

Shun 'profit at all cost' mindset

Ethically-driven, socially-conscious employers and organisations should be lauded

Letter from Sanjay Perera

I REFER to the recent letters on unjust treatment of cleaners and "Lessons must be learnt" (Oct 22) on private school closures. The underlying motif seems to be placing profit over people for enterprises.

Certain enterprises just don't seem to hold the welfare of the worker or student as a key consideration. What they are most interested in is what they can get out of an enterprise monetarily, irrespective of consequences.

It is time for the business and financial world to acknowledge their responsibility for some of what goes wrong in how people are treated as part of the workforce or student population.

It is puerile to point to the profit motive as an excuse for unethical attitudes and gains on investment. This is akin to condoning a loanshark desecrating the front of a home because, after all, it is business and nothing personal.

Stick to the self-serving mindset and we're no better than the Indonesian farmers behind the haze blighting the region.

In this we must draw the distinction between just making money and doing business in an ethical way, one which is socially and environmentally responsible, and which can also lead to sustained employment.

We insist on a mindset change of people to upgrade themselves, take lower pay and make sacrifices of family time, while forgetting to demand a mindset change for those in business and banking.

Every time we see an elderly worker sitting on the floor because there is no where else to sit, or every time we see one sitting on some public staircase eating lunch, it should serve as a reminder of

the consequences of thinking in terms of "business only, nothing personal".

And what about the youth who want a decent education and have to scurry around trying to work out loans in an environment where neither the educational institutions nor the banks involved care a jot beyond covering their own backs?

There is something wrong with theories that claim to promote economic growth while harming the people meant to benefit from it.

Each time we talk about economic growth, we should remind ourselves that abundance should be for everyone, rather than at someone else's expense. It is time that high salaries are given not for profit-at-all-cost ways of doing things, but to those who bring in and implement ideas which work that are self-sustaining, people- and environmentally-friendly, and ethically-grounded.

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