

# Andrew Bolt

AUSTRALIA'S MOST READ COLUMNIST



It's not corporate greed that's drowning us in debt. It's community greed – the greed and the envy of millions of Australians

# Greed? Reflect on your own

**W**ANT to see the greedy bastards who really are stuffing up our country, taking money that's not theirs? No, it's not the bankers.

Not just them, anyway.

No, get yourselves a mirror. And buy two more for Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten.

Look at yourselves, still demanding even more handouts your children will have to pay for, as the federal government's gross debt soars to \$500 billion next year.

Look: 44 per cent

of you are now living completely off government salaries, pensions and handouts, as calculated by *The Australian*. All supplied by other taxpayers.

Look at you, vilifying the rich as parasites even though one in three of you get more in handouts than you pay in taxes.

Have you thanked the rest of us?

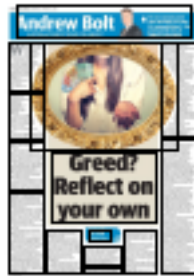
See, it's not corporate greed that's drowning us in debt. It's community greed — the greed and the envy of the millions of Australians spending

billions they've stolen from their children and snatched from the "rich".

Agreed, a lot of those handouts make for a better society. But you could at least stop trashing those rich as near criminals while you stuff your pockets with what they've earned.

ABC presenter Jon Faine might even stop attacking as "oligarchs" the likes of entrepreneurial miner Gina Rinehart, who actually paid \$466 million in taxes in a single year — enough to run Faine's bloated ABC for five months.

It's so easy and gratifying to bash the greedy rich. So popular, too, that politicians compete to smash these scapegoats rather than tell equally greedy voters some home truths.



There's Shorten, the Labor leader, blasting the "corporate greed" of the banks when he, himself, greedily snaffled a secret \$40,000 private donation from an employer whose workers were members of the union Shorten then led.

There's Prime Minister Turnbull, berating bankers for their "singular pursuit of an extra dollar of profit", when he, himself, was a reputedly ruthless merchant banker who made an estimated \$200 million.

Spare me lectures on greed from those two.

But look who they're trying to appeal to by hanging bankers from the lampposts.

Yes, you. Aren't you embarrassed?

Sure, there are greedy bankers. But there are also greedy bakers — as well as electricians, teachers, lawyers, clerks, builders, real estate agents, salesmen and welfare cheats.

It wasn't that long ago that we even jailed a former Labor national president, Michael Williamson, for greedily taking members' money.

Yes, all these bank bashers and barely one mirror between them.

Take "social justice" warrior Josh Bornstein, of the pro-Labor Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.

There he was in the *Guardian Australia*, thundering against "predatory crooks in our ethically challenged banks".

But, wait, Maurice Blackburn? Isn't that the firm that a couple of years ago won a \$794 million payout for victims of Victoria's 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and that, while it took its own rich cut, has yet to share the honey from the fund it administers with the victims, themselves?

All above board, true. But spare me lectures from Bornstein, too.

The fact is there's plenty of greed to go around without singling out any group. Indeed, there's a general

decline of civility and concern for the common wealth, and it's got nothing to do with capitalism. Capitalism is just a system that frees people to invent, invest, hire, sell, manage and work, within a framework of morals and laws set (hopefully) by the citizens of an equally free democracy.

This creation of Christian cultures has been unbelievably successful in making billions of people healthier

and richer than ever before. If some capitalists break the law, don't blame their tools but their souls — and maybe the decline of serious faith. And don't think socialism is the answer.

Capitalism may make people unequally rich, but socialism just makes people equally poor.

But in practice, socialism also has its own elite, often thugs, bullies and kleptomaniacs corrupted by far too much power.

Yet here we go again, effectively slipping toward socialism because of sheer envy that someone else might be even richer.

What makes that slide even

slippier is that half of Australia's voters are now dependent on government payments and handouts.

They naturally see "big government" as their saviour, not a menace. You can see in this election campaign how the rot has set in.

Labor now dares to openly boast it will hit us with an extra \$100 billion of tax rises and charges over 10 years — yes, \$100 billion — almost all to pay for yet more spending.

Mind you, the Turnbull government, terrified of seeming mean, doesn't have the guts to insist we need to cut the spending that keeps growing every year.

This orgy, unleashed by the Rudd Labor government, has Canberra still handing out nearly \$100 million a day more than it earns.

Some state governments are even worse, so that total government debt has tripled as a share of the economy in just 10 years — and is still growing.

This is playing with fire. You know

this money must be paid back, don't you? Or are you proud to leave the bill to your kids?

Worse, if China suddenly falters, we're in the deepest trouble. See already how China's steel glut threatens to wipe out Whyalla?

It's worrying how reluctant Australians are to confront such truths, and alarming how few politicians are game to tell them.

Instead, Labor and the Greens spin the fantasy that there's almost no handout we can't afford. A disability insurance scheme costing \$110 billion over the next decade? No worries! A Labor plan for schools costing an extra \$37 billion? Of course! Billions more for hospitals? Only the cruel would say no.

Even the Turnbull government can't resist spending borrowed billions. In the past six months, it's promised \$1 billion to help foreign countries handle global warming, \$1.1 billion for an innovation statement no one can remember, \$1 billion extra to fight hepatitis C, \$1 billion for loans for a clean energy fund wanted by the Greens, and \$2.9 billion to the states for extra health spending.

Around the Western world, it's this same ugly story of politicians exploiting the envy and greed of a pampered public that would rather get a handout than earn a living.

Look how unexpectedly successful US presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has been in attacking "the greed of Wall Street and corporate America". He's particularly loved by students for promising to make other people pay for their degrees.

Now Sanders has flown to Rome to praise the Pope for being almost as big a socialist: "What he is saying is that we cannot continue to go forward when so few have so much and when greed is such a destructive force." Of course, Sanders is right that we're choking on greed.

But he's wrong to think the most dangerous greed is that of rich bankers. Get out those mirrors.

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