



THE GOOD SOCIETY POLICY NETWORK

What follows is a list of brief descriptions of some missing – and needed – policy options, that are identified as likely to improve social wellbeing and perceived trust in governments. Some are already being developed while others require work.

They all meet the criteria of contributing to social needs and equity goals that are not being addressed by those in power:

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Please use the contact form on the Get Involved page to talk about these and other potential policies that could be included. Even more importantly, start the discussion with each other, in your office, with your neighbours, friends and family.

We've also developed a format for you to follow in preparing a policy. It is designed to be used for advocacy and lobbying as it lists the information that is likely to be useful in promoting options.

Rebuilding trust between elected representatives and voters

We propose establishing a national commission, to consult and devise new social contracts, with widely agreed goals that can be delivered by more social and equitable ways of governance and delivery.

The paradigm shift of the last four decades, with its emphasis on individuated self-interested materialism, has failed us by damaging the necessary trust of our democratic processes, and so creates distrust-based damaging social divides.

We need to review market-based government funding and policies to guarantee they address fairness and create collective wellbeing, not just more GDP growth!

The commission would need to devise inclusive modes of consultation to ensure views of all are contributed. Its initial report would clarify the appropriate roles and formal responsibilities of our governance and power brokers: elected bodies, public servants, corporations, public institutions, and groupings such as community/not for profit/co-ops/mutuals, identity and other groupings as well as informal deliverers of care and supports, both paid and unpaid.

There are too many examples of failing or absent policies at various government levels, some of which are briefly listed below. We need to debate and advocate for some or more of these, both before and in the coming election campaigns, and after, if we want to restore and renew a fairer trustworthy social contract!

Proposed policies to fix

Anti-poverty measures

| Short Term Changes to Welfare Payments | |
|---|--|
| Proposal | Reason |
| Newstart: raise payments by \$90 per week and index to CPI | The rate is too low and too many depend on it for the long term |
| Sole parent payment: reintroduce for those with children aged 8-15 | Research shows that more parenting time is required for older children, not less |
| Cashless Welfare Card Trials: stop the trials but not services | There is no evidence control works & services skew 'trial' |
| Disability Support Pension: establish less severe criteria for claimants | Unlikely to find jobs and income too low to live on |
| Age Pension: ensure adequate payments for retirees with no superannuation | Payment needs to ensure dignity for the elderly, care requirements and other needs |
| Medium Term Welfare Reform via Universal Basic Income (UBI) | |
| Proposal | Reason |
| Transfer people who are on income management trials to a UBI | It will cut complex administrative and trial costs |
| Recognise agency and control as part of payees' rights | Establish recipient rights to control their spending |
| Ban broad conditional controls over welfare payments | Controls should be limited to the plans of individual cases |
| Recognise creative activities by paying UBI | Low income levels block engagement in the creative arts |
| Cut superannuation concessions and replace with universal age pension | Fairer for lower income earners, women and others |

Privatisation/contracting out community services

| Proposal | Reason |
|--|---|
| Set clear criteria for not-for-profit v profit service funding | Distinguish market from community models |
| Abolish competitive tendering to create co-operation | Services need to trust and work collaboratively |
| Establish accountability criteria for users and members | They, not the funders, should judge the effectiveness |
| Fund government/community jointly planned, NGO local services | Funding profits doesn't meet community needs |
| Plans must meet proper local/cultural community needs | Very often, top down decisions are seriously flawed |
| Ensure ongoing funding is renewable for good services | Short term, limited contracts limit effectiveness |
| Fund under-resourced community needs to build equity | Develop communal strengths, not target deficits |
| Fund and establish local collaborations of support structures | Shares skills and knowledge of expertise and links |

Child Care Services

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|--|
| Set government control by funding service contracts to meet needs | Fix locations, fees, places etc to improve user access |
| Ensure all children can access services and quality care | Care must meet children's needs as well as parental needs |
| Ensure local childcare services link with local communities etc | Families need local links to build a sense of community belonging and reduce isolation |
| Adjust funding formula to ensure fair fees and access | Too many services impose high fees, no controls |

Women's Services

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|--|
| Ensure separate ample funding for women's domestic violence (DV) services | DV services meet complex needs, not just housing |
| Access to DV crisis payment regardless of visa status | Helps foreign 'brides' escape DV situations |

NDIS and aged services

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|---|
| Ensure all NDIS clients are well supported and protected | Local links are needed to protect people from questionable service providers, programs, carers etc. |
| Support co-ops/mutual aid groups to support NDIS clients and the aged | Encourages those with local skills to offer services |
| Link up NDIS individual workers to ensure fair conditions | The market model can make workers vulnerable |
| Increase home care funding and create local support etc. | Too many people end up in care without access to services |
| Control price and limit the access of for-profit care services | Customer choice doesn't work, need more controls |
| Ensure local easy access to complaints and rights support | RC shows many examples of exploitation and threats |

Increased funding for local groups to create employment opportunities

| Proposal | Reason |
|--|---|
| Increase funding and expand community-based services creating employment | Much more is needed for community jobs for the hard to employ |

TAFE community contributions

| Proposal | Reason |
|--|--|
| Restore funded non job training community courses | Outreach and community-based courses restored |
| Restore TAFE funding to meet skill needs/shortages | Allow discretion to meet local needs/shortages |

Housing

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|--|
| Increased capital funds for more city social housing | High housing costs are creating more homelessness |
| Offer tax incentives for investing in long term rentals | Ensures continuing renters have security |
| Ensure local regulations ensure the rights of long-term lessees | Security of tenure is currently not well protected |

First National Specific Concerns

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|---|
| Accept the Uluru recommendations and fund them | We all need the voice, treaties and truth telling |
| Recognise self-determined/cultural/local decisions | Current funding via capital cities is not effective |
| Fund local communities to improve safety and care | Building community wellbeing reduced crime etc |
| Restore original CDEP to create locally needed services | Community control and decisions improves lives |
| Fund the NACCHO Indigenous health planning models | The evidence is there, local based decisions work |
| Abolish competitive tendering top down funding models | This is why IAS model didn't – and couldn't – work |
| Fund Indigenous-run treaty planning processes | Negotiate between equals for just outcomes |
| Fund National Congress to continue | Needed source of advice/better evidence |
| Double the current number of rangers every three years and fund long term | Successful, useful, valuable – so must extend further |
| Fund language retention & ESL teaching for children | Value multilingual First Australian contributions |
| Mandate Indigenous Cultural Training for educators | Improves services knowledge and increases use |
| Ensure First Nations self-determination as crucial inputs | The evidence is that this delivers quality services |
| Reinstate /expand Budget Based direct CC funding model | Direct funding best for Indigenous/complex services |

Gender Inequity

| Proposal | Reason |
|--|---|
| Retain current government paid parental leave (PPL) as a minimum | Extra time is needed to enhance parent/baby time |
| Set date to extend PPL to 26 weeks and 6 weeks partner leave | Encourage partners to take more leave and meet ILO minimum levels |
| Include super contributions with PPL government payments as soon as possible | PPL should be more like other forms of leave, workplace entitled |
| Align eligibility for national employment standard leave with PPL pay | Match unpaid leave and pay eligibility to keep jobs |
| Fund equal pay gender based skills review to adjust pay | Legislate to fix adjusted gender biased pay rates |
| Subsidise pay rise for all child care workers in new packet | Underpay and high turnover damages service quality |
| Counter sexist stereotyping by funding school programs | Counter macho masculinity and too passive femininity |

Youth Services

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|---|
| Appoint a Minister for Youth to engage young people | Need cabinet power to fund youth strategies |
| Fund an NGO as a national voice for young people | We need an Australian Youth Affairs Coalition |

Immigration

| Proposal | Reason |
|--|--|
| Process asylum seekers in the region and set up a real queue | It's low cost and undercuts smugglers' business plans |
| Close Manus/Nauru, process here and resettle elsewhere | Discourages smugglers and stops persecution |
| Triple total refugee entrants to offer hope in region | Will undermine smugglers' business plan |
| Add staff to process all leftover asylum seekers in limbo | High level of insecurity as many have no rights to work/study |
| Give asylum seekers access to universities and TAFE fee help | If they stay, the community benefits. If not, they have gained more/new skills |
| Open refugee centres – stop controls over workers and visitors reports | Interim means to limit secret controls and damage |
| Offer 457 visas to sex workers, allowing them to work here legally | Stops unfair exploitative brothel owners/sex slavery |

Issues Related to Paid Work

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|---|
| Replace part time and full time work with flexibility | Changing status to valuing productivity not the number of hours worked |
| Recognise that productivity is higher with shorter hours | Lots of research shows long hours are not good for people's health or productivity. |
| Use technology and social changes to shorten all work hours | Give both men and women time to share care |
| Reward skills and competencies by their social value | Fix gender biased skills and pay relationships |

The Arts

| Proposal | Reason |
|---|---|
| Restore community-based funding to meet social needs | Participation in creative cohesion activities |
| Set criteria for diversity of funded public collections | Redefine diverse merit to represent us all |