

Australia's Demographic Challenges
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Reference; Submission 'Australia's Demographic Challenges'.

The Big picture;

Globalisation has now let the money-genie completely out of its bottle. The money-genie promises a motivated world, a competitive world, a world where status, stimulation, and security will truly be the rewards of the individual money achievers.

However, one thing that the humans of 100,000 years ago had to face, that we today have to face, and humans of the future will also have to face, is that each of us starts off, and ends, with a period of dependency. In theory at least all past, and to a great degree our present society, have relied primarily on the storage of '*social credit*', the extended family (or the state) financed the young and the old directly from income, it was essentially a community thing.

With globalisation we are entering an era where each individual will be expected to look after him/her self and it is being said, more and more, that we must '*each*' save for that inevitable future period of dependency (and also repay any debts for our initial period of dependency). And we must store what the future '*workers*' want to buy in exchange for their services, or in other words we must '*save*' what can be exchanged for money in the future.

Also, as we become more a '*service-based*' society, we increasingly need much more than shelter and food, we want travel, excitement, exotic foods, entertainment, good medical care, all this together with a stabilising population will make it increasingly more difficult to store sufficient '*Capital Stock*' to exchange in the future for the money to meet our desire for '*Services*'.

But luckily we have another '*storage-space*', which is termed '*human-wealth*', which includes the skills, energies, determination, ideas and knowledge of the population, this stock of '*wealth*' (like language) is a property of the general community, in fact it is this '*human wealth*' (I believe anyway) that makes a '*nation-state*' what it is.

In the '*Western World*' at the moment we are witnessing a battle, hopefully more of a melding, between asset-wealth (individualism-globalisation) and human-wealth (community-nation state), I'm sure some compromise will be arrived at!!!

The above is reality - it is inexorable.

The Local reaction;

The Australian '*work-force*' now works harder, for longer hours, and more efficiently than ever before. There is a very real social pressure, and expectation, on each individual worker to perform better, or to be replaced.

The threat of 'redundancy' fuels the need to accumulate sufficient funds during one's 'competitive' work period of life to pay for one's way through an ever increasing retirement period, which provides the 'motivation' to work harder, for longer hours, and more efficiently during one's paid work period.

In such a competitive world there is no place for the less-efficient. This falls rather heavily on the elderly as no amount of study or exercise or dedication can make a 70 year old (or even a 60 or 50 year old) competitive with say a more recently trained 30 year old who is desperately trying to accumulate wealth in anticipation of an early retrenchment.

In a recent newspaper article (Mercury 2-3-02) Natalie Jackson (*director of the University of Tasmania's Demographic Analytical Services Unit*) is reported to have stated that

'the world population is heading back towards zero population growth and that by 2008 more than half the world's people will live in countries where the birthrate is at or below the 2.1 births per woman which theoretically is necessary to replace each generation'. Perhaps of greater significance is her inference that this will be a people decision, not a politician's dream *'You cannot hold back that tide - it is inexorable'*.

She also goes on to state that *'Tasmania will be the first Australian state to reach natural decline - between 2012 and 2026'*.

Conclusion:

The 'man/woman-in-the-street' is doing something, they are having less children and using these savings to fund their old-age. Or in other words they are 'saving for a rainy day' by depositing in material-assets and not in children.

The suggestions in 'Australia's Demographic Challenges' fully support the above way of living. I guess in a way it is inexorable.


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