

Can NZ Rise to the Productivity/Competitiveness Challenge

NZ Values Study 1992 - Webster & Perry

- The cultural environment is an important explanatory factor in economic performance
- There is every reason to believe that many New Zealanders are still dependent, rather than innovative and autonomous
- Many years of sheltered, if modest affluence may have prevented much of a thrust of competitive inventiveness
- The attitudes of the past characterise all levels of the workforce

- Hard work and competition are not particularly popular – equity and prosperity are preferred
- Most New Zealanders believe the poverty and need are more likely to arise from bad luck or injustice than from the inadequacy of individuals
- The different cultures of work in New Zealand must be taken seriously, as revealing that a major paradigm shift in New Zealand is needed if there is to be a more viable New Zealand economy

Conclusions:

- Economic growth is critical
- New Zealand's growth performance must be improved, decisively
- Because of its importance it should be the top priority
- There needs to be a clear and persuasive explanation of this to the community
- The alternative, of business as usual and continuing present trends, with further relative decline in community services, living standards, higher taxes and an increasing exodus of people and capital, is unacceptable

- Strong leadership will be needed, particularly given community attitudes and the need to change them
- Given the relative decline to date compared to other OECD economies, decisive action is needed now