

a massive gully conscience from
 twice taxing our superannuation?

Whack when we enter, whack
 when we are in there and the final
 whack when you leave. It is one of
 Australia's most extraordinary tax
 anomalies.

This government, with its
 \$10 billion surplus, wants us to fund
 our own retirement but then taxes us
 all the way. Then along comes
 "Robbing" Hood in the guise of the
 Australian Securities and
 Investments Commission and the
 Australian Taxation Office, stealing
 from the rich and giving to the
 previously overtaxed poor.
 The Rio Tinto buyback is of no

E-passport snags

I have found most hotel clerks in
 foreign climes have opposable
 thumbs, and thus will easily be able to
 choose either "open" or "closed" as
 their preferred position from which to
 fraudulently skin your passport
 information. It is time the Department
 of Foreign Affairs and Trade looked
 at the wider privacy and data security
 problems posed by e-passports,
 instead of just whether they will work
 in an airport ("No open-and-shut case
 for e-passports", April 12).

Anna Johnston,
 Chair, Australian Privacy
 Foundation,
 Crows Nest, NSW.

SUBMITTING LETTERS

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the 30 per cent-plus individual
 shareholder's on a tax rate of 30 per
 cent or more.

The company is about to
 distribute \$400 million in franking
 credits.

If this distribution was by the
 normal and legal pro rata
 entitlement to shareholders it means
 they would each receive 80¢ a share.
 So say you own 1000 shares in Rio
 Tinto then in the perfect world you
 would have received an \$800, fully
 franked dividend cheque.

If you were a super fund with 200
 shares you would have received
 \$160 per share.

But now enter the dreaded fully
 franked dividend buyback scheme.

The 30 per cent-plus individual
 totally misses out on his \$800
 entitlement. But the superannuation
 fund that owns only 200 shares will
 receive an \$8000 fully franked
 dividend plus an \$8000 capital loss
 and after tax will finish way, way in
 front. What's fairer than that?

You, the investing public, can
 thank the ATO and ASIC for a very
 large majority of Rio Tinto
 shareholders being disenfranchised
 from their legally owned franking
 credits.

Thanks to these bodacious directors
 are now allowed to distribute
 franked dividends not in
 accordance with the share register.
 While on the role of directors in

this bureaucratically organised tax
 scam, I would like to know what
 each and every director is going to
 do with his own shareholding?

On my scanning of the companies
 that have indulged in this
 premeditated tax roft, not one single
 director has accepted the buyback.
 I would like to know why not,
 because they seem to think for all us
 ungodly reason it is great for all us
 other mug shareholders.

Perhaps it is because it increases
 the value of their directors' options.
 Now there is another little scandal
 in itself.

Hugh Wallace-Smith,
 Leopold, Vic.



Farmers can't have subsidies and lifestyle

David Norman's letter ("Farming
 industry faces major crisis", April
 13) has captured the essential issue
 facing Australian farmers.
 However, there is a radically

quarrel with the latter. But if profits
 are "generally well below what is
 sustainable", why is it that many more
 farmers have not left their properties?
 Simply selling the farm for whatever

Of course, individuals can choose
 to be farmers and to enjoy a rural
 community lifestyle if they want to
 — that is their right, and nobody
 should stop them from making that

How convenient for Paul Monk
 (Review, April 8) to discuss the
 of torture using the Geneva
 Convention and, of all things,
 Hollywood fiction, to justify his
 stance on torture.

And he did not refer to the fact
 that Australia has signed and
 ratified the UN Convention on
 Torture 1985. This is a debate we
 should not be having, as it is law
 this country not to use or condone
 torture. It forbids countries to turn
 a refugee to his country if there is
 reason to believe he/she will be
 tortured.

This reminds me of how the US
 military turned over prisoners and
 Viet Cong suspects to the
 Vietnamese army, knowing full well
 that "they" would use torture.
 Pontius Pilate washed his hands
 with more dignity.

William Collins
 Bendigo, Vic.

Online integrity

Your Hearsay report (April 8)
 unfairly misrepresents the integrity
 of the online polling process under-
 way in the 2005 Australian Law
 Awards.

The report says that anyone with
 a fake email address can vote and
 attacks the integrity of the poll for
 this reason. Yet the poll integrity
 does not rely on the email address at
 all.

Lawyer Weekly, the news
 magazine and organiser of the
 event, contracted BigPulse.com to
 run the awards as a secure online
 poll. It will produce the first market-
 wide democratic vote for a law
 award event, perhaps in the world.
 Our client opted for the additional
 expense of an independent audit
 based on voter contact details rather
 than issuing voting PINs. This