

THE AUSTRALIAN

This fiscal folly is more than we can stanza

HENRY ERGAS THE AUSTRALIAN APRIL 28, 2014 12:00AM



Illustration: Eric Lobbecke Source: TheAustralian

THE nation's mood was grim that day,

Australians all were doomed to pay.

With NDIS fast coming due, PPL and Gonski too,

One question strained on every lip,

“Can Joe budge it?”

It rarely brings much merriment

To state a truth self-evident:

The more prolonged the spending spree,

The harsher the collapse must be.

As export prices, heading for the rocks,

Pushed the budget into hock,

Renewing the nation's fiscal insurance

Would test Hockey's courage and endurance.
Had the Treasurer the strengths
To take savings to those lengths?
Would the audit report inform
A bold strategy of reform?
Social spending was far too slack,
Bloated bureaucracies deserved the sack,
Healthcare outlays should feel the lash,
While salary packages got the axe.
Green rorts we couldn't afford,
Should be put to the sword,
And pensions needed to be contained,
Though reducing them went against the grain.
But would Talbragar, Wagga and Taree
Accept such fiscal misery?
Wouldn't the party's polling suffer
From making life that much tougher?
To dangers of that kind,
The partyroom was scarcely blind.
Could habits long rehearsed
Suddenly be reversed?
"Yes," called some, "let's not be idle:
But nor wilfully suicidal.
To restore the public purse
Isn't worth an electoral curse."
Critics sneered, cynics sniggered,
Would it all end in a whimper?
Had Joe trimmed his silhouette,
To succumb to fiscal wets?

Wayne, after all, had been sly,
Crafting budgets to deceive the eye,
The only arrows in his quiver,
Showman's tricks that didn't deliver.
As every day brought new endeavours,
Paid for in the never never,
Purely imaginary revenue surges
Fuelled Labor's spending urges.
Profligacy's icy slopes dazzle
But fiscal sins cast long shadows,
The bequests hard and bitter
of false promises' false glitter.
"Dulce et decorum non est",
if "vectigalia pergrandia pendere" is the rest:
Neither sweet nor fitting is the cost
of taxes borne for yesterday's loss.
As Canberra nights, now growing cold,
Drive each rat to its budget hole,
We finish, dear readers, in suspense,
About Joe and his task immense.
For those that render melancholic,
This thought closes our fiscal frolic.
In 30 years we will not get
Fairer, richer or out of debt,
If it remains spending more
That governments are elected for.
So may the Treasurer dispense
A dose of Liberal common sense.
Let a dawn of enlightenment

end the age of entitlement.

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