

Budget Challenge – Model Language Analysis 2

Due to recent chastisement from the Labor party of Joe Hockey for delaying the intergenerational report, the issue of how Joe Hockey and Tony Abbott are going to maintain and improve the budget has come to prominence in the media. The editor in his opinion piece in *The Australian* on 7/10/2014 optimistically contends that Liberal must continue their strives towards savings, despite Labor's defiant and obstructive opposition, in order to improve Australia's currently economic status. Kudelka, in his cartoon, contends that Abbott's Paid Parental Leave scheme renders substantial budget cuts impossible, while N. Bailey, in his letter to the editor, accusingly contends that Labor are solely to blame for the budget crisis, and must begin to help Hockey rather than oppose him.

The editor opens his article by declaring Labor's "chutzpah", deliberately utilising a colloquial term often used to describe cheeky yet powerless youth to expose Labor's immaturity, immediately framing Labor's stance as crude and jejune, akin to a child, throwing an economic tantrum purely to hinder Liberal's mature, mutually beneficial decision making, shamelessly abusing its little remaining power for a final prospect of revenge. Furthermore, the editor describes Labor's forecasting as "dewy-eyed", highlighting Labor's sentimental naivety, deliberately utilising a word associated with hopeless romantics to illustrate Labor's unrealistic optimism: dangerously desperate and lonely, willing to overlook obvious economic shortcomings to remain ignorantly enchanted by the preposterous possibility of a utopic Australia, a non-existent fantasy nation with no cuts and infinite subsidies. Moreover, the writer declares such irresponsibility "Labor's legacy", insinuating that such careless, undependable behaviour is intrinsically imbued in Labor's very character; regardless of any promising leaders or ephemeral success, Labor will inexorably revert to thoughtless immaturity, forever burdening Australians with amending Labor's almost irreversible errors.

After a scathing diatribe of Labor's incompetence, the writer shifts focus to Liberal's potential, specifically enlisting "Tony Abbott and Mr Hockey" to achieve their aims, suggesting that these two men are Australia's long-awaited, heroic leaders, two authority figures to lead Australia out of debilitating debt and deficit and into the glory of surplus, rescuing a trapped nation from the heinously destructive aims of Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd, the indisputably wicked villains of Australia's economic saga. Furthermore, the editor details Hockey's ability to "battle...his first budget" while "already turning attention to his second",

revealing Hockey's skilled multi-tasking prowess, able to expertly and efficiently rebuild Australia's economy, epitomising the remarkable calmness of a true leader under immense pressure.

After detailing Australia's very capable leadership, the editor optimistically depicts the nation's resultant position, claiming that the delayed intergenerational report will enable "deep economic discussion", suggesting that Australia's current issues will in fact propel it to extraordinary intellectual heights; unity and discussion through adversity will encourage widespread sophisticated thought, transforming Australia into a nation of informed, intelligent economists, collaborating to drive Australia above and beyond the current benchmark. Accordingly, the writer implores the Prime Minister and his Treasury to "take this opportunity" to reform Australia's long-term stability, implying that due to Australia's complete economic destruction, there is a rare chance for absolute rebuilding; only when all is lost, can Australia begin the arduous but enlightening process of reconquering the economic world.

The editor closes his article by imploring the Prime Minister to continue to keep his "overarching promise" of fixing the budget, encouraging Tony Abbott not to lose sight of his underlying goal, and to continue to strive for long-term improvement, rather than succumb to insistent political pressure to ease cuts.

In sharp contrast with the editor, Kudelka illustrates Abbott and Hockey in a WWI-era plane, portraying them as belonging to a bygone era, anachronistic and regressive, unidentifiable with contemporary society and unable to comprehend or fix modern-day issues such as excessive paid parental leave. Kudelka uses the battered airplane to represent the dilapidated government, unable to maintain a steady or safe position, and therefore in desperate need of replacement; the Liberal government have sufficiently served their country, but they cannot continue.

However, N. Bailey believes that any damage is solely due to Labor's atrocious incompetence, detailing Labor's refusal to adopt a "bipartisan" approach, portraying the Labor party as megalomaniacal, power-crazed autocrats, dismissing the good of the nation in favour of unnecessarily challenging Liberal's noble intentions, manipulatively fooling voters into believing that Liberal is in fact mistaken, and Labor must return to power to save the nation. Moreover, Bailey ridicules a different party, Palmer United, for their "semi-permanent state of indecision", insinuating that Palmer United are inexperienced and unsophisticated, incapable of making the difficult, yet crucial decisions inherent in leadership positions, and therefore should not be awarded any power, lest Australia recede into an intimidated nation of hesitance and indecision, contrary to core Australian values of direct honesty and fairness. Finally, Bailey declares

that Shorten must “put his ambition aside” and “admit errors”, highlighting Shorten’s stubborn, sinful pride, egotistical and self-absorbed, unwilling to gaze beyond diluted self-interest, rendering him incapable of adequately and selflessly representing Australia’s best interests.

Hockey's budget challenge harder this year and next

- EDITORIAL
- [THE AUSTRALIAN](#)
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YOU must marvel at Labor's chutzpah. After postponing the intergenerational report due last year, to push it to the far side of the election, Labor chastises Joe Hockey for delaying it a few months from the end of this year to early next. The opposition Treasury spokesman has used this trifling delay for a paper dealing in generational challenges to claim a new budget crisis. "I mean their budget is out of control," Chris Bowen said yesterday. "We've seen massive budget dysfunction." We have, Mr Bowen, that's the point. Dewy-eyed forecasting, profligate spending, promised surpluses, unmet targets, delayed intergenerational reports and record deficits have created a debt problem and entrenched a structural deficit that demands attention. This is Labor's legacy and it undercuts the opposition's ground when it offers fiscal criticism, especially when it is blocking significant savings measures.

The Treasurer, well aware of these political realities, must find a way to marry fiscal necessity with political possibility. There is little Mr Hockey can do to prevent the obstinate blocking in the Senate or the lack of economic responsibility that underpins it. Yet the government must remain committed to repairing the budget and establishing the conditions to maximise economic growth to build a position that can insulate the nation from future shocks. To deliver these aims, Tony Abbott and Mr Hockey must do two things, simultaneously: deliver what savings and reforms they can through measures that don't require legislation or by negotiating and compromising in the Senate; and continue to make the public argument for economic reform to increase political pressure on their obstructionist opponents.

While the parliamentary battle to deliver savings from his first budget is ongoing, Mr Hockey, rightly, is already turning attention to his second. The outcome of political haggling over budget measures will have an impact on calculations for the intergenerational report. So it makes sense to delay it until next year. Then the confronting facts about long-term expenditure trends against long-term revenues can be used to deepen economic discussion in the lead-up to next May's budget. Not that discussion should ever stop.

Falling commodity prices and downward trends in China and global growth forecasts are combining to make the fiscal task increasingly difficult for the government. The task is complicated further by additional expenditure totalling at least \$1 billion over the forward estimates for increased domestic security services and the military deployment to Iraq. We await the mid-year economic and fiscal outlook statement for details of new savings offsets for these new outlays. But the indications are ominous that Mr Hockey could oversee a blowout in his first outcome: the budgeted \$30 billion deficit. He should work hard to avoid such a setback.

The Prime Minister and his Treasurer should take this opportunity to re-examine some of their own promised expenditure. The overly generous paid parental leave scheme should be scrapped or delayed, especially given so many other reforms face the same fate courtesy of the Senate. The government also could pick up a windfall if its so-called direct action plan is blocked in the Senate. If Labor and the Greens are hypocritical enough to vote against abating carbon, why not pocket the savings? These two measures could save up to \$7 billion — not a bad start. Whatever voters may think about broken promises so far, the Prime Minister is right to say his overarching promise was to fix the budget. He must be willing to apply this imperative to his own pet policies, as well as all other government spending.

Cartoon

By Kudelka



Labor's budget choice

Letter to the editor, N. Bailey

ANOTHER excellent article by Chris Kenny on the attitude adopted by Bill Shorten and Labor instead of policy generation (“Shorten starts second year scoring high on popularity, low on serious policy reform”, 4/10).

It also is surely too late for the opposition to admit to the appalling economic chaos created during the Rudd-Gillard governments. That admission should have been acknowledged following the election and a bipartisan approach adopted to bring the budget back to surplus.

As it stands, with the opposition blocking key budget elements in the Senate and the Palmer United Party in a semi-permanent state of indecision, the Treasurer is stuck in some sort of limbo. It would benefit the nation if Shorten put his ambition aside, admit errors made during the six years of Labor, and agree to work with the Coalition to reduce the monumental debt and deficit it created.