

Big Issues survey 2017 comments

Other policies to address the issue of inequality

Personal finance issues

Superannuation education for young people.

Provide more incentive to work save and invest.

Encourage financial literacy education programs and (low-cost) positive incentives.

Policies to encourage more personal savings and less individual spending.

Services

Access to services (job, health, training).

Mental health service.

Domestic violence services.

More policies and legislation about domestic violence.

New services which are based on income distributed across the population – e.g. carers and emotional supports.

Anti-free market sentiment

There needs to be a complete change to the "let the market decide" policy. The market has left us without a manufacturing industry, bad energy policy, and lack of affordable housing.

Education

Targeted vocational training with employment pathways.

Redistribution to schools on the basis of need – aka Gonski.

Reduce the cost of Higher Education.

Adequate and appropriate training of service providers (cultural sensitivity).

Reform education sector.

Retraining to move employees from declining industries to emerging industries.

Equitable and targeted support for improved and remedial education at all levels.

Fund education.

Remove financial assistance from private schools and use the funds in public education.

Increase aid for less privileged to attend tertiary education.

Work with tertiary sector (universities and TAFE) on retraining packages for unemployed.

Recognise that baby boomers have benefitted from advantages not now available to younger people (such as free tertiary education, reasonably priced housing and more certainty in employment markets).

Prioritised skill development at three. Quality of human resources is deteriorating everywhere.

Promote skills training availability and affordability.

View educating Australians as an investment in our future, not a business, and reform the economics of education accordingly. Continue to sell education to overseas students.

Education and training, matched with job creation and incentive.

Free tertiary education.

A more effective adult education/training sector that can support workers who lose their jobs due to industry restructuring/business closures.

Support the disadvantaged youth (primary school) to ensure they receive an education and get out of the poverty cycle.

Support for a strong education system for all Australians from the very early years to university (1-21). Through good education comes opportunity.

Ensure that tertiary education is available to all through the use of HELP and HECS assistance.

Funding for sport/music/extracurricular activities for children of low income households.

Family law

Laws ensuring fairer divorce outcomes.

Intergenerational inequality

Anti-age discrimination policies.

Industry assistance to provide employment for older Australians.

Social welfare system

Raise Newstart and Youth Allowance.

Put cut off timelines on welfare.

Universal wage.

Work for the dole.

Too many people on welfare.

Stronger welfare system. Increased participation requirements. Increased mutual obligation requirements in order to receive income support.

If guaranteed minimum income policy is not a universal basic income, then UBI should be considered. It could also be on a sliding scale, as your income exceeds \$100,000 it winds back and cuts out at \$200,000.

Early intervention to provide opportunities for all (much more expensive to pay benefits, healthcare or incarceration costs down the track).

Reduce incentives to 'game' the super-welfare system for retirees – e.g. extract and waste the super then rolling onto welfare. Policy solution would be to restrict the uses of super on retirement to include 'maximum' extractable amounts per annum.

Higher concentration of investment in marginalised elements of the community, such as low-income areas, indigenous and regional.

Reduced middle class welfare.

Low income people should be protected with a safety net of the minimum requirements of the basic needs.

People should be incentivised and rewarded for effort.

Unemployed and low paid people do not need a holiday to Bali. It is not an entitlement. Just because Fred goes to Bali, Joe shouldn't expect others to pay for him to have a trip to Bali too.

I think reforming the welfare system where instead of going on 'the dole' you are employed by the government for a period of time to do a range of jobs. These might be related to your local community or address a current gap in the job market or address an environmental issue, for example littering. There could be short-term contracts and longer-term contracts. That way the stigma of the dole would be reduced, tax payer money would be invested in government positions that are needed and workers could gain experience and learn new skills.

Tougher means testing on pensions and on 'middle class welfare' benefits such as health insurance.

Improved delivery of social services in terms of time frames.

Cash card should be universal.

Lift household income across the board especially middle class.

Incentives must be to encourage more people into the workforce – motivate people to find work.

Stop paying welfare!

Universal income...Adelaide is the perfect place to trial this idea (like somewhere in Canada already did).

Issue is to raise working middle class wages so gap between rich 10 per cent and rest is less.

Immigration

End abuse and rorts of 457 visa system.

Lower rate of immigration.

Moderately restrict immigration.

Gender issues

Closing the gender pay gap.

Quotas for gender diversity in private and public sector.

Childcare

Affordable childcare for working parents.

Early childhood services for all families and better access to shelters for victims of domestic violence.

Childcare paid whilst parents are in education or work.

Housing

Affordable housing policy.

Reduce rental stress.

Linked to housing affordability in a country where the home is a major investment instead of somewhere to live

Housing policy that priorities people, not solely investors.

Housing is critical. It would seem to be cheaper to give a homeless person a house, rather than all the social workers, consultants, mentors etc. that an individual homeless person gets. It would be good to review the effectiveness of these expenditures.

Taxation

More redistributive taxation-social wage policies.

Progressive taxation.

Address sorting of the welfare system.

Bracket creep reform.

Reform tax benefits to wealthy and target tax avoidance by wealthy and companies.

Higher taxation on wealth.

Abolish negative gearing on housing.

More equitable (and efficient) tax system.

Address multinational tax avoidance and excessive C-Suite pay.

CGT reform including addressing present overly generous taxation concessions on principal residence that encourage the use of superannuation lump sums to extinguish mortgages rather than provide for retirement.

Inheritance tax.

Stop providing significant tax offsets to the highest earners (trusts, negative gearing...etc).

Remove the 'poverty trap' of high effective marginal tax rates from low income households (i.e. loss of cash benefits as well as taxes kicking in).

Higher consumption taxes instead of income taxes.

Increase highest income tax rates for highest paid.

Decrease income tax rates for lowest paid.

Tighten up corporate tax laws for international firms.

Address over-reliance on income taxes and substitute other forms of tax revenue.

End abuse of transfer pricing tax system.

Not addressing the elephant in the room which is that wealth is not taxed at all in Australia. We need to significantly lower income taxes and start taxing wealth (land and estate taxes).

Overall, it makes no sense that 60 per cent of people are not contributing to the tax base because their benefits equal or exceed their tax contributions – this is not sustainable. So, measures to address inequality need to address both ends.

Tax superannuation payments as income at marginal rates (i.e. treat super as deferred income) with a tax credit for tax paid. For 90 per cent of people, they will not be worse off.

Tax undistributed super on death at flat 30 per cent rate (as we do currently for AL and LSL payouts).

Implement income threshold for eligibility for government benefits (e.g. top marginal rate threshold).

Bring back estate duties.

Align income tax system and welfare system so that you need a TFN to get government benefits.

Include asset declarations on income tax returns (with thresholds) so ATO can track and align changes of wealth with reported income.

Declare any use of tax havens illegal with confiscation of all assets for someone who has breached these (after a, say, three year transition period).

Remove CGT exemption.

No joint income in taxation – everyone treated as an individual.

Remove GST exemptions.

Tax the wealthy more, cut tax loopholes for the rich to hide income through trusts and offshore havens. Pat Rafter was Australian of the Year once, yet was a resident offshore for tax purposes.

Incentivizing business

Rewarding big business for positive social welfare contributions.

Tax breaks for businesses addressing inequality.

A negative income tax policy to help attach value to economic activities previously provided through the volunteering sector.

Social policy

Affirmative action.

Higher levels of public services generally.

Greater focus on addressing the social housing deficit.

Fighting against racism and bigotry.

Support the Arts.

Legalise abortion.

Early intervention policies to prevent long-term intergenerational welfare dependency.

Better policing of discrimination laws. Banning exemptions from these laws.

Child protection policies to break the cycle of poverty/abuse. Children who have been abused won't reach their full potential and will cost the public health/justice systems.

A review of drugs policy is urgently required.

Place based "hubs" which support highly disadvantaged people, particularly those in contact with the criminal justice system.

Reform of corrections urgently needed.

NT youth justice recommendations implemented nationally to break the cycle.

Regional issues

Provide better assistance to the regions.

Greater incentives to industry in regional Australia.

Relocate government bodies/services to regional areas.

Establish niche economic zones for regional development where development proposals must aim to bring all regions to a minimum level of economic and social parity, where developers and investors could enjoy unique benefits including forms of tax havens, industrial support, regulatory support that are unique to a region.

Wages/employment

Implement maximum wage.

Hold remuneration increase for a few years and address productivity issues.

Phase out Enterprise Agreements (EBA) and make Unions negotiate wages and conditions directly with the regulator and not employers.

Tighter requirements to relocate to find work, tighter requirements and support to retrain for available work.

Better enforcement of existing employment laws.

Employment opportunities.

Encouraging more economic investment to support employment and wage growth.

Jobs growth.

Better public employment services.

Reduction in maximum hours worked.

Need to look at low wage growth.

No reductions to minimum wage.

Wages growth to balance profitability before wage stagnation causes industrial instability and productivity falls over a cliff.

Control of managerial and executive salaries.

Technology and innovation

Investment in innovation technologies.

Address digital disruption affecting employment.

Ecological modernisation to create new industries and jobs.

The enormous impact of intelligence and robotics is not being managed by policy makers and the cities industries (urban planning and engineering).

Industry assistance to support new industries and emerging employment opportunities.

Economic research and discussion

Publicize poverty and inequality research.

Leadership, debate, discussion of implications of not addressing.

Indigenous issues

Indigenous Council to determine priorities for expenditure and delivery of methodology for addressing indigenous inequality issues.

More indigenous funding and land rights.

Recognise First Nations people in the constitution.

Indigenous, health and education outcomes have been poor despite considerable budgets so it is essential to have a plan which is constantly reviewed for progress.

Indigenous reconciliation and recognition; equal access to health, education and housing.

Family education

Education of parents on responsibilities in the home to bring up next generation of children will resolve more issues within a generation than any other.

General comments

As a society we need to stop assuming we need to be offended on someone else's behalf. All generations present need to understand that life can be tough and there is a real world – not the social media world that the generations are now living by. We need to be thankful for what we have and make the most of it. Life is great if you are not six feet under, although it sometimes can be hard and make you feel that the whole world is against you. I am not a minority, that doesn't mean that I don't understand that life can be tough, so stop trying to advise me otherwise and exclude me because I am not a minority.

Consistency.

The basic premise of most of the questions here is that the Government is there to "solve" a myriad of problems. The real solution is for the Government to reduce barriers to the effective performance of markets. The invisible hand of the bureaucrat inevitably introduces negative, unintended consequences.

We certainly need to keep building equality in our communities...led by building capacity, supported by benefits.

Partnering with industry.

Unless there is clear information about costs and benefits, advantages and disadvantages, winners and losers, it is impossible to choose policy.

Improve economic growth.

Base funding allocations on demonstrated outcomes, not promises, commitments or statements.

Creating a genuine level playing field.

Consumer spending growth is too low and is a major concern.

Address the source of the issue, rather than the symptoms. Look at more than money.

Inclusion.

Targeted housing, education and health policies are key to equality.

A whole of government response is needed to address inequality. There are thousands of families living on the margins, barely existing.

Too little investment in Australia's future. Australia's resources too freely given away.

The corporate sector must seriously address its social licence to operate.

When the average income can't afford the average mortgage, society will suffer in due course.

The policies address the symptoms not the causes – it is this kneejerk policy response that is the real problem in Australia.