

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



ASSET RICH BUT STILL BROKE

There is a severe lack of understanding at all levels of Australian society about the debt this country finds itself in.

We have become lazy and soft over the past 45 years and we have our political leaders lack of leadership and our own conceited smugness is to blame.

We have ACTU President Ged Kearney coming out on national TV (06/05/17) once again stating we are a "rich country" and wages should rise.

With a GDP of \$1,500 billion, debt of \$2,400 billion (debt/GDP ratio 160 per cent) I would say we are asset rich but broke and we are unlikely to repay all the debt.

The only place we are still competitive in the world market is in primary production, both mining and agriculture. This is because we have to compete with every other country producing the same product at the same quality for market share which is done on prices paid.

This is the only thing that keeps Australia partially afloat.

Labour in this country has been protected from reality for the past 45 years with wages going ever higher never being asked to compete on the international market to justify these rises.

The consequence is the loss of manufacturing in this country and the employment that goes with those industries.

We wonder why backpackers take over the labour market in some sectors like tourism and agriculture? The answer is simple. They want to work and the wages paid are more competitive and allow business to make a little profit.

Collectively the Australian populous needs to stop expecting a free ride through life and work its way back to competitiveness. This will not happen until we are forced to and that day is getting ever closer in the shape of a financial downturn the like of which we have not seen for nearly 90 years.

- Richard Holme, Malanda

BRUCE HWY CLOSURES HIT OUR ROAD NETWORK

I commend North and Central Queensland residents for their preparation ahead of Cyclone Debbie. While we can prepare our homes and businesses as best we can, there is not much we can do to ward off the disastrous affects cyclonic weather and flooding have on our road network.

The impacts from closed and flooded roads on the coast during our tropical wet seasons have a wider impact on communities and the north's economy, from delayed deliveries of goods and services, ruined fresh produce, reduced business and tourism and the inability to attend jobs.

A 2011 North Queensland Roads Alliance report assessing the 'Economic Impacts for North Queensland of Closures of the Bruce Highway', found that a 24 hours loss of trade on the highway resulted in negative economic impacts in North Queensland and the South East, including; direct impacts of \$3.3 million in output, \$.9 million in income and 21 full time employment positions.

Safe and reliable road access is essential to sustaining growth and the health of regional and rural communities. That is why 49 partners, including 33 councils, came together to develop the Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan (IQ-RAP). The IQ-RAP prioritises upgrades over the next 18 years and is designed to assist stakeholders and governments to assess and prioritise projects for funding.

It is vital to our economic prosperity that Queensland has a robust network of inland roads connecting to and providing viable alternate routes to the Bruce Highway, as well as providing more direct inland routes to southern states.

- Cr Jane McNamara, Flinders Shire Mayor, IQ-RAP Working Group Deputy Chair

GM STAGNATION THREATENS FOOD SECURITY

ISAAA's latest annual industry report on

global Genetically use shows it has steady soy, corn, canola, contain only the two released in 1996 - B tolerance and Bt in.

Long promised but complex traits such tolerance; nitrogen nutritious foods; high public funding was 30 years on trying to fruition, without success.

Over 90 per cent planted last year in South American countries Brazil - by far the two producers - drove a small but the 24 other GM minor increases or crops in 2016. Burkina 400,000 ha of GM cotton GM fibre quality ruined reputation and down Romania also imposed with farmer support maize. Only 18 million the world's 570 million commodities. Most (for animal feed, biofuels people willingly eat it.

Faced with hard times merging and cross-listing to stay viable. Soon just and seed conglomerates ChemChina/Syngenta - will own over 70 per cent seed globally, including.

This powerful cartel absolute control over global food supply - so fertilisers, machinery Food security for future so the concentration prohibited.

- Bob Phelps, Executive Ethics

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