Too little forethought in move to Asianise Australia

top priority

Readers continue to probe what the Asian Century white paper could mean for the Australian economy.

Taken over already

“AUSTRALIA must become more Asianised”, Prime Minister Julia Gillard has been arguing this week.

With few exceptions, the vast majority of motor cars on Australian roads are manufactured in other Asian countries and for that we can thank the foreign-owned “local” manufacturers for producing cars here few people want.

With no exceptions, including internationally famous brands, every shirt, skirt, dress, suit, knickers, jocks, bras, socks and shoes are made in Asian countries other than Australia.

Increasingly, those so-called private label foods sold in our three major supermarket groups, including things we still actually grow here (allegedly fresh fruit and vegetables), plus biscuits, breakfast foods and the vast majority of pet foods, are all being manufactured and packed in Asian countries other than Australia.

Practically every item which we used to manufacture now is being manufactured in Asian countries except Australia. Maybe someone within what passes for the Federal Government can tell us exactly how much more “Asianised” Australia can become.

ROBERT S. McCORMICK, Bridgewater.

Fiasco in the making

I WAS shocked by the ALP’s plan to “Asianise” Australia, a hideously racist act akin to the ALP’s earlier White Australia policy intended to “Europeanise” Australia.

This discrimination is an attack on the multicultural values that underpin contemporary Australia that validates other forms of racial discrimination.

It also is an enormous white elephant that might make Julia Gillard look statesmanlike but would cost billions to implement and maintain. At the same time, it would achieve next to nothing as English is the de facto world language as Bob Couch rightly pointed out (“Plan not realistic”, The Advertiser, 30/10/12).

In short, another fiscal fiasco in the making – like the Building the Education Revolution, pink batts and National Broadband Network disasters.

RICHARD LUTZ, Seafcliff.

We are innovators

POLITICIANS tend to be either lawyers or accountants and, as such, are totally unequipped to recognise the tremendous strengths of innovation Australians are capable of, from the bush mechanic to the scientist.

Australia has produced more original ideas per head of population than any other nation. Think of penicillin, the cochlear implant, the scram jet, the photocopier, the wi-fi internet device, to name but a few.

Before retiring I worked in the electronic engineering section at UniSA and part of my job was helping students in their final year who were working on pet projects of their own.

My observations were that, in general, if you wanted something original, look to the Australian student. If you wanted something improved or miniaturised, look at the work of the Asian student.

An Australian student would come up with something new and amazing that looked like a bird’s nest of wires covering a table top and the Asian student could take it and engineer it down to something the size of a mobile phone. Both these skills are extremely valuable and one cannot exist without the other. That is where the
politicians fall down. They just don’t recognise the genius of the Australian who first came up with the idea – they just see the glossy Asian commercial result.

All this nonsense of learning obscure languages in the Asian Century white paper – unless you are going to be a diplomat or travelling businessman, to most people it would be completely irrelevant.

English is the universal technical language of today and it would be far more useful to teach youngsters the principles of good English grammar, how to construct sentences and put ideas down clearly on paper without ambiguity.

The most successful anti-submarine weapon devised was designed and made here in SA. It was so successful it was sold to the defence forces of many countries. We have to harness this tremendous creative resource, not try to compete with cheap manufacturing countries.

Creativity and research in all disciplines is our strength, something that put us head and shoulders above other nations.

Yet it is so little recognised by politicians or big business.

TOM CLAYTON, Davoren Park.

**Control on costs**

WORDS are cheap when the Prime Minister states we must gear up for the Asian Century.

I say this because Australia is a high-wage, high-taxing and high-cost country.

Every time the Feds award a pay rise the tax take goes straight to federal coffers. So who gains from wage rises? Very rarely the workers.

Until we have governments that genuinely attempt to control production and transport costs (two of the big impost on Aussie-made goods) and live within their budgets at a federal and state level, we have little hope of competing in Asia.

If some people in the Government have their way, even something that previously was a waste product (such as LPG 80c a litre), soon will match the cost of petrol.

This is just another example of an extra tax grab for the Feds, something which literally fuels higher production costs.

PETER BLYTH, Williamstown.

**Seek asylum in Asia**

WHY don’t asylum seekers pay closer attention to the Asian Century statistics and head for closer and richer Singapore, which is deeply concerned about its declining birth rate?

ROD MATTHEWS, Fairfield, Vic.

**Understand cultures**

CHINA and India are the two fastest-growing economic giants of the world with backgrounds of centuries-old great civilisations and cultures.