and you're not. Governments are elected to govern, but Senates are elected to acquiesce, so as you might guess we're more than a trifle peeved that we have to listen to all this crap about "honesty" and "honour". What we say is right, and if you don't happen to agree with that blatantly obvious truism you can just take a hike. We will decide which of these so-called promises come to the table, and the circumstances in which they come. For too long arrogance with and dismissive behaviour towards the Australian people have been treated without the respect and reverence that we assign to them, and now we're going to elevate them back onto the pedestal where we think they belong. The fact that we can kick those who we have a problem with in the guts along the way is just an added bonus.

I commend the Bill to the House."

Alert moderator

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**Alpo:**

16 May 2014 2:51:11pm

Yes, I remember that speech, word by word. It was Hockey, wasn't it? Just a few days ago.... I think that the Liberal benches applauded and smiled at the end. I couldn't understand why, but there you go.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 1:41:29pm

Not worth a bit of "free" medical care, they say, the medical care we've invested in for generations, the system we set up, the system we're still paying for. But of course medical research, that's where they milk your medical information, harvest your genes for ideas and then sell them to big corporations overseas. Of course we do have to pay for that.

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 1:46:25pm

And it's not like America, England haven't been draining us of our best minds for years, it's not like they don't benefit from our subsidized education, our subsidized research, the ways in which our brightest and most brilliant have risen from the ranks of the dirty poor people and taken their intelligence out there and really made a difference. No, it's not that at all.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 3:00:13pm

I mean, theoretically, sure, we could pour all that GST, clearly the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, into helping the poor poor people wipe off some of that grime. But that's like saying we can have a Lotto to fund the poor poor people and the culture and social lives of our people and then just using it as an excuse to open the door to liberalising poker machines, TV gambling, casinos. It's just smoke and mirrors.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 3:12:21pm

I mean, we're already paying taxes on everything we buy. That's hardly the problem is it? The problem is the government is having a bit of a conscience problem on whether it should be actually receiving those taxes or not. Say we pay more GST to Amazon. Tell me what that's going to pay for, Mister Hockey. You guys have all the information on that kind of thing, right?

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 3:25:07pm

Economics. It's simple. Money comes in, it pays for things we need. Paying for things we need, that's when the money goes out. Think of it a bit like a tide.

Alert moderator

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**Romanov:**

16 May 2014 3:48:27pm

@Hello Neil:

Most interesting is your comment about "human capital":

"We had a hint of this well before the election, when funding for the paid parental leave scheme tax was spun as 'an investment in human capital' rather than a 'new tax'."

However you didn't seem to see logical contradiction in that kind of spin.

It's not just a contradiction, but a cynical exercise of arch-hypocrisy!

Contrary to this "investment in capital," is the intent by the Abbott government to destroy or diminish the HUMAN CAPITAL of the young unemployed under 30 who want to claim the dole.

Now a young person under 30 could easily be a University graduate or a skilled

tradesman with completed apprenticeship.

If he or she cannot claim the dole for 6 months, and then is sent out to collect fruit as cheap labour, to What Extent does this policy increase HUMAN CAPITAL?

As far as "lifting" and "contribution" are concerned, most of the wealthy families will only do the "lifting" by paying marginal increases and experiencing some cuts in monetary terms.

Their wants and pleasures, their freedoms and dignity will remain intact.

The bodies and minds of high income earners will remain intact, safe from the blows and arrows of having to do with the casual, unskilled work for subsistence money.

So much for all this hogwash about "equal pain" and "contribution".

Alert moderator

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**Forrest Gardener:**

16 May 2014 7:14:52pm

Step 1: pick fruit.

Step 2: look for something more fulfilling.

The idea that the nation owes any individual the job of their choice may appeal to the Labor Fan Club, but it's not how the world is ever going to work.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 3:55:14pm

This of course is where we the taxpayer need to pay attention. What are we getting back from that seven dollars a shot doctors payment, what is our cut on the deal. What are we getting back from the levy and what are we getting back from pregnant mothers and what are we getting back from the ballet school. We are investors in our economy here and we need to pay attention to our returns.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 4:00:29pm

And why haven't we heard from the graziers, they're always upset about budgets. Why haven't we heard from the banks, from the remaining car industry that had so much to say a few months back, from the airlines. Aren't they facing a fuel levy? Why haven't we heard from the big grocery chains that will be losing so much money through freightage. And the producers of all things. Why aren't they upset. Are they thinking that the GST will more than compensate for their losses? Lucky them.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 4:08:45pm

I cannot help but wonder if the big joke is what's to come. All that horsing around: you think that's a tax? THAT's not a tax. I suppose the punchline may well be

THIS

is a tax.

Alert moderator

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**Lehan Ramsay:**

16 May 2014 4:18:31pm

That's why I can't help but think that the REAL tax isn't even in the budget.

Alert moderator

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**VoR:**

16 May 2014 5:03:31pm

Yes Neil James, this current government has taken communication with the public to a new low - mostly they hardly even PRETEND to be doing anything other than recycling tired old slogans. And the game of "look, over there, an illegal immigrant" is all that's needed to distract people.

The thing is : pollies do what works.

The media isn't about informing people, it's about sensationalist headlines and catastrophic gotcha moments. So the pollies' interaction with the media is all about avoiding these.

There's only one way this can end. Politicians with zero real accountability to the public (artificial gotchas don't count) will do something with such dreadful consequences that it will shock the communication system back (as much as it ever was) into information mode.

Alert moderator

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**GrumpiSkeptic:**

16 May 2014 5:05:04pm

I went to K-Mart a couple of weeks ago and bought a nifty little gadget. It is a "Vegetable Slicer". Being a health conscious individual, I like my own home-cooked food. Cutting and slicing a slippery, almost round object like a potato is a real pain. With this gadget, it will slice it cleanly into flat strips. Just change a cutting head, I can get long, noodle-like strips. But that is it.

It is impossible to turn the strips around to cut and slice them again. Bugger. I can try though, but all I get is a messy pile of wet organic material.

Sadly, technology stopped right there. But don't despair, folks. The politicians have better technology than that cheap cut/slice gadget I bought. They have their tongues, and years of legal training. Yes, they have ways to turn, twist, cut, slice, dice, and repeat them again until voters simply gave up and took the medicines.

Dr Neil James talks about the harshness/impness of politicians' speeches. I can definitely see a hard, no bullsh\*t, language style before the election. Simple, minimalist



approach by Tony Abbott. Many declarations were made, and they invariably started with a "NO". "NO new tax." "NO great big tax." "NO cuts to pensions" "NO cuts to education". Sorry, I won't bore you readers with more of the same.

Now, it is switched to a "Cruel to be kind" mode. Cuts to the bloody lot of them. Even cancers copped a stern warning as Joe is going to splash out all 20 Billions to hunt them down. Kindness to humanity is bottomless.

I see a Dr. Jackal and Mr. Hyde scenario here. Cut until you bleed, but they will deal with the demonic cancers as only Dr. Jackal knows how.

Cut/slice/dice, all these years of legal training does bear fruits, don't you reckon?

Alert moderator

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**Christopher J:**

16 May 2014 5:29:13pm

Labor should just pass this Budget .....the over 65s were the ones who were the most scornful of Labor and the Greens, now they seem to want Labor and the Greens to soften Abbots Budget for them.....pathetic.

Alert moderator

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**Treetop:**

16 May 2014 6:55:08pm

You would have thought that Tony Abbott would have been taught a lesson from what happened to the previous government in that changing policies after an election can be a disaster for a new government .

Both Mr Hockey and Mr Turnbull both would like to be prime minister .

Having observed both Mr Hockey and Mr Turnbull in a number of interviews , I have observed from both of them in their interviews from their comments in a very slight way that under the surface that both of them are not totally 100% behind Mr Abbott .

The person who had the most to lose from broken promises in this budget was Mr Abbott because he is the one who made the most comments on the different policies that have now been broken so I am wondering if those that put the most into framing this budget were one step ahead of Mr Abbott in that they made a budget that would have the most negative impact on Mr Abbott so his leadership of the party would be weakened and when Mr Abbott took the bait to proceed with the broken promises after receiving assurances from others in the party that this budget was the right budget when in fact this budget could ruin Mr Abbott's political career .

Alert moderator

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**RLS:**

16 May 2014 7:11:58pm

IF Australia with its so called budget crisis is in such a sad state yet performing much better than most other countries where has all the money gone. Probably into the bulging bank vaults of the likes of the Murdoch's and the Rinehart's of this world. And now the

governments of the world need to screw their workers for even more to feed these hungry vaults.

Just supposition but not much wankier that the dribble coming from the Abbott loyalists

Alert moderator

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**Celiniac:**

16 May 2014 7:36:11pm

Am I going mad? Hockey and Abbott look directly at the tv camera and straight out lie to us about their pre election promises. When accused on the ABC about breaking promises Hockey answered "I don't accept that". Duh! Am I living in another world? I've been on this planet for almost seven decades and I have never seen such blatant disrespect for the people of Australia. What goes around comes around. Truth and good always wins in the end.

Alert moderator

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Comments for this story are closed, but you can still have your say.

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