

NEOLIBERALISM **FACTS**

FIGHT AGAINST INEQUALITY NETWORK INC.

1

Competitive individualism is central to neoliberalism, and involves the key free-market beliefs and values for individual behaviour:

- > 'self-reliance and hard work bring success'
- > competition against others and 'efficient use of paid work hours' (individual productivity) is a 'fair' way to distribute rewards
- > success or failure is down to individual effort

2

The ideas of competitive individualism prescribes and emphasises individual behaviour, and **shapes public attitudes** towards public welfare policies.

3

This demeaning messaging is a powerful tool in **promoting disdain for others** - especially for people doing it tough. It influences public attitudes about what kind of welfare policies the government should provide, and who should benefit.

4

Mental health issues can and do arise due to the **constant economic struggle to survive** on too little income or living in deepening poverty, constant negative messaging, and for many, harsh treatments associated with federal government social services. Mandatory compliance, sanctions, and very low income support payment rates are used to coerce people receiving payments to move from so-called welfare 'benefits' into work.

Federal Government social (in)security income support and public policy has built-in **poverty level incomes, shame and humiliation**.

**THERE IS NO
'FAIR GO'
HERE.**

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References: fainetwork.com/resources/references

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NEOLIBERALISM



Messaging & Poverty¹



'Neoliberalism' here refers to an approach to public policy favouring free-market capitalism, cutting down red-tape (deregulation), and reduced social spending.

At the core of this approach is neoliberalism messaging, which **blames the individual for their circumstances**.

For people experiencing tough times or living in poverty, John Falzon² highlights the labels commonly peddled by politicians and commercial media outlets against them:

- > they're **demonised** (as dole bludgers, layabouts, leaners)
- > they're **criminalised** (as cheats, fraudsters, liars)
- > they're **pathologised** (as mental cases, unhinged, crazy)

“ Such individuals are not self-reliant, hardworking, responsible, competing for success, nor rewarded for their efforts: *they have failed!* ”

In other words, they are not 'economically productive' individuals, and are therefore undeserving of rewards and respect – beliefs and values *intended* to make people feel shame and humiliation.

THIS IS A **MYTH** OF NEOLIBERALISM