

(The following excellent letter was submitted to "The Australian", October 1991.)

The Australian middle class only has its own apathy to blame for being bled dry by taxes. There is a clear alternative to our present complicated and anti-productive tax system, and a sovereign remedy to most, if not all, of our economic ills: Site Revenue.

In a Site Revenue economy all taxes (from income, payroll and sales tax to excise, tariff and stamp duties and imposts on financial transactions) are ended. Instead, the annual rental-value (as fixed by the free market) of sites privately occupied is collected to be the sole source of public monies. These sites may be on land (industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural etc.), on or in water (e.g. moorings, oyster leases), or in the air (high-rise, flight-paths, atmospheric pollution, broadcasting bands).

Sites are in limited supply and were provided by Creation, not made by humanity. This gift must not be negated. The value of sites is created by the entire community, not by the site-holder: this, and this alone, should be socialized. The only vestige of this proper socialization in Australia, Land Tax, is now under unwise threat, especially in

Queensland. Economic sanity is impossible unless those granted monopoly tenure over sites pay due Site Revenue back to the community. All other forms of revenue impede production and initiative or coddle incompetence.

Site Revenue would force governments to live within their budgets, and the utilization of sites to maximum economic advantage. Sites unused, or held merely for speculative purposes, would perforce be disgorged. The major cause of environmental abuse, inflation, boom-bust economy, rich-poor gap and (equally with attempts to legislate for morality) public graft, and the crippling price of sites (but not of improvements upon same), would all be destroyed.

Work (at a minimum as a comfortable, independent peasant) would become available to all willing to labour with hand or brain. Having options to wage-slavery, workers would be in a good bargaining position as against capital, so trade unions would become superfluous and co-operatives be fostered. Welfare dependency would be decimated. Political power would decentralize, with Site Revenue being collected locally and remitted inwards through regional to national level. Investment would be forced into productive, rather than speculative, enterprise. Foreign investment could no longer parasitize upon our community.

Politicians, bureaucrats, academics, trade union leaders and the welfare lobby are all well aware of the Site Revenue case, but all co-operate (recklessly and informally) to quash it, without advancing viable arguments against it, so as to divide the community and preserve their own vested interests. Middle Australia and the environment are the big losers.

Site Revenue is neither Communist nor Capitalist: just common sense. It is about time Australia too had its own revolution, took the strong medicine of Site Revenue and led the world.

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