

Project Western Australia

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Institute of Public Affairs
Australia's Leading Free Market Think Tank

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The need for a new approach

The need for a new approach to policy formation in Western Australia is abundantly clear. If Western Australia is to fully profit from the opportunities presented by its natural wealth and the rise of Asian economies, then a new attitude is needed.

PROJECT WESTERN AUSTRALIA is a forward-looking joint program of the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation and the Institute of Public Affairs, Australia's leading free market think tank. PROJECT WESTERN AUSTRALIA is aimed at stimulating policy discussion and development.

The Project

During 2007, research experts in each of these fields will conduct original and innovative policy research to provide a blueprint for forward-looking governments.

The need for PROJECT WESTERN AUSTRALIA is clear. Without a comprehensive reassessment of public policy approaches, Western Australia may not prosper from its boom.

The challenges facing Western Australia are many. A few deserve to be highlighted.

1) The Importance of property rights in Western Australia

The rise of regulations that diminish private property values without actually transferring the title is both relentless and insidious. Particular problem areas in WA include heritage listings for which there is no appeal, lack of security over water titles, and unfair native vegetation assessment procedures and outcomes. Changes to planning schemes also continue to disadvantage some property owners without consultation or compensation. Yet there is little understanding in the broader community of the importance of safeguarding the rights of private property owners against capricious or malicious intervention by government.

2) City and Urban Development

Worldwide leading cities perform strongly across economic, social and cultural spheres and Perth has key strengths in all these areas. Yet Perth has its own challenges to ensure the strong growth currently being experienced is translated into sustainable and equitable outcomes. Government policies need to evolve (or in some cases be radically revised) to better cater for the 'leading city' status Perth aspires to. Particular areas needing new directions and options are; housing affordabil-

ity, shop trading hours and availability of a range of entertainment and hospitality venues. On a broader scale, new governance mechanisms that reflect Perth's status as a sophisticated, multi-faceted city need to be integrated into decision-making processes.

3) Transport

How should transport infrastructure and services be funded and delivered in Western Australia?

In relation to public transport, a focus needs to be upon the delivery of rail services and whether Perth's rail system has delivered value to taxpayers and commuters.

PROJECT WESTERN AUSTRALIA will place recent developments in their historic context and also compare what has happened in WA with other states. Are WA taxpayers getting value for money compared to others across the country? Not merely fares, but service quality outcomes (reliability, punctuality, safety etc.) should be compared with the performance of other States.

The project plans to consider the current model of service provision and whether there could be an

increased role for the private sector through the privatisation of public transport services.

Further, there needs to be a review of the balance of funding between public transport and roads.

4) Education

What are the options for reform of the government school system in Western Australia? PROJECT WESTERN AUSTRALIA will examine the funding and management of schools, and the curriculum offering for students. It will also study the process of implementation of outcomes based education in the state.

Importantly, the time for discussion of school vouchers as a way of improving the education outcomes of all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, has come.



Mannkal Economic Education Foundation

The Mannkal Economic Education Foundation aims to strengthen the free market system in Western Australia and Australia, by promoting ideals of voluntary co-operation, choice, personal rights, limited government, and resourcefulness of individuals. The Mannkal Economic Education Foundation organises events that allow individuals to exchange ideas defending free markets and we sponsor students for seminars and essay competitions.

For more information contact Ron Manners on 08 9322 6777. Visit www.mannkal.org

The Institute of Public Affairs

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) is an independent, non-profit public policy think tank, dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of economic and political freedom.

Founded in 1943, the IPA has an exceptional reputation as the leading Australian political think-tank, and remains at the forefront of the political process, defining the contemporary political landscape.

The IPA has been actively engaged in policy analysis in Western Australian since its foundation. In 1993, the IPA published the influential *Reform and Recovery: An Agenda for the Western Australian Government*. Recently the IPA has published several studies on property rights in Western Australia, housing affordability, and government finances after the introduction of the GST.

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