

VISION FOR AUSTRALIA OF THE FUTURE

A PERSONAL VIEW

Vision for Australia of the Future: A Personal View

Australia must find its place in its geographic part of the world. Looked at from the perspective of Asia, our country is an anachronistic left-over from the British Empire. Our value systems are often out of harmony with those of our neighbours. Whereas we emphasise individual rights and the rule of law, they emphasise community, obligations and the rule of powerful élites. If the Australian culture is to survive in its unnatural geographical situation, it will be important that future citizens see it in relation to the European centres from which it derived but also in relation to the Asian and Pacific neighbours with whom it must coexist. There can be few issues of greater importance than defining the special features of Australian culture. Multiculturalism should be seen as an aspect of toleration and acceptance of difference. An element of non-conformity and respecting individual differences should be inculcated. We can learn this much from our North Asian neighbours. Excellence in mathematics, science and technological subjects and streaming of gifted and talented students will be essential if our economy is to be rescued from a perpetual doldrum. In short, we must find our place in the world; define it without parochial nationalism; map out the things we can do best in our continental country; and provide a model of the reconciliation of peoples and individuals of different backgrounds. That model could provide a goal for the rest of the world to emulate.