



John Storey Discussing How Migration Plans Fail Australian Pensioners, Veterans And Students Who Want To Get Into Work – 6PR Live With Oliver Paterson

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On May 25, IPA Director of Legal Rights John Storey discussed how migration plans fail Australian pensioners, veterans and students who want to get into work.

Below is a transcript of the interview.

Oliver Peterson:

John Storey is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Public Affairs. G'day, John.

John Storey:

G'day, Ollie. How are you?

Oliver Peterson:



I'm good, John. How many additional Kiwis do you think will be making the move across the ditch and calling Australia home?

John Storey:

Well, based on the new government policy changes, we expect that the net increase, so that's net, people come and go every year, but the net increase in Australia over four years will be 130,000 new Kiwis will become Australian citizens.

Oliver Peterson:

That's a lot of New Zealanders who want to become Aussies.

John Storey:

It is indeed. And that comes on top of 1.5 million. That's the government's estimate of net migration into Australia over five years. So the government's figures didn't factor in the likely increase from immigration from New Zealand from their policy change. So that's a hell of a lot of people. That's about three-quarters of Perth. Our country will increase in size in five years. The problem is we're not building a new Perth in that time.

Oliver Peterson:

Well, that is the problem, John. I mean, we are in the middle of a housing crisis at the moment, plus all the other infrastructure demands in Australia. Quite simply, where are people going to live? How will they be educated? How will they be able to get medical treatment in the hospitals, John? We haven't planned for this.

John Storey:

No, that's the problem. Immigration's been part of the Australian story. It'll continue to be part of the Australian story. But it needs to be planned for it to work well for Australians. And also the migrants that come here. I mean, people come here for opportunity. They want to send their kids to schools. They want to be able to have access to transport and hospitals, but we're not planning for it, particularly in housing. There's going to be hundreds of thousands of housing shortfall across the country that we're just not planning for. So to have so many people come here without a proper plan, the result will be inflation in Perth has the highest based on the latest March figures, the highest increase year-on-year in rental prices, 14.6%. Expect more of that.

Oliver Peterson:

The Migration Review pointed to the fact that we do have a skill shortage, John, hence why the government argues we need to boost migration and boost it now. Do you think there were some other solutions or options available to the government, particularly, again, with this housing crisis?

John Storey:



Yeah, absolutely. I mean, a big part of the solution to our worker shortage is here right in Australia right now. We don't need to build new infrastructure to house and school and transport it. And that is pensioners, students, and veterans who are willing to work, who want to work, and could be filling the worker shortage that we have. The reason they're not doing that is because of unfair red tape and unfair tax rules that mean you effectively lose your pension or your welfare payments if you work. And so there's no incentive.

Now, just to give you some meat on the bones on this issue. In New Zealand, about 25% of pensioners work at a full or part-time. Now in Australia, that's 3%. And opinion polling has shown that about 20% of pensioners would like to work if it wasn't for the unfair rules. Now, put that in context. If 20% of pensioners worked full or part-time, that'd be about half a million, and our worker shortage is less than that. So look, I'm not suggesting that pensioners can solve all the problems, but it would go a long way to addressing it and then we could go, "Okay, well, where are the real skill shortages after we've utilized our own resources?" And then we can bring in people to address that.

Oliver Peterson:

Thanks, John. Appreciate your time.

John Storey:

Great, great. Thanks, Ollie.

This transcript with John Storey talking on PR Perth from 25 May 2023 has been edited for clarity.