

What does matter?

Published: January 12, 2026, 11:16 pm

Having written two blogs in a row on quite personal issues - one [on being despised by a commentator on Forbes](#) and another on [commentators on this blog who seem intent on a destructive relationship](#) - the question of what does matter seems of relevance early on a Saturday morning when I would rather be asleep but have habitually woken, nonetheless.

Let's make the obvious comments first. My family to whom I have yet to take tea this morning matter.

And so do the enormous number of decent, caring, people I meet directly and indirectly through the work I do, and elsewhere.

But so do those who despise that work matter. That's not just because they are fellow human travellers - although that's true and a reason for saying they matter. They are also of concern because they despise and because they want to block and because their aim appears to be to cause harm.

Now I am sure they will say it is me and my colleagues in the tax justice movement doing harm, but I will unsurprisingly beg to differ. I believe that the time when it was possible to argue, as they all seem to do, that a purely utilitarian view that increasing wealth without consideration for its distribution has long gone. We know now, without a doubt, that distribution of wealth matters and that inequality is harmful.

Again, the time when it could be argued from a libertarian perspective that government per se was harmful has again passed. This is simply not true. What we know as a matter of fact is that when policies in pursuit of this goal are put into practice - as this government and others, using the excuse of the recession, have sought to do - then the weakest in society suffer disproportionately. Real suffering, of the sort denied as real by many such libertarians because they cannot quantify its impact, results.

The denial of this reality matters.

The capture of the income streams of government through the privatisation process

that will as a consequence enrich a few when those funds should be used to serve the majority matters.

The denial of tax revenues to governments that need funds to equitably relieve inequality in society and to meet real need matters.

The inequality between societies matters. In a small world our neighbour is everywhere even if some are closer than others.

The delivery of social as well as economic justice matters.

The right - and I think it is a right - of each individual to achieve that of which they are able matters, because to me that is the best expression of equality that there really is. Removing the impediments that prevent that achievement happening matters very much indeed, and has to be the focus of any responsible government.

The support for community matters, because we all live in it, even if many would deny it.

And the time to reflect, to relax, to enjoy, to break bread with others, to breathe in the wonder of the world, and our small part in it, those things all matter - and far too many are denied those pleasures by the oppression of an economic system that is indifferent to them and their need for such real pleasures in life.

The counterpart of this indifference to the needs for the pleasure of many, which is the denial of the purpose of far too many people as evidenced by a willingness to consign them to unemployment, zero hours contracts, and outsourced contracting where their integral membership of the entity they service is denied , matters enormously.

At the end of the day dignity matters. The dignity of each and every person, that is, whatever their situation. Each has a right to that dignity. And that, I think is a key element of what tax justice is about. We have always said each person, their contribution and their rights matter, whoever and wherever they are.

That's why I will take being despised to do this work. Because it matters.

Now, time for tea, I think.