

# Education and Full Employment: Enabling Active Citizenship?



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# Modern Monetary Theory (MMT): Basics

- ~~Governments collect taxes to fund their spending~~
- Governments must spend first for us to pay our taxes (Mitchell et al., 2019; Mosler, 2010; Wray, 2015)



# Currency Sovereignty

- Only government can issue its currency
- Has a floating exchange rate
- JobKeeper: Australian government spent \$88.8 billion without first raising taxes. (Australian Government Treasury, 2023)



# The MMT Money Story

## Step 1: Impose a tax



## Step 2: Spend



## Step 3: Collect tax

# Full Employment vs Unemployment: Contemporary History

- Full employment (Keynesian) era : 1945-1970s
- Un-employment (neoliberal) era: 1970s – present  
– also beginning of MMT-era in 1971(!)  
(Mitchell et al., 2019)

# Full Employment vs Unemployment: Impact on Education?

## Full-employment era (in Australia 1945–1975):

“[t]he school does not exist to grade students for employers” (Karmel, 1973, p. 23).

## Un-employment era (1975–present):

The Australian government wished for “an improved relationship between secondary education and employment” (Karmel, 1985, p. 68).



# Return to Full Employment: View from History

## Full employment era : 1945-

### 1970s

- Social movements: civil rights, anti-war, student movement etc.



## Unemployment era : 1970s- present

- Competition amongst workers & students



## Return to full employment?

- Education for active citizenship: “work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments” (Council of Australian Governments Education Council, 2019); (van Tol, 2024)

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