

Project Western Australia – Official Launch Comments

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Unlike our Federal Treasurer, we will not call upon the mystic spirits of present or past rock singers, to give credibility to our efforts.

We will let this document, itself, stand tall and hopefully inspire some vigorous debate and resolutions about the way forward for our great State of Western Australia.

Our Mannkal Foundation, over the past 15 years, has sent 600 of Western Australia's brightest students to internships, conferences and seminars, both in Australia and overseas and that has put us in the privileged position of learning how our younger generation feel about whether our current generation is leaving for them an asset or a liability.

They ask some good questions like:-

- How can our Federal Treasurer say that Australia came through the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) 'unscathed' when Australia now has the highest level of household debt in the world?

The household debt of \$82,000 for every Australian did not exist before the GFC.

This is not 'unscathed'. It is 'mega scathed'.

- How come our State Government is borrowing money to establish a Sovereign Wealth Fund?

These are very good questions; there is general concern from the next generation.

So, if our Project W.A. handbook is to be dedicated to anyone, let it be dedicated to our next generation.

Background to this Handbook

In 2006 the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation was often asked; "Who in Western Australia is generating and developing State policies that look beyond the short-term political election cycles?"

There was mounting concern at the glacier-like process of our Local Government and State Government approvals process. So abysmal was this process that it gave rise to an expanding lobbying industry, as the only way of achieving any conclusive outcome. Mannkal recognised the need for thoughtful policy development and sought an experienced and credible joint-venture partner to join us in this task. The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) was more than up to this task.

Taking the lead and maintaining focus on multiple deadlines were John Hyde (Mannkal), Andrew Pickford (Mannkal), John Roskam (IPA) and Chris Berg (IPA). Over these intervening six years a series of Discussion papers have been publicly launched and circulated with considerable feedback received. We also extend our sincere thanks to those un-named advisors.

Let me mention one point in particular; John Hyde, in his modest style, is no stranger to policy formation. In his past lives he generated several similar policy manuals for both Federal and State Governments. During his term, as Liberal Federal Member, with a small group (including Bert Kelly, Jim Carlton and Peter Shack), known as the Drys, were successful in generating policies that were implemented by the Hawke and Keating Governments, resulting in a remarkable acceleration of Australia's economic progress, during those years (and I can remember the benefits that flowed through to every level of the economy).

So, with that example in mind, we don't mind much who picks up these ideas from our current handbook as long as someone does so and enables us to pick up the pace.

Outcome of our Six Year Project

Now, this deceptively slim volume summarises all these endeavours to drive this discussion further.

Your input and thoughtful comment is welcome and, in fact necessary. We have made it easy for you to be part of this process. Simply click on the *Project Western Australia* button on our homepage – www.mannkal.org – and input your 'comment' indicating the subject covered and perhaps the page ref. from this attached handbook.

In this way we will maintain the momentum of our focus on constructive ideas for the future.

Thank you for attending today.