percapita

FIGHTING INEQUALITY IN AUSTRALIA

2022 End of Year Report

The Year at a Glance.

10
NEW REPORTS PRODUCED

8
SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT INQUIRIES

3376
MEDIA MENTIONS

4
NEW STAFF

9
IN-PERSON EVENTS

8
WEBINARS

Contents.

Reports....4
Submissions to Government Inquiries....8
Events....10
Appearances....11
The Centre for New Industry....12
Staff Team....13

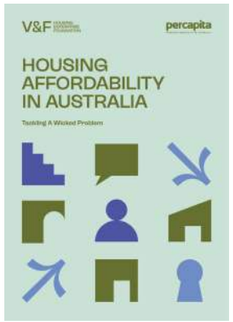
> “So much of this agenda reflects the work we have done at Per Capita over the last four years. The focus on foundational workers, on reconstructing and diversifying our industrial base, on achieving genuine full employment, and delivering a stronger, fairer future for all - this is the heart of the Per Capita project, and it’s thrilling to hear that agenda expressed by the Prime Minister and Treasurer of our nation.”

Emma Dawson,
at the Jobs and Skills Summit, 1/9/22

Reports.

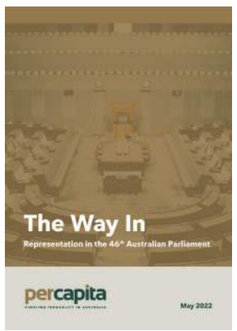
Housing Affordability in Australia: Tackling a wicked problem

Secure housing in Australia is increasingly out of reach for a growing proportion of the population – arguably more so than in any comparable country. And it's not just about first home buyers - rents are soaring across the country and social housing is in desperately short supply after decades of neglect. What can be done to reverse course, to reposition the home as a source of shelter and security for all, rather than material wealth for a few? This report for the V&F Housing Enterprise Foundation sets out some options.



The Way In: Representation in the 46th Australian Parliament

This report explores the path to parliament taken by the members of the 46th Federal Parliament. It considers a wide variety of identity, vocational and experiential factors, and builds on the previous Per Capita report looking at the 45th Federal Parliament published in 2019. At its core, the research seeks to understand whether there is a particular path to parliament that allows one group to exercise a much greater degree of power and influence than any other, and shine a light on the underrepresented parts of our community.

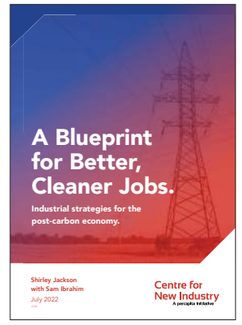


Contracting Care: The rise and risks of digital contractor work in the NDIS

Within the NDIS market for care there are several companies operating as digital contractor marketplaces, with an operating model similar to that of Uber. Disability support workers can, without registering with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, offer support services as sole traders. The digital contactor marketplaces then take a cut of the income received, without providing any of the legal supports that a traditional employer would provide. This report examines some of the potential consequences of these emerging trends in employment arrangements in the disability care labour market.

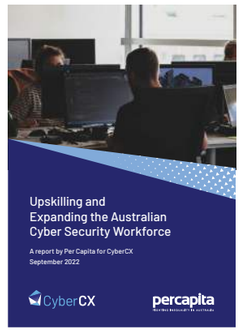
A Blueprint for Better Cleaner Jobs: Industrial Strategies for the post carbon economy

The political, ecological and economic challenge of decarbonising Australia's energy and industrial base is crying out for leadership. We have a unique opportunity to reframe our economy in the interests of the people who work within it. This report aims to provide insights and options to policy makers, so that we can both confront the challenges and seize the opportunities of action on climate change.



Upskilling and Expanding the Australian Cyber Security Workforce

Australia is experiencing a critical skills shortage across the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, and especially in cyber security. The report models the shortfall within the cyber security workforce, forecasting the anticipated increase in the size of the workforce needed by 2026. The report outlines a possible approach to upskilling and reskilling, also considers the supplementary role of targeted migration in addressing technical skills shortages.

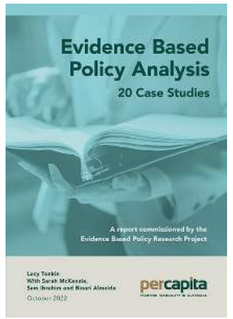


A Home of One's Own: Philanthropic and social sector solutions for women's housing

This report applies a gender lens to the housing crisis. It finds that women and children escaping family violence, single mothers and older single women are most at risk of falling into homelessness. Australia needs a big investment to create a lot more secure, affordable housing. This requires the private sector, led by institutional and social impact investors, developers, and philanthropists, to step up to the challenge. This report sets out that challenge and proposes some solutions.

Evidence Based Policy Project 2022

Public policy should be based on evidence, not on ideology. Now in its fifth year, the Evidence Based Policy Project began when the newDemocracy Foundation commissioned two think tanks with different ideological leanings to rate 20 recent high-profile state and federal policies, determining the degree to which each policy was evidence-based, regardless of their ideological support. In 2022 Per Capita was joined for the first time by the Blueprint Institute to complete the analysis.



Our Culture, Our value: The Costs of Hearing Loss in Australia

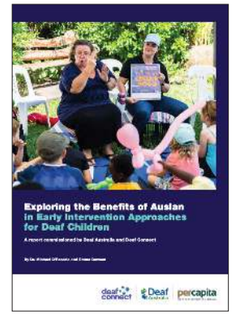
Deaf Connect and Deaf Australia commissioned Per Capita to determine the broad impacts of hearing loss and their associated costs. The financial impacts of hearing loss are substantial, with the most significant costs associated with lost productivity caused by hearing loss, and the disabling effects of hearing loss. The total cost of hearing loss is currently $1.78 billion annually. This is arguably one of the largest health associated costs within the Australian economy.

Our Culture, Our Value: The social and economic benefits of Auslan

This report identifies that the economic benefits of sign language are significant, and that the Social Return on Investment of Auslan access and usage are likely to substantially exceed the modest investment required to facilitate language access and exposure. Beyond the economic benefits, that are exceedingly high, the cultural benefits of Auslan to the Deaf community are significant. The embedding of Auslan into civic systems is essential in shifting mindsets from 'conscious ableism' to a cultural linguistic view of Auslan that aligns with the values of the Deaf community.

Exploring the Benefits of Auslan in Early Intervention Approaches for Deaf Children

The parents of children that are born with hearing loss or acquire hearing loss before learning to speak face complex decisions about the type and timing of intervention best able to support their child's language acquisition. The choice of whether, and when, to begin Auslan education with their child is often made harder by intervention choices being presented as either/or decisions. Deaf Connect and Deaf Australia commissioned Per Capita to explore some of the impacts of delayed Auslan intervention on Deaf and hard of hearing children.



Submissions to Government Inquiries.

Repeal of the Cashless Debit Card

The Cashless Debit Card is inherently disempowering and stigmatising. The stated objective of the Cashless Debit Card presumes that the fact of being in receipt of income support means that a person is both more likely to experience addiction and unable to managetheir financial resources. We reject these assumptions.

Jobs and Skills Australia Bill

This submission supports the proposed Jobs and Skills Australia Bill as crucial and necessary legislative reforms that build towards a true Full Employment economy. In particular, the submission highlights the challenges of skills mismatch and underutilisation, the crucial role that funding plays in our vocational education and training system, the need for effective coordination and the importance of smoothing labour market transitions in a Full Employment economy.

Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave

Per Capita commended the expanded scope of this Bill, in that it acknowledges that Family and Domestic Violence does not respect gender, postcode or age: it can happen to anyone. In particular, Per Capita supports paid entitlement for all employees, including casual employees. Additionally, Per Capita makes several suggestions as to the drafting of the Bill, which will provide clarity on the entitlements.

FWA "Equal Pay for Equal Work" Bill

Per Capita found the scope of this Bill woefully inadequate to address the problem it seeks to tackle: to 'stop the exploitation and limit the use of labour hire contracts by removing the incentive for employers to do so, which is lower wages'. Further, Per Capita submits that the use of the phrase 'equal pay for equal work' in the title of the Bill, a phrase most commonly associated with the ongoing struggle for gender pay parity, is inappropriate.

Work and Care

This submission looks at the impact of unpaid labour and care through a gender lens. It is overwhelmingly women in heterosexual relationships with dependent children who undertake care and other unpaid domestic work in Australia, more so than in most comparable OECD nations. Per Capita welcomes the Senate's initiative to inquire into the interaction of paid and unpaid work, especially the work of care, and its effects on workers, carers and recipients of care. Consideration of how we might better balance the demands of paid labour with the needs of our families and loved ones is fundamental to creating a more equitable and just society.

Secure Jobs Better Pay Bill

Per Capita's submission is supportive of the Bill and focuses on supported bargaining, single interest employer authorisations and cooperative workplaces. It also addresses some common criticisms of the Bill. These reforms are reasonable, not radical, and do not depart from the core elements which have persisted throughout every iteration of Australia's industrial relations system. Following this submission we were invited to give evidence to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee's Inquiry.

Employment White Paper Consultation

Our central argument is that the achievement of social objectives such as full employment, the transition towards net zero carbon emissions and reducing income and wealth inequality is constrained by the current New Consensus Macroeconomics derived policy frameworks, which prevent the effective coordination of monetary and fiscal policy. Per Capita believes that the Federal Government should return to a genuine full employment framework, utilising coordinated fiscal and monetary policy for specific social objectives as was the case following World War II.

Pre-employment Programs and ParentsNext

Our historical overview explains how both in its premise and in practice ParentsNext is a failed program. In this submission we conclude that ParentsNext is overweighted towards compulsory attendance and participation. It is too focused on managing parents' behaviour and time use, and it assigns to a complex web of government agents and information system processes the power to cause uncertainty, stress and harm, by suspending payments for non-attendance backed up by the risk of payment cancellation. The activities the program proposes and includes in participants' plans are too limited and are driven more by mutual obligation requirements than by an effective strategy to encourage and enable preparation for employment.

Events.

Webinars

Our lunchtime webinar series featured a variety of topics and speakers including:

- Population Shock, with Abul Rizvi
- The Big Switch: Australia's Electric Future, with Saul Griffith
- Burning Down the House: Reconstructing Modern Politics, with Jo Dyer
- The Idea of Australia: A search for the soul of the nation, with Julianne Schultz
- The Woman President, with Dr Ramona Vijeyarasa
- Lone Wolf: Albanese and the new politics, with Katharine Murphy
- 2 federal budget analysis webinars, hosted with the McKell Institute, Chifley Research Centre and John Curtin Research Centre

John Cain Luncheons

July saw the reurn of our monthly John Cain Luncheons, an event inherited from our 2020 merger with the John Cain Foundation. Speakers and topics included:

- Who Needs the ABC? With Matthew Ricketson and Patrick Mullins
- Safety Net: The Future of Welfare in Australia, with Daniel Mulino
- Sub Imperial Power: Australia in the International Arena, with Clinton Fernandes
- Dreamers and Schemers: A political history of Australia, with Frank Bongiorno
- The Whitlam Government: 50 years on, with Professor Jenny Hocking

We record all our webinars and John Cain Luncheon presentations and discussions. If you'd like to re-watch an event, catch up on one you missed or share it with someone you think might be interested, you can find the links on the Past Events page of our website here, or on our YouTube channel here. The recordings are usually available within a few days of the event.

Appearances.

Here is a selection of our top speaking engagements and opportunities to represent Per Capita this year:

Executive Director Emma Dawson received an invitation to the Albanese Government's Jobs and Skills Summit in Canberra, the largest gathering of leaders and representatives from the labour movement, business, academia and civil society in a decade.

Shirley Jackson participated in the October Budget Lockup, and Emma Dawson spoke on a panel at the official Women's Budget Statement event, attended by the Prime Minister, Treasurer and Minister for Finance and Women.

We published a total of 15 op ed pieces this year.

Emma appeared as a panelist on ABC TV's The Drum three times.

Director of the Centre for New Industry, Shirley Jackson, appeared as a panelist at the Melbourne Writer's Festival, speaking on *The Age of Anti Ambition* – discussing the phenomenon of "Quiet Quitting" and what has been dubbed "The Great Resignation" following the pandemic.

Shirley was a panelist at the RMIT event "*Building the social economy co-operatively: The role of governments and educators.*"

Emma joined the panel for a UQ webinar event called *"Time for a Four Day Working Week?"*

Emma also joined the panel for a Future Women event entitled "*Budgeting for Women's Success*," analysing the October budget with a gender lens.

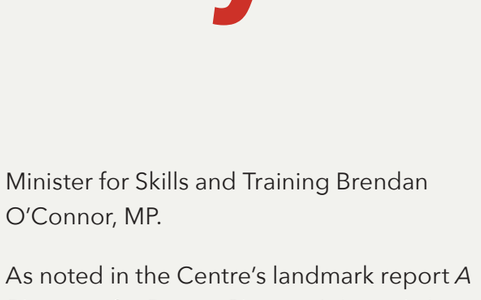
The Centre for New Industry.

In August this year Per Capita proudly launched the *Centre for New Industry*, a research centre to tackle Australia's economic, climate and employment challenges and propose bold and courageous industrial policy solutions. The new Centre is part of our work to support the creation of a full employment, post-carbon economy and to ensure we create the jobs of the future. The Centre was launched during Skills Week by Minister for Skills and Training Brendan O'Connor, MP.

As noted in the Centre's landmark report *A Blueprint for Better, Cleaner Jobs*, only by investing in workers and their communities can the shift to a net-zero carbon economy avoid the unemployment and insecurity that previous structural adjustments have created. Evidence shows that there are credible options available if we have the collective will to implement them.

> The political, ecological and economic challenge of decarbonising Australia's energy and industrial base is crying out for leadership. The next five to ten years are crucial to ensure that the worst outcomes of the climate crisis are mitigated, and we have a unique opportunity to reframe our economy in the interests of the people who work within it.

Shirley Jackson
Director, Centre for New Industry



The Centre was launched by Minister for Skills and Training Brendan O'Connor, MP, along with Centre Director Shirley Jackson and Per Capita Executive Director Emma Dawson.

Staff Team.

Emma Dawson **Executive Director**	Matt Lloyd Cape **Director of Equitable Housing**	Shirley Jackson **Director, Centre for New Industry**
Dr Michael D'Rosario **Chief Economist**	Dr John Falzon **Senior Fellow, Inequality and Social Justice**	Dr May Lam **Senior Fellow, Employment Services Reform**
Sam Ibrahim **Research Economist**	Sarah McKenzie **Research Associate**	Lucy Tonkin **Andrew Herington Fellow**
Meredith Eldridge **Communication and Events Manager**	Rebecca Connell **Production and Administration Assistant**	Lucy Tyrrell **Intern**

The Per Capita team has grown this year with four new positions: Senior Fellow, Employment Services Reform; Research Associate; Production and Administration Assistant; and the Andrew Herington Fellowship. We were also delighted to have Lucy Tyrrell join us for an internship as part of her tertiary studies.

Our deepest thanks to all our donors and partners who made this possible. This exciting and encouraging growth is only possible thanks to your support.

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