



nationbuild

the quest for self-reliance



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“Here is the fruit of much realistic thought about what we in this great, prospering country require to form a more cohesive and content nation. This book abounds in workable ideas how this might be achieved.”

Wolfgang Kasper
Emeritus Professor of Economics
Australian National University



Out late 2007!



Australia is universally regarded as a 'great country'. Few people, however, describe Australia as a 'great nation'. Why is this, and what is it that makes a nation 'great'?

There are many elements which distinguish greatness from the ordinary. However, one of the key measures of greatness is a nation's ability to influence and shape world events. Great nations are able to provide much needed leadership, guidance and very importantly, practical assistance in times of need. To be able to do this, a country must be strong both socially and economically and its citizens must feel confident in who they are and what they possess.

To be strong socially, a nation must have strong public institutions---parliaments, courts, universities, churches, the media. To be strong economically, a nation must be able to develop its natural resources and provide its citizens with vital infrastructure and services.

Australia has the potential to become one of the world's great nations.

This is our challenge.

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self reliance

Developing the strength and capacity to provide for oneself is as important to individuals as it is to nations. Self-reliant nations have the capacity to determine their own destiny, to care for their own citizens and importantly, to contribute to the welfare of others.

home ownership

Homeownership has been a great equaliser for Australians. It gives people a sense of belonging and a tangible stake in our democracy. We must ensure homeownership remains the expectation of the many not the privilege of the few.

families

No form of human association can match the profound benefits of being raised in a loving, functional and secure family. As the fundamental building block of society, we diminish their capacity to function effectively at our peril.

work

The tragedy of workplace regulation is that while it seeks to protect the interests of those *in* work it effectively holds many others out. The low skilled and least able are the most likely victims. Tearing down unjust regulation is about a stronger, more inclusive Australia.

tax

If the Australian tax system is to offer incentives to be productive, to expand activities, to shift from welfare to work, to pay tax and invest in the future then it must be simple, flat and, in the eyes of tax payers, a fair system.

trade & commerce

Our rise through world economic ranks over the past decade does not guarantee our economic future. As new entrants rise to take ground from us, we need to take the steps necessary to ensure our continued competitiveness.

property rights

Property rights provide the foundation on which many other rights and privileges are exercised. The progressive erosion of the rights of property owners through legislation, regulation, zoning and court decisions is significantly diminishing the opportunities for self reliance.

indigenous affairs

There is no future in laws which discriminate on the basis of race. All laws should be 'colourblind'. If a person needs assistance, their race or ethnicity should be irrelevant.

federalism

It is a well known principle that decisions are best made by those closest to the people who will be affected by those decisions. What began as a trickle of power to the centre has become a flood. Federalism is under attack and there appear to be few defenders.

global impact

Australia has much to offer to the world. We have become one of the most stable and prosperous nations on earth, but with privilege comes responsibility and the way we rise to meet these responsibilities will ultimately determine if we truly are a great nation.