

VIEW FROM CANBERRA



Special Election Commentary

The Federal Budget was and is the Federal Election central theme – it is the economy stupid

My interest peaked again recently, politics in Canberra all of a sudden got some balls and substance.

After a number of years of numb, visionless, stagnant, intolerable coalition in-fighting and easy goals for Labor with simple ideas peppered with money and stupid coal or nothing mantras, some vision and competition may have been injected into a failing federal political scene.

And of all things it was in the pre-election federal budget, one of the most unlikely forums for long term solid tax policy, sensible business changes, good old *hard helmet* economics and significant infrastructure investment. What is that all about?

I put it down to a serious leadership change by the Libs (and the Nats) to their policy and membership base focus and I reckon the pre-election budget announcements are, will be and should be at the centre of the whole federal election. What a way to make Malcolm irrelevant at last.

I think the punter has cottoned on and there is a real chance Scott Morrison's marketing background and hard work on the campaign trail might just get him over the election line, who knows?

I get the feeling ALP voters see some hope in Scomo and are relating back to the Howard battlers, a tax break and an economy that will deliver new jobs and even possible wage rises down the track, even if this is beyond this election term.

Long term structural tax reform is not foreign to tradies and service providers and small business after all, despite the fact some media commentators believe we are all too dumb to understand the economy and how it works and are only interested in short term handouts.

I say 'finger out' not hand out is winning the day and whoever can deliver the opportunity to pull your finger out and make a buck and not rely on a government 'hand up or out' to get by, is going to win this election. It is the Australian way, give me a fair go and I will have a go. The ALP seem to have forgotten this in the campaign so far.

The Budget has set up the ALP for a predictable response to put more money in people's pockets without the strong long term economic and future surplus focus of the government budget.

The federal election campaign predictably has focussed on 'the ALP will spend it', 'the Libs will set the economy up for the future'. Who will punters believe?

The long term future projections of surpluses and economic health interwoven with moderate tax cuts for low to middle income earners equals responsible and good government. And why are high income

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earners somehow not worthy as well? They are employment and wage rise generators and contribute the largest percentage of total income tax.

Sure people want bigger wages now but let's not forget that small business benefits and the income tax benefits are also about improved productivity and economic growth. This is the real and natural way for national wage growth as opposed to messing about with the fundamental base of labour laws, enterprise bargaining, the minimum wage and the so called *living wage* concept.

In my view the pre-election budget, without all the massive spending to buy votes and a solid economic mandate directed at winning votes is all about returning the Liberal party to its policy and program business roots, and don't forget the *hard helmet* economics related to tax benefits and return to incentivising apprenticeships through employers. All good grist to the mill for aspirational Howard battlers.

The Federal election campaign is still about the budget. 'It is the economy stupid' and the campaign for both sides need to stay focussed in my view on getting voters to vote for whoever will be the best economic manager going forward.

It is BIG politics this year in Canberra which is why we are holding the national conference in Canberra, November 17 to 20. By the time the conference rolls around, the 46th Parliament of Australia will have formed and the voter-elected PM will be invited to join us at the conference. So make sure you too are there. All details at www.movingpeople.com.au

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