

## **John Thom's Vote of Thanks**

We have indeed been lucky today to have Mark Johnson as our guest speaker.

We might have been better served had we invited you Mark, 18 months ago and as a result, been better prepared for what has transpired..

I have made a personal study of financial crashes throughout history and have found that each generation, and indeed gurus within generations, find new names for each disaster and excuse the lack of foresight because this time it is something completely new and therefore absolutely unforeseeable. Poppycock – it is always the same cause. Leverage – bidding up prices of whatever is in vogue at the time, to unsustainable levels with borrowed funds.

Put aside Tulip Bulbs, South Sea Bubbles and Russian Bonds. Put aside Latin American Debt, Hedge Funds and Asian Contagion. Put aside Wall Street 1929, the Dot Com fiasco, the Savings and Loan catastrophe and a continuum of like occurrences. It is always leverage – and, it seems, we never learn.

We need more people like Mark Johnson, giving up time to educate the likes of us to drive home this lesson that has escaped every generation since Adam was a boy.

Mark, I would encourage you to go beyond us, the old brigade because we will not be around for the next episode. I encourage you to find a way to take the lesson to school kids. I know that it is too much to expect you to travel from school to school – your time is far too valuable to spread so thinly. But you are a man with widely held respect in the Australian community and I am sure you have influence with those in power in Canberra and Macquarie Street.

I think it is time for not just you Mark, but for all of us to make our presence felt and cause a move towards introducing a “HISTORY OF LEVERAGE CRISES” in to the curriculum of high schools – even at the expense of some other subjects that in the light of present circumstances must be seen as less important.

Unless the next generation is exposed in the class room to what we know and have felt so painfully in real life, it will only be 20 or 30 years before it all happens again, and again, and again, as it has throughout history.

It's an honour and a pleasure to thank you Mark, on behalf of all of us here today, for a most informative address. I am sure that even the least financially educated amongst us now understands the fundamentals thanks to your thoughtful explanation, and that is a gift.

But in thanking you, I do ask that you take on board the need for school level education and find opportunities to use your influence to bring into being a new generation ready and alert without having to go through the pain.