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Last year, the *IPA Review* had its sixtieth birthday, making it the oldest continuously published political magazine in the country since the demise of *The Bulletin*. And this year we were awarded the Sir Anthony Fisher International Memorial Award for best magazine by the US-based Atlas Economic Research Foundation.

The mission of the Atlas Foundation is, in the words of its former President, John Blundell, 'to litter the world with free market think tanks'. To do so, it supports new and existing think tanks by providing logistic and intellectual advice. Much of its work is focused on encouraging free market activists in parts of the world where our message is so alien that operating a think tank has as many legal and safety challenges as intellectual ones.

The Fisher prizes are awarded by a distinguished panel of judges which includes Atlas President Alejandro Chafuen and George Mason University Professor Tyler Cowen, as well as economists and political scientists from the Heritage Foundation, the Mont Pelerin Society, the leading German think tank Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft, and the Institute for Humane Studies, among others.

The *IPA Review*, long established as a central part of Australia's political culture, has now been recognised by this influential free market group as doing something genuinely important for the cause of liberty. Australia is neither on freedom's frontiers or a monument to its greatest successes, but internationally the health of Australian liberty is important.

It is hard to think of another country that has been so completely colonised by green dogma as Australia—we should hope, for the sake of the world's poor, that our environmentalists aren't too focused on exporting their anti-growth ideologies elsewhere. How our governments respond to the controversies over climate change, or the Nanny State, or over-regulation, is keenly observed by foreign politicians and activists.

Just as we dig through the impacts of the policies of foreign governments, so do policymakers and critics outside our borders. As Australian governments implement more and more regulations which inhibit individual choice and liberty, we can be sure that aspiring Nanny-Statists in other countries will be watching closely.

Why is the *IPA Review* important? Australia is a small country. As we lack the size of our English-speaking friends—the United States and Great Britain—we can never be entirely confident that the voice of liberalism will always be heard. As Richard Allsop points out in his review of two recent political biographies in this edition, the Australian public went almost forty years at the beginning of the twentieth century without hearing the cause of political and economic liberty defended in the federal parliament. When it was heard, it was a rare curiosity; widely dismissed as an ideological anachronism. Liberalism's supporters in the public arena were just as scarce.

In 2008, there is among the educated public a much greater awareness of the existence—if not an understanding of the importance—of liberalism's political and public policy views. Liberalism's opponent today is not socialism, as it was when the *IPA Review* was founded in 1947; liberal philosophy now stands against an arguably more challenging adversary—soft 'market-orientated' managerialism, which professes an appreciation of competition and commerce, but is in fact dedicated to limiting it.

Today's left do not carry utopian Marxist tracts that contain fully elaborated plans for revolutionary government. But now the left clutches cherry-picked studies from the fields

of psychology and behavioural economics. We are told that markets are irredeemably irrational, that we need to increase taxes in order to fully account for 'social costs' and externalities, and that only a Nanny State can look after us. The left has replaced the socialist objective with a rigid utilitarianism that has no interest in any philosophical or moral discussion about the appropriate limits of government action. They are nonchalant about the impact their policy prescriptions will have on individual freedom. And they are positively hostile to the concept of personal responsibility—people are too irrational to take responsibility for their own actions, and if they did, there would be too many 'social costs' for the government to possibly tolerate.

The need for a voice of liberalism in 2008 is just as strong as it was in 1947. The Sir Anthony Fisher International Memorial Award recognises the vital role the *IPA Review* has in defending liberty in Australia.



Sir Anthony Fisher
International Memorial Awards