

THE DARK SIDE OF ECONOMIC REFORM

In a follow-up to my 'Balanced Life' piece in our Summer edition I have come across a fascinating and insightful new book, *The Experience of Middle Australia: The Dark Side of Economic Reform* by Australian Sociologist, Michael Pusey. What follows are extracts of some recent reviews.....

The Bulletin: Since the early 1980s, Australians have been forced, or persuaded, to accept high levels of job insecurity as economic reforms have transformed almost every aspect of the way we live to mirror market conditions. For all the anxiety that swirls around the job market, and the insistence that workers need to "re-invent" themselves constantly to stay employable, the broad categories of work have proven remarkably durable. What has changed and is still changing in Australia's work culture is who's getting the jobs, and why, and how hard they're working to keep ahead.

"Market society is now a principal cause of depression," sociologist Michael Pusey writes in *The Experience of Middle Australia* (CUP, 2003). "Labour market reform is a false exchange that makes payment for work in the wrong currency." Pusey believes that work is a "social protein" and that trading labour like any other commodity, and discounting the "social meaning" of jobs, is deeply destabilising for an open democracy such as ours. He may well be proven right. But as things stand, and look likely to stay as long as the capitalist system of the United States remains so dominant in the world economy, those who come out on top in the employment stakes are those who are best equipped to take risks, and who are protected against failure. That's the way markets work. Diana Bagnall

Sydney Morning Herald: What links wedge politics, law-and-order elections, fear of the future, market-rules economics, the Tampa affair, aspirational voters, globalisation and the end of Australia's fair-go ethos? It is, according to Michael Pusey, a traumatised middle Australia, subjected to a brutal transformation of the old social contract into a competitive, fearful, angry and resentful society that can turn against asylum seekers, politicians and "losers" with equal vengeance.

The losers, of course, include middle Australians. An extraordinary two-thirds say they are angry or unhappy about what is happening to people like themselves. A majority believe that life is getting harder and their quality of life is declining. Their

chief emotions about this are anger and moral anxiety.

Which spills over into divisiveness and the sorts of phrases these ordinary, middle-class, middle-of-the-road suburbanites use to describe Australian society today: "changing values", "lost respect", "too much aggression", "dog eat dog", "everything's a business".

Pusey, a leading sociologist, has based his book on one of the largest social surveys undertaken in Australia. Four hundred middle Australians were interviewed and studied over five years, together with focus groups. Pusey identified them by deleting the top 10 per cent and bottom 20 per cent of income earners. They were spread over five capital cities and included men and women.

The portrait he evokes of middle Australia is deeply worrying. After all, this is the heartland of our civic culture and what emerges from the research is a profoundly troubled, pessimistic populace, which has become distrustful (perhaps rightly) of where its leaders are taking it and typically holds "strong" to "very strong" feelings of anger and resentment towards politicians, big business and the media.

One of the few heartening findings is that the majority support "active government" and think the government can do "quite a bit" about job insecurity, the gap between winners and losers, and so on. In other words, middle Australia has not replaced its belief in government with an untrammelled belief in the free market. Is there a lesson for a directionless Labor Party there? Craig McGregor

Michael Pusey will appear at the coming Adelaide Festival of Ideas (July 10th - 13th) Book through BASS.

Cheers

Gordon Russell cpm
Managing Director

ps: our current newsletter can be downloaded from our web site



unit
Care



Gordon Russell CPM
Managing Director
unitcare@senet.com.au

www.unitcare.com.au

SAVING ENERGY & MONEY THIS WINTER

The colder weather is upon us so we looked up the Energy SA web site and found some useful tips to help keep down your energy bills.

- ✓ Begin by insulating the roof of your home, starting with the main rooms which are heated. This will reduce heat losses as well as heating bills.
- ✓ Wear warm clothes inside, so that you don't have to use a heater as often.
- ✓ Heat only when and where needed. Switch heaters off when they are not required.
- ✓ If the heater has a thermostat, set it at the lowest temperature setting at which you still feel warm enough: 20°C - 21°C should be adequate. Each 1°C reduction of the thermostat setting will save about 10% on your energy usage. If the heater does not have a thermostat, switch it off when the room has reached a comfortable temperature.
- ✓ If you are purchasing an air conditioner with a heating or cooling capacity less than 7.5kW, use the Energy Rating Labels to help you choose an energy efficient model. If you are purchasing a gas heater, use the Australian Gas Association's Gas Energy Rating Labels to help you choose an energy efficient unit.
- ✓ Fit weather stripping around

door frames and draught excluders at the bottom of external doors, and doors to high ventilation areas like the bathroom and laundry.

- ✓ Keep your heating system clean for maximum performance and efficiency.
 - ✓ Close windows and doors to the areas being heated, and close curtains (except on north facing windows during the day), to help keep the heat inside.
 - ✓ Ensure the safety of your family and home by following these tips. never hang clothes over heaters to dry and keep heaters away from curtains, beware of open flames, don't store wood next to a slow combustion heater and always ensure adequate ventilation for unflued gas heaters.
- Lighting: Many of our clients are switching to low cost low energy lights (fluorescent) that can be bought at the local supermarket or hardware store. Simply take out the old incandescent bulb and replace with low energy equivalent. An 11 watt lamp replaces a 60 watt one.
- Further information on Energy Saving can be obtained from **Energy SA** at www.energy.sa.gov.au or telephone 8204 1888




unit
Care

Real Estate Institute of South Australia
CPM
CERTIFIED PRACTISING MEMBER



UnitCare Services
phone 08 8364 0022
fax 08 8364 6822
web site www.unitcare.com.au
email unitcare@senet.com.au
P.O. Box 195, Belair 5052
46 Kensington Road, Rose

after hours emergencies - phone 8364 0022 for numbers

ABN 193 4872 3265

This is a publication of UnitCare Services and is offered as information only and is not intended as a substitute for professional advice.

Sticky Issue

Recently we were appointed as managers for a group with a sticky problem. One of the outstanding issues from the previous manager was a bee infestation in one of the old chimneys. Whilst the bees had been killed off no action was taken over the hive.

With no maintenance by the bees the hive began to deteriorate. The lack of maintenance and hot weather resulted in the hive falling down the chimney and exploding in the fireplace below. Honey splattered and poured over the unit. The owner's carpet was saturated with honey.

Following some disputes between which insurance company would cover the damage to the carpet the contents

insurer has agreed to pay up.

At the time of writing we are investigating a variety of methods for dealing with the honey remaining in the chimney.

Our contractors advise that owners should have been warned of the probably collapse of the hive and methods to deal with it before treating the bees. Once treated the chimney should be steam cleaned to remove all waste.

Our thanks to the Metropolitan Fire Service and our contractors for their help with this sticky issue.



in the honey

Saving Paper & Costs

Following concerns raised by owners we have reprogrammed our annual Activity Report.

The report now leaves out the logs of our office sending levy notices to owners. This will save on paper and copying costs and some rather monotonous reading.

Our monthly report to Treasures will continue to include the levy notice logs.

Adelaide Festival of Ideas

The Adelaide Festival of Ideas is upon us again from 10th - 13th July. This is a biannual event in the off year from the Arts Festival.

This year the theme is Hope & Fear.

For three days and four nights this July, Adelaide will come alive with challenging speakers and buzz with the adrenaline of intellectual debate and speculation. Get beyond the ten second sound grabs. Turn your mind toward the future. Celebrate the power of ideas and the joy of thinking aloud together!

The speakers include Robert Fisk (middle east correspondent), Frank Brennan (priest, lawyer), Michael Pusey, (sociologist & author), Richard Butler (ex UN arms control chief), Margo Kingston (Journalist SMH).

Visit www.adelaidefestivalofideas.com.au for more information on the great range of national and international speakers and how to book or phone the Adelaide Festival Centre on 131 246.



Mortgage Advice

Finding the best mortgage for your circumstances, or even checking that your current one is still giving you maximum leverage, can be a tricky business.

We have been impressed recently with Flynn Sullivan of Mortgage Choice. He has excellent software enabling him to compare and recommend mortgage products from over 20 lending institutions nationwide.

Flynn is paid by the lender, and he gets the same commission regardless of which lender or loan you choose. His home loan advice is free and truly unbiased, which is refreshing to say the least!

The home loan market in Australia is one of the most complicated in the world with more lender and loan types than you can imagine.

That's both good and bad. You can spend a lot of time searching for the best loan and still not find it. But on the other hand there's probably one that suits your situation perfectly. It's a matter of finding it!

Flynn's service is a bit like being in a room full of bankers who are bidding for your business.

If any of the following apply to you or your family, I'd suggest that you give Flynn a

call or email him.

He only needs a few details to do a preliminary check to see what the possibilities are.

Home Loan Health Check: - Is your current loan still the best option for you right now?

First Home Loan: It's important to get started in property

New Home Loan: Are you changing units or buying a house?

Debt Consolidation: If you have several loans or debts, it may be sensible to combine them at home loan rates.

Investment Property - The equity you have in your unit/s may be enough to get you into another property. A Health Check on your existing loan/s will tell you straight away.

Gordon Russell, Managing Director of Unitcare Services is impressed with the unbiased mortgage advice from Flynn Sullivan of Mortgage Choice.

You can check out Flynn and Mortgage Choice from links on our web site unitcare.com.au. or mortgagechoice.com.au/

flynn.sullivan

He can be contacted on 8388 2655 or email flynn.sullivan@mortgagechoice.com.au.

UnitCare Services receives no commis-



Flynn Sullivan of Mortgage

unbiased mortgage advice

free checkup

We have been able to save money for many of our clients through insurance premiums, after hours maintenance and preventative works.

If you are not one of our clients, give us a ring and we can review your group's costs to find possible savings.

This service is free and with no obligation.

Call us on **08 8364 0022**