THE GOOD SOCIETY

Priorities

Restoration of 'public' services.

Examine the role of privatisation of public utilities and 'natural' monopolies in eroding public trust in government. The reconceptualisation of citizens to consumers of services must be seriously assessed in reference to both trust and capability. Explore the feasibility of reclaiming control over these enterprises as part of a project to reassure citizens that public funds (pooled taxes) are committed to the provision of essential services, and to ensure these are affordable, environmentally responsible and reliable. These services may include but are not exclusive to , electricity, roads or public transport.

Reinstate social planning mechanisms.

Reintroduce planning models to determine the location of aged, disability, children's and educational services based on community need. Allow 'for profit' services to co-exist, where needed, but at controlled costs.

Measure unpaid activity.

Establish new criteria for measuring progress and wellbeing that challenge political assumptions that only traded/tradable, transactional, or material goods and services 'count'. These new measures should include the full range of unpaid contributions performed in society: caring, social, creative, innovative, traditional and cultural activities.

Support new patterns of paid and unpaid work.

Current and future demands for paid workers are not likely to offer enough secure, well paid employment opportunities. We need to challenge assumptions such as the benefits of long working hours (shorter hours usually lead to greater productivity), the distinction between full-time and part-time (which is increasingly obsolete), and the gender bias of work patterns associated with care of family members. There are many ways beyond paid work to contribute to social wellbeing as suggested above.

Fair allocation of funds to education.

Provide advice to governments for the fair allocation of public funds to all types of education (pre-schools, schools, technical education, universities), with the aim of sustaining an education system that promotes equity of outcomes as well as opportunities. Publicly funded education should be non-profit, culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible.

A fairer health system.

Develop ideas that contribute to a fairer, more equitable health care system. Medicare is being eroded by increased gap payments and inequities in many areas such dental health and Aboriginal health outcomes. The unintended consequences of current funding regimes have had negatively impacts, particularly in less affluent and rural areas.

Welfare system transformation.

A fundamental review of Australia's over-complex and controlling welfare system is essential. The welfare payments system is systemically unfair as a consequence of both the assumption that the working age population, regardless of circumstances, seek paid jobs and the punitive conditions and means-testing attached to payments. We need to look at creating a new system that does not depend on access to paid work as its primary aim and guarantees citizens a basic income as a basic entitlement. We need to use the Universal Basic Income (UBI) debate as an opportunity to look at serious reform to address the potential for reduced demands for paid labour, and a different society that values social contributions.

Addressing the social environment that will support climate change and sustainability.

Government infighting and (in)action on the environment is a major cause of voter cynicism and distrust in Australia. This is a classic example of where change is needed that goes beyond political parties, the private/public divide, and a narrow economic view of Australia's interests, and delivers trust and innovative, effective solutions.

Fair refugee and immigration policies.

Develop a humane refugee and immigration position that includes the closure of programs on Manus Island and Nauru, adequate alternative location of existing refugees (e.g. in New Zealand, Australia and other like countries), and clarifies the situation for those on temporary visas in Australia.

Give voice and legitimacy to Indigenous viewpoints.

Restart public discussions on the Uluru Statement and create pathways to include Indigenous voices in public policy, as part of wider changes to government funding and constitutional reform. Introduce self-determination criteria into all Indigenous funding and consult widely on how to achieve this.

Encourage ethical behaviour in corporations.

Develop criteria and conditions of ethical behaviour, including fair tax contributions for corporations. Government apathy on misbehaviour by the private sector, including but not limited to the banks, is damaging our ability to be both innovative and resilient to meet the many and various challenges of the future. This is an important issue that is responsible for the fading trust in government and the private sector.

Review gendered socialisation practices and education.

Accept evidence from #metoo and DV rates that gender power relations need to be addressed. We should look closely at how we socialise girls and boys to fix gendered inequities - for example, help girls develop the agency to say 'no', and boys to understand that they do not need to always be tough and in control. The aim here is long-term behavioural change for future generations. Changes will address toxic bases of gender divides, including masculinity and femininity to challenge violence as a means of self-assertion.

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