

26 June 2017

Peter McEvoy and Tony Jones

Q&A

ABC TV

By email: [McEvoy.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McEvoy.Peter@abc.net.au), [jones.tony@abc.net.au](mailto:jones.tony@abc.net.au)

Dear Tony and Peter

In all the discussion about whether or not Australia's economy is going backwards, no one in the media ever seems to question the underlying assumption: Is growth good for us? Is it the only aim of our economy to deliver ever more goods and services? And what growth is good? Growth in house prices, negative growth in average incomes, growing disparity between rich and poor?

Your audience is beginning to question these assumptions, which is why they are being turned off by today's politics. They don't feel that more equals better. They don't believe they are the ones benefitting. They see that Australia has become a gas and coal exporting superpower, but all that has meant is ever growing energy prices. They see us rushing to 'Big Australia' at an accelerating pace, but every poll says they don't welcome it.

When the Head of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, came on I thought the most important thing she was going to be asked was that in a finite world, it is impossible for the growth she is talking about to go on forever.

Interestingly enough, right at the start of the show the following two Tweets came up:

**"they should be on about equity and sustainability not growth" #qanda robtb**

**"Growth isn't a solution, it's the problem and it's unsustainable." #QandA PolemiCol**

However as far as I can remember no one in panel discussion addressed those questions. What's going on? In all the years of Q&A, isn't it worth one show that asks whether our growth obsession is delivering healthier, happier societies? In fact all the measures suggest we have passed the sweet spot and are heading in the opposite direction.

Of course there is an underlying claim that anyone who talks about growth must be referring to immigration, and therefore they could be suspected of being racist. In my case, I believe that to go from 7 billion to 10 billion on this Earth is going to be absolutely crazy and it will affect every single race, religion and culture. Like David Attenborough, I don't see one problem we face as a global community that gets easier with more and more people.

Tony and Peter, can you advise me why this issue is hardly covered on your show, and also virtually not covered on the ABC news and current affairs?

Yours faithfully



Dick Smith