



Battlers and Billionaires: The Story of Inequality in Australia (Redback Quarterly)

Andrew Leigh

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Is Australia fair enough? And why does inequality matter anyway?

In *Battlers and Billionaires*, Andrew Leigh weaves together vivid anecdotes, interesting history and powerful statistics to tell the story of inequality in this country. This is economics writing at its best.

From egalitarian beginnings, Australian inequality rose through the nineteenth century. Then we became more equal again, with inequality falling markedly from the 1920s to the 1970s. Now, inequality is returning to the heights of the 1920s.

Leigh shows that while inequality can fuel growth, it also poses dangers to society. Too much inequality risks cleaving us into two Australias, occupying fundamentally separate worlds, with little contact between the haves and the have-nots. And the further apart the rungs on the ladder of opportunity, the harder it is for a kid born into poverty to enter the middle class.

Battlers and Billionaires sheds fresh light on what makes Australia distinctive, and what it means to have – and keep – a fair go.

Longlisted for the 2014 John Button Prize

‘This is required reading for every Australian who seriously cares about the fair go enduring.’ —Peter FitzSimons

‘Be warned: this book will open your eyes and prick your conscience.’ —Ross Gittins

‘A thought-provoking book which emphasises how far we have strayed from confidently discussing public policies that seek to give meaning to our egalitarian spirit.’ —Laura Tingle

‘A cogent and accessible read’ —*Sun-Herald*

‘An informed study of a serious topic, written with a conversational ease that makes it quite accessible.’ —*the Age*

‘This short book is the first in what promises to be a great new series from Black Inc. called “Redbacks”. Leigh makes no bones about the fact that he is writing from a particular political standpoint, but his arguments are lucid, detailed and well-balanced. This book will appear to readers of quality political commentary such as the Quarterly Essay and it is especially pertinent in an election year.’
—*Books+Publishing*

Andrew Leigh is the federal member for Fraser and the Shadow Assistant Treasurer. Before being elected in 2010, he was a professor of economics at the Australian National University. His books include *Disconnected* (2010), *Battlers and Billionaires* (2013) and *The Economics of Just About Everything* (2014).

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