



Social democracy in northern Europe: Its relevance for Australia

Andrew Scott, The
University of Melbourne
and RMIT University

ABSTRACT

Social democrats in English-speaking countries have frequently looked to Sweden and its neighbours as offering a policy model that combines economic prosperity with social equality. In recent decades this admiration has dissipated due to a sense that comprehensive welfare provision in the Nordic nations is in retreat and that policy options for small states have been reduced by 'globalisation'. Yet there remains strong evidence of economic and social achievement in various

northern European nations,
maintained by policies which
continue to be more
recognisably social
democratic than elsewhere.

This article examines
Australian policy interest in
Scandinavia, especially the
1986 union mission that
produced the report,
Australia Reconstructed.

The article situates that