

## Diary of Social Legislation and Policy 1982

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**1982**

**Diary of  
Social  
Legislation  
and  
Policy**

edited by  
Helen Ferber

Institute of Applied Economic  
and Social Research  
Institute of Family Studies  
Social Welfare Research Centre

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# List of Abbreviations

AMA	Australian Medical Association
AMWSU	Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union
BLMR	Bureau of Labour Market Research
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
CPD	<i>Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates</i>
	HR House of Representatives
	S Senate
CRAFT	Commonwealth Rebate for Apprenticeship Full-Time Training
CYSS	Community Youth Support Scheme
FODS	Fraud and Overservicing Detection System
NAATI	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
NH&MRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NLCC	National Labour Consultative Council
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
SYETP	Special Youth Employment Training Program
TAFE	Technical and Further Education



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# Introduction

This *Diary* summarises the legislative and administrative changes made in the social policy field during 1982 by the Commonwealth government, and to a lesser extent by the State governments. It provides a ready reference for research workers, and can also be used as a succinct and factual account of policy during the year.

The *Diary* follows the format of the 'diaries' prepared by Helen Ferber of the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research and published in R.B. Scotton and Helen Ferber (eds), *Public Expenditures and Social Policy in Australia* (2 volumes, Melbourne, Longman-Cheshire, 1978 and 1980). The 'diary' in Volume I of *Public Expenditures and Social Policy* covered the years 1972 to 1975, while the 'diary' in Volume II covered the years 1975 to 1978. The first *Diary* in the present series covered events for the calendar year 1980. As there was no *Diary* for the calendar year 1979, each issue in the series has covered one aspect of social policy in 1979. The 1980 *Diary* covered Immigration; that for 1981 covered Social Security and Welfare and the present issue covers Health.

In addition to Commonwealth legislation and events, this *Diary* attempts to cover the main policy changes at State level in the fields of social security, welfare and adoption. It has not been possible to obtain complete coverage for all fields and all States, and we would be very grateful for offers of help from people who are in a position to assist in filling the gaps.

This *Diary* covers the main areas of social policy apart from education. However, it makes no mention of general economic policy or political events. For these the reader is referred to the 'Diary of Recent Economic Events and Policy

Statements' included in each issue of the *Australian Economic Review*, to the Diary of Political Events in each issue of *Australian Quarterly*, and to the 'Broadcasting Chronology' included since 1981 in *Media Information Australia*.

It has been possible once again to publish and distribute this issue free to persons on the mailing lists of the Social Welfare Research Centre, the Institute of Family Studies, and the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research. Would anybody receiving two copies in this process hand on the second copy to somebody who can use it. We again cannot promise that the happy circumstances which enable us to distribute this issue of the *Diary* without charge will continue. It may be necessary to impose a charge in future years. The Secretaries of the three Institutes would be glad to hear from readers not already on the mailing list who wish to receive a copy next year, and would also welcome suggestions as to how the *Diary* might be improved.

This issue was edited by Helen Ferber. Co-ordinators were Mari Davis of the Institute of Family Studies, Ian Manning of the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research and Margaret McAllister of the Social Welfare Research Centre. Individual contributions by members of the Centre and the two Institutes are gratefully acknowledged. Assistance was also received from the various government departments whose policies are covered in the *Diary*. We wish to thank them for their help in ensuring its accuracy.

**Don Edgar**

*Institute of Family Studies*

**Adam Graycar**

*Social Welfare Research Centre*

**Duncan Ironmonger**

*Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research*

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# Social Security and Welfare

Compiled by Margaret McAllister\*  
Social Welfare Research Centre  
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## Services for Handicapped People

**1 February 1982:** The rate of incentive allowance paid to all handicapped people who receive a sheltered employment allowance was increased by \$5 to \$8 per week, as foreshadowed in the 1981-82 Budget. **17 August 1982:** Provision was made in the 1982-83 Budget for grants to eligible organisations for capital and current costs totalling \$74.1 million, compared to \$61.7 million in 1981-82, under the Handicapped Persons Welfare Program. Other measures foreshadowed in the Minister's Budget announcement included the introduction of a mobility allowance of \$10 per week, to be payable from April 1983 to severely handicapped people aged 16 and over who were in employment or undertaking vocational training and who were unable to use public transport because of their disability; a pilot study to test alternative models of attendant care; a new form of income maintenance payment (to be called a rehabilitation allowance and introduced in January 1983) for people undertaking a Commonwealth rehabilitation program and who would otherwise be eligible for a Social Security pension or benefit; and, from January 1983, the granting of Health Care cards for 12 months, free of an income test, to people who gave up an invalid pension or sheltered employment allowance to take up open employment. The Minister also announced that the incentive allowance paid to people in sheltered employment would be increased by \$2 to \$10 per week from 4 November 1982, and foreshadowed that from February 1983 eligibility for the allowance would be extended to invalid pensioners undertaking activity therapy and training programs under the Handicapped Persons Welfare Program. **11 November 1982:** Details of the pilot study of attendant care assistance for severely disabled people were announced by the Minister for Social Security. The pilot would focus on the provision of

attendant care services but would incorporate direct payments to some handicapped people for the employment of their own attendants. It would be introduced first in NSW and would be subject to an independent evaluation. An amount of \$100 000 had been allocated from the Budget to finance the pilot program.

## Supplementary Assistance/Allowance

**1 February 1982:** The maximum rate of supplementary assistance/allowance payable to pensioners and long-term sickness beneficiaries paying rent was increased from \$5 to \$8 per week. New eligibility criteria were also instituted, under the Social Services Amendment Act 1981, whereby 50 cents of supplementary assistance/allowance would now be paid for each \$1 of rent in excess of \$10 per week, up to \$8 maximum, in lieu of \$1 of assistance for \$1 of rent. However, pensioners who were tenants of public housing authorities would no longer be eligible for supplementary assistance (*see* 1981 *Diary*, p.5 and *CPD, HR*, 27 October 1981). **17 August 1982:** An increase in the rate of supplementary assistance payable to eligible pensioners and beneficiaries from \$8 to \$10 per week from 4 November 1982 was announced by the Minister for Social Security. **2 December 1982:** Persons transferring from unemployment benefit to sickness benefit who were previously not eligible to receive supplementary allowance would become eligible under legislation foreshadowed by the Minister for Social Security. In addition, the six-weeks waiting period for supplementary allowance would no longer apply in respect of pensioners and supporting parent beneficiaries previously in receipt of supplementary assistance or incentive allowance who transferred to sickness benefits. The Social Security Amendment Bill 1982, giving effect to these changes, was introduced in Parliament on **9 December 1982** and assented to on **31 December 1982**.

## Social Welfare Policy Secretariat

**8 March 1982:** Dr Sidney Sax retired from the Commonwealth Public Service. Dr Sax had been head of the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat since its inception in 1978. **9 August 1982:** Mrs Marie Coleman, formerly Director of the Office of Child Care in the Department of Social Security, was appointed special adviser on welfare matters to the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat. Mr Keith Burnett replaced Mrs Coleman as Director of the Office of Child Care. **27 August 1982:** The appointment of Mr Daryl Dixon as head of the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat was announced by the Minister for Social Security. Mr Dixon had been a member of

\* Compiled with assistance from the Department of Social Security, Canberra

the Secretariat staff for four years and its acting head since Dr Sax's retirement. **14 October 1982:** Mr Vic Rogers was appointed Policy Co-ordinator in the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat, a position previously occupied by Mr Dixon.

## Youth Services Scheme

**23 March 1982:** The Minister for Social Security announced that the three-year pilot Youth Services Scheme, which provided crisis accommodation and support services for homeless young people, would be extended for a year beyond its original date of 30 June 1982. In the extension of time the Commonwealth and State governments, which jointly supported the Scheme, would consider the findings and recommendations of its evaluation. **17 August 1982:** Additional funds of nearly \$500 000 were allocated to the Youth Services Scheme in the 1982-83 Budget, bringing the total allocation in 1982-83 to \$1.73 million, pending its final evaluation. (See also Housing Section of this *Diary*, Youth Accommodation Assistance.)

## Social Security Legislation

**24 March 1982:** The Social Services Amendment Bill (No.3) 1981, containing provisions to prevent the payment of unemployment benefit to the spouse of a person engaged in industrial action, or the spouse of a person who had otherwise been refused unemployment benefit, was defeated in the Senate for the third time. (See 1981 *Diary*, pp. 4, 5.)

**25 March 1982:** The Social Services Legislation Amendment Bill 1982 contained a technical amendment which changed the title of the principal Act from the Social Services Act to the Social Security Act, with effect from **1 July 1982**. Assent was given on **2 June 1982**. **23 September 1982:** The Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill 1982 was introduced in the House of Representatives. The amendments in the Bill included most of those announced in the Minister's Budget statement of 17 August 1982\*. **27 October 1982:** The Act was assented to.

## Department of Social Security Administration

**25 March 1982:** A new approach to providing Departmental services in areas remote from regional offices would be tested

\* These amendments are dealt with under the appropriate headings elsewhere in this *Diary*.

in Queensland, according to an announcement by the Minister for Social Security. The Minister listed ten centres where agents would be appointed on a 12-month trial basis. Their task would be to provide information about Departmental services and to accept claims for pensions, benefits and allowances from people in the district. **20 October 1982:** A report on regional office staffing, workloads and outputs in the Department of Social Security, prepared by Coopers and Lybrand Services in conjunction with the Public Service Board, was released by the Minister for Social Security. It was commissioned in 1981 following the industrial dispute over work conditions and staff levels in the Department. The report dealt with the major issues of: the adequacy of 1981-82 staffing levels in regional offices; relief requirements; training requirements; operational improvements and planning, reviewing and controlling staffing resources.

## Pensions Income Test

**25 March 1982:** The government would not proceed with legislation intended to tighten up the Social Services Act to prevent income avoidance for pension purposes, the Minister for Social Security told Parliament. He said that it had proved very difficult to draft effective legislation in a way that did not touch normal investment activities. **17 August 1982:** A liberalisation of the income test for the basic pension and for fringe benefits was announced by the Minister for Social Security. The amounts of private income allowable without loss of entitlement to a full pension would be increased from \$20 to \$30 per week for single pensioners and from \$34.50 to \$50 per week for couples. The income limit for pensioner health benefits would be increased from \$40 to \$54 per week for single pensioners and from \$68 to \$90 per week for couples. The extra income allowable for dependent children would be a uniform \$20 per week for each child, replacing the current range of \$11 to \$17. The changes would be effective from November 1982.

## Commonwealth Government Employees' Compensation

**1 May 1982:** The first indexation adjustments to the benefits payable under the Compensation (Commonwealth Government Employees) Act 1971 and the Seamen's Compensation Act 1911 were made. The new rates represented a 4.64 per cent increase in the level of benefits, reflecting the percentage movement in the Weighted Average Weekly Wage Rate under federal awards during the six months 1 July to 31



December 1981. **1 November 1982:** The compensation benefit rates were adjusted in accordance with the established formula, providing an 8.53 per cent increase in the level of benefits. **11 November 1982:** The Minister for Social Security announced new administrative arrangements for handling government employees' compensation matters. Regional offices of the Commissioner for Employees' Compensation would be established in each State and the ACT, to replace the current system of using delegates spread throughout government departments and authorities. The first of the new offices was expected to open in the ACT in mid-1983. **2 December 1982:** Mr Dennis Corrigan, a First Assistant Director-General in the Department of Social Security, was appointed Commissioner for Employees' Compensation, the former Commissioner, Mr Bernard Dwyer, having retired.

## Rates of Pensions and Benefits

**1 May 1982:** Under the automatic indexation provisions of the Social Services Act, the maximum rates of pensions and benefits (excluding payments to single unemployment beneficiaries aged 18 and over without dependants, and to unemployment, special and sickness beneficiaries, aged under 18) were increased by \$4.45 to \$74.15 per week for a single person and by \$7.40 to \$123.60 per week for a married couple. The increases reflected the 6.4 per cent movement in the Consumer Price Index for the six months to December 1981. In the case of pensions and the supporting parent's benefit, the new rates operated from 6 May, being the first payday in May. **17 August 1982:** The Minister for Social Security announced that the rate of unemployment benefit payable to persons aged 18 years and over without dependants would be increased by \$6.30 to \$64.40 per week, and the rate payable to unemployment and sickness beneficiaries aged 16 and 17 years would be increased by \$4 to \$40. The increases took effect with the first payment due in November 1982. **1 November 1982:** Maximum rates of the pensions and benefits subject to automatic indexation were increased by \$3.10 to \$77.25 per week for a single person and by \$5.20 to \$128.80 per week for a married couple. The increases reflected the 4.2 per cent rise in the Consumer Price Index for the six months to June 1982. They became effective from 4 November in the case of pensions and supporting parent's benefits, and from the first payday on or after 1 November in the case of unemployment, sickness and special benefits.

## Administration of Overseas Pension Payments

**7 July 1982:** Pensioners qualified for portable Australian pensions who went overseas for periods of less than twelve months would not be able to arrange for their cheques to be sent to an overseas address. In announcing this change, the Minister for Social Security advised that such pensioners may instead have their pension payments held by the Department and paid in a lump sum on their return to Australia, or have them paid direct into a bank, building society, or credit union account. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs later made it clear that these procedures also applied to the payment of repatriation pensions and allowances. **1 September 1982:** The new overseas payment procedures were applied.

## Wife's Pension

**17 August 1982:** Wife pensioners who were resident overseas would be able to qualify for a widow's pension without having to be physically present or residing in Australia, according to an announcement by the Minister for Social Security. The change would be effective from November 1982.

## Welfare Housing

**7 May 1982:** Changes to the ministerial and departmental organisation of the government were announced by the Prime Minister. As a result, responsibility for welfare housing activities and the development of housing assistance programs was transferred from the former Department of Housing and Construction to the Department of Social Security. (See Housing section of this *Diary* for other entries on housing policy and administration).

## Repatriation Benefits

**13 May 1982:** Repatriation pensions were increased by 6.4 per cent in line with the movement in the Consumer Price Index. The rates for the service pension increased by \$7.40 to \$123.60 combined married rate, and by \$4.45 to \$74.15, standard. Special rate increased by \$8.55 to \$142.05, intermediate by \$5.90 to \$97.80, general by \$3.20 to \$53.55, and

the war and defence widow's pension by \$4.45 to \$74.15. **17 August 1982:** Details of extension of eligibility for repatriation benefits and related entitlements were announced by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. As from 11 November 1982, 100 per cent of any disability pension received by a veteran would be disregarded as income when assessing service pension level and eligibility for fringe benefits, in lieu of 60 per cent. The amounts of private income allowable without loss of entitlement to the maximum rate of the service pension would be increased from \$20 to \$30 a week for a single pensioner and from \$34.50 to \$50 a week for a married couple. For fringe benefits eligibility, income limits would be raised from \$40 to \$54 a week for a single pensioner and from \$68 to \$90 a week for a married couple. The maximum rate of supplementary (rent) allowance would be increased by \$2 to \$10 a week. As well, changes were introduced which extended the eligibility for double orphan's benefit, increased the maximum rate of funeral benefit payable, and extended retrospectively the eligibility for benefits of members of peacekeeping, monitoring and observing forces before 2 November 1981. **11 November 1982:** Repatriation pensions were increased by 4.2 per cent, following the movement in the Consumer Price Index. The rates for the service pension increased by \$5.20 to \$128.80 combined married rate and by \$3.10 to \$77.25, standard. Special rate increased by \$5.95 to \$148.00, intermediate by \$4.10 to \$101.90, general by \$2.25 to \$55.80, and the widow's pension by \$3.10 to \$77.25.

## Unemployment Benefits

**25 March 1982:** New procedures for payment of unemployment benefits were incorporated in the Social Services Legislation Amendment Bill 1982, introduced in the House of Representatives. The date of registration as unemployed at the Commonwealth Employment Service would be taken to be the date of lodgement of the claim for benefit, provided a claim was made within 14 days of registration. Extension of the 14-day period would be allowed in special cases. The new procedures were applied from **2 June 1982** at the date of assent to the Act.

## Sickness Benefits

**2 June 1982:** Under provisions of the Social Services Legislation Amendment Act 1982, certain sickness beneficiaries would be exempted from the normal seven-day waiting period for claims made on or after this date. The exemption

would apply to claimants who had been in receipt of sickness benefits for a previous incapacity with a cause related to the current incapacity, and would particularly benefit those people who needed to cease work from time to time as a result of a chronic illness or a recurring medical condition. **20 July 1982:** The Minister for Social Security announced that payment of sickness benefits would be changed from payment in advance to payment in arrears for all new beneficiaries on or after 2 August 1982. Current recipients would continue to be paid in advance. **1 August 1982:** New provisions of the Social Services Amendment Act 1979, as amended by the Social Services Legislation Amendment Act 1982, were brought into effect to clarify the existing provisions of the Social Security Act regarding the payment of compensation in respect of an incapacity for which sickness benefits had been claimed or paid. **17 August 1982:** The Minister for Social Security announced that all sickness beneficiaries would become eligible for a Health Benefits card, free of income test, from November 1982. **13 October 1982:** A changed interpretation of section 108 of the Social Security Act meant that certain categories of people had become ineligible for sickness benefits where formerly they would have been able to claim it, the Minister for Social Security told the Senate. A legal ruling was obtained from the Attorney-General's Department dealing with the requirement that a claimant for sickness benefit demonstrate a 'loss of income' due to sickness. The ruling indicated that this requirement was not met where a person ceased to be eligible for a pension or supporting parent's benefit and was unable to work due to sickness. **2 December 1982:** A proposed amendment to the Social Security Act to restore eligibility for sickness benefits to those people excluded by the changed interpretation of the loss of income provisions was announced by the Minister for Social Security. The legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives on **9 December 1982**. **31 December 1982:** The amendment came into effect with the grant of assent to the Act.

## Benefits Income Test

**17 August 1982:** A uniform increase of \$10 a week in the amount of private income which unemployment and sickness beneficiaries were allowed to earn before it affected their rate of benefit was announced by the Minister for Social Security. Under this more generous income test, people with more than \$10 a week private income would lose 50 cents benefit for every \$1 of extra income up to a limit of \$60. The amount of income currently allowed before reduction of benefit was \$3 a week for single people under 18 with a parent living in Australia, and \$6 for others. The changes would be effective from 1 November 1982.

## Aid to Supporting Parents

**17 August 1982:** Plans to reactivate the maintenance provisions of the Social Security Act were announced by the Minister for Social Security. The provisions, which had not been enforced since the mid-1970s, would require applicants for the supporting parent's benefit to pursue maintenance from the father or mother of the child or be deemed ineligible for the benefit. The provision was similar to that applying to deserted or divorced applicants for widow's pension. The Minister also announced that from November 1982 it would no longer be possible for a supporting parent beneficiary to be regarded as a dependant of another person for the purpose of any payment of pension, benefit, or allowance, although existing recipients would be exempted from the effect of the change. Also foreshadowed was the clarification of the Social Security Act to ensure that maintenance payments received by supporting parent beneficiaries in respect of their children would be treated in the same way as such payments to widow pensioners: thus, from February 1983 amounts in excess of \$312 per annum per child would be included in the income of the supporting parent beneficiary for income test purposes.

## Aged and Disabled Persons Accommodation

**1 July 1982:** The maximum building grants payable under the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Act for the last year of the current funding triennium were increased by \$1900 to \$14000 for single accommodation units and by \$2205 to \$16240 for double units. The maximum subsidy payable under the Aged and Disabled Persons Hostels Act was increased by \$2850 to \$21000 per person housed. Under the Handicapped Persons Assistance Act, the maximum subsidies were increased by \$2280 to \$16800 for single accommodation units and by \$2645 to \$19488 for double units. In addition, the personal care subsidy paid to organisations caring for frail aged people in approved hostels was increased by \$10 to \$30 per week per eligible resident, as from 6 July 1982. **11 August 1982:** The Minister for Social Security announced that provision would be made in the Budget for capital grants under the Aged or Disabled Persons Accommodation Program to total \$83 million in 1982-83, compared with an expenditure of \$56.7 million in 1981-82. He also announced that the triennium system of funding would end with the 1982-83 financial year and be replaced by a yearly allocation system. **22 October 1982:** The Minister for Social Security released a report by the Australian Housing Research Council which recommended

a major review of current funding arrangements, with a view to promoting services to disabled people living or wishing to live independently of institutional accommodation.

## Family Allowances

**25 March 1982:** A provision of the Social Services Legislation Amendment Bill 1982 precluded the grant or payment of family allowances to prohibited immigrants and to certain temporary residents of Australia. **2 June 1982:** The Act was assented to. **17 August 1982:** Provision was made in the 1982-83 Budget to increase family allowances payable for the first and second children in a family. The rate for the first child would increase by \$7.60 to \$22.80 per month and for the second child by \$10.85 to \$32.55 per month. The new rates would apply from the family allowance pay period commencing 15 October 1982, for inclusion in the first payments made in November. **2 December 1982:** Family allowances payable in respect of school-leavers would be extended for a period of six weeks to cover the waiting time before school-leavers were eligible for unemployment benefit. Announcing the change, the Minister for Social Security said that allowances paid to pensioners and beneficiaries in respect of the former student would also be continued for six weeks. The scheme would operate from the family allowance pay period commencing 15 October 1982 and for pension and benefit payments due on or after 1 November 1982.

## Family Income Supplement

**17 August 1982:** A tax-free family income supplement of up to \$10 per week for each dependent child of a low-income family not in receipt of a pension or benefit was announced by the Minister for Social Security. The Minister said that the income supplement, to take effect from May 1983, reflected the government's recognition of the cost burden borne by low-income families bringing up children, and would help to eliminate the unfair situation where an unemployment beneficiary could be better off financially than a person in similar family circumstances who was employed but earning low wages. The supplement was payable for a child or student between the ages of 16 and 25 years in respect of whom family allowance was payable, provided that no direct income-tested Commonwealth payment was being made to, or in respect of, that child or student under the Secondary Allowances Scheme or related schemes. The Social Security

Legislation Amendment Bill 1982, introduced in Parliament on **23 September 1982**, made provision for payment of the supplement. It received assent on **27 October 1982**.

### Homeless Persons Assistance Program

**17 August 1982:** The 1982-83 Budget allocation for the Homeless Persons Assistance program was \$6.7 million, compared with the 1981-82 expenditure of \$5.49 million.

**1 October 1982:** Following amendment to the Homeless Persons Assistance Regulations, the subsidy paid to organisations and local government authorities providing food and accommodation for homeless persons was increased from \$1.20 to \$1.35 per day, and the meal subsidy for non-residents from 40 cents to 45 cents per meal.

### Children's Services

**17 August 1982:** Details of the 1982-83 Budget allocation for the Children's Services Program were announced by the Minister for Social Security. Funding for children's services had been increased to \$70.04 million, compared with the 1981-82 expenditure of \$47.56 million. Additional grants to the States and the Northern Territory for pre-school education remained at \$33.09 million. The Minister also announced revised policy directions for the government's funding program, which would concentrate funding on 'mainstream' services (not less than 75 per cent of funds would be spent on day care services for young children) and on subsidising economically needy families to ensure their access to day care. This would be done through a new fee rebating arrangement to be known as the Special Economic Need Subsidy, and through Supplementary Services Grants to assist children with development and cultural needs. As well, \$200 000 had been allocated to a pilot scheme providing subsidies for children attending commercial child care centres, and \$5 million set aside to fund new or expanded services to meet high priority needs. **10 November 1982:** The allocation of funds totalling \$1 800 000 for child care in women's refuges was announced by the Minister for Social Security. The Minister also announced a change in the method of allocating funds to individual refuges, from same-sized grants to needs-based grants.

### Handicapped Child's Allowance

**17 August 1982:** Provision was made in the Budget for an increase of \$12 a month in the Handicapped Child's Allowance. The new rate would be \$85 a month and would apply from the family allowance pay period commencing 15 October 1982, with the first payments at these rates being made in November 1982.

### Delivered Meals Subsidy

**17 August 1982:** Provision was made in the Budget for an increase in the rate of subsidy paid under the Delivered Meals Subsidy Act. The basic rate for each delivered meal was increased by 10 cents to 50 cents and for meals with an approved Vitamin C supplement by 10 cents to 55 cents. The increased subsidies would be paid from October 1982.

### Community Projects Program

**14 December 1982:** A one-year experimental program under which long-term unemployed people could be given part-time work on projects run by local government authorities, local offices of other public authorities, and local voluntary bodies was announced by the Minister for Social Security. Funds for the projects would be provided by the Commonwealth through the State and Territory governments, and would allow the payment of casual award wages to a weekly amount equal to the current rate of unemployment benefit plus a supplement of \$35 per week. The positions would be filled via the Commonwealth Employment Service but participation would be voluntary.

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# State and Territory Social Security and Welfare Policy Events

Compiled with the assistance of the  
Department of Welfare Services, Brisbane;  
Department of Youth and Community  
Services, Sydney;  
Department of Community Welfare Services,  
Melbourne;  
Department for Community Welfare, Hobart;  
Department for Community Welfare, Adelaide;  
Department for Community Welfare, Perth;  
Department of Community Development,  
Darwin.

## Queensland

### Disabled Persons' Service

**26 May 1982:** The establishment of a Disabled Persons Service in the Department of Welfare Services was announced by the Minister for Welfare Services. As well as providing advice and referral information, the Service aimed to further the principles of the International year of Disabled Persons, and to act as a link between disabled persons' organisations and the Minister.

### Migrant Advisory Committee

**9 June 1982:** The inaugural meeting of the Migrant Advisory Committee was held. It was established to advise the Minister for Welfare Services on matters of concern to migrants.

## Child Care Licensing

**21 October 1982:** Under new regulations approved by Cabinet, a new system of child care licensing was introduced, whereby registered community organisations could establish Family Day Care schemes and authorise day care in private homes.

## New South Wales

### Vocational Centres for Handicapped

**10 February 1982:** The Department of Youth and Community Services commenced implementation of licensing laws introduced in July 1981 which set minimum standards for vocational centres catering for handicapped people. All organisations providing such facilities would be required to apply for a licence.

## Child Welfare Act

**25 May 1982:** Assent was given to the Community Welfare Act. It would replace the Child Welfare Act 1939 and make legislative provision for welfare services, for dealing with children in need of care and young offenders, for the constitution of the Children's Court of NSW and for the detention of children and other people who had been placed in training centres or were on remand. It also included provisions for the welfare of handicapped persons, including the introduction of guardianship for certain intellectually handicapped adults. Proclamation of the Act's commencement was expected in 1983.

### Advisory Council on Handicapped

**10 June 1982:** The New South Wales Advisory Council on the Handicapped was reconstituted and would receive statutory recognition with the proclamation of the Community Welfare Act. The Council now comprised ten non-government members, six members representing relevant Ministers of the NSW government, and four members representing relevant Ministers of the Commonwealth

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government. It would advise the Minister for Youth and Community Services on matters relating to the welfare of handicapped people.

## Child Protection

**30 June 1982:** A new system of notification, registration and monitoring of services to children in need of protection was developed and implemented by a committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Youth and Community Services, the Health Commission and the Police Department. Part of the new notification procedure was the systematic collection of data in the area of child protection.

## Victoria

### Family Welfare Services

**1 March 1982:** A Family Strengthening Program was introduced, providing \$3 million over an 18-month period to fund services that sought to 'enhance and strengthen' family life. Types of services funded by the Department of Community Welfare Services under this Program included emergency overnight care for children, family counselling, family support, parent support and self help.

### Income Security Task Force

**8 June 1982:** An Income Security Task Force was established to review existing federal pension and benefit levels in terms of their adequacy and impact on the incomes and functioning of families, and to develop a Victorian position in respect of changes to federal pension and benefit levels. The Task Force report was released on **5 December 1982**.

### Concessions for Pensioners and Low Income Families

**8 June 1982:** A Ministerial Committee on State Concessions was established to review and rationalise the provision of State funded concessionary services to pensioners, beneficiaries and low income people.

## Early Childhood Services Reviewed

**27 September 1982:** A review of early childhood services was commenced. The review, due for completion in mid-1983, would recommend to the Ministers for Health and Community Welfare Services ways in which existing and new resources could be used more flexibly to meet the various needs of children and families, and would plan a five-year program for the development of a more effective system of services for young children in Victoria.

## Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review

**22 November 1982:** The Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review was established. Its terms of reference included: to review child welfare legislation and practice in that part of the Victorian welfare/justice system affecting children, young people and their families; to develop principles that should guide and govern child welfare legislation and practice; to provide detailed instructions on provisions to guide the drafting of new child welfare legislation and practice; to provide detailed instructions on provisions to guide the drafting of new child welfare legislation consistent with the principles identified; to make recommendations on any changes to practices or services that were desirable within the foreseeable future and to suggest a time scale for the implementation of changes in practice and/or services, according to priorities developed through the review process.

## Community Welfare Services Act Amended

**29 November 1982:** Amendments to the Community Welfare Services Bill were formulated to remedy some legislative inconsistencies and operational difficulties and to correct anomalies existing between the Community Welfare Services Act 1970 and the Children's Courts Act 1973 in relation to child welfare legislation.

## Community Welfare Priorities

**7 December 1982:** A ministerial statement on community welfare priorities was made, outlining the government's welfare directions. The principal policy objectives described in the statement included the extension of community welfare

rights, the fair distribution of resources, the adequate provision of community welfare services and the development of a co-ordinated and co-operative planning system.

### Child Care

**10 December 1982:** A report on the range and provision of 24-hour child care arrangements was published. It is a study of differently organised arrangements providing family-based 24-hour care on a temporary or extended basis.

## Tasmania

### Regional Welfare Services

**6 January 1982:** Regionalisation of the services administered by the Department of Social Welfare was implemented. Three regional offices were established and a co-ordinator appointed at head office.

### Multicultural Affairs Pass to Social Welfare Department

**1 July 1982:** Responsibility for the administration of multicultural affairs was transferred to the Department of Social Welfare from the Attorney-General's Department.

### Child Welfare Act Amended

**19 October 1982:** The Child Welfare Act 1960 was amended to enable the Children's Court to place a child who was the subject of neglect proceedings in the care of the Department during the proceedings.

### Department for Community Welfare

**9 December 1982:** The name of the Department of Social Welfare was changed to the Department for Community Welfare.

## South Australia

### Ethnic Adviser in Department for Community Welfare

**15 January 1982:** An ethnic adviser position was established in the Department for Community Welfare. The adviser's role would include developing a series of cultural awareness programs, to be funded partially by the Commonwealth government through the Galbally program, and enabling the Department to give greater emphasis to the delivery of welfare services to ethnic people.

### Community Service for Young Offenders

**13 February 1982:** A Community Service Project scheme was introduced, enabling Children's Courts to order young offenders to take part in supervised community service work as an alternative to a period of detention.

### Committee on Early Childhood Care

**26 February 1982:** The establishment of a Community Welfare Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Care was announced by the Minister of Community Welfare. The new committee would be responsible for advising the Minister on all aspects of early childhood care except pre-school services, which would be covered by a committee responsible to the Education Minister. The new committees were being established in place of the Childhood Services Council.

### Transport Concessions for School-Leavers

**2 August 1982:** The government extended its transport concession scheme to school-leavers under 16 who were registered as unemployed and were not in receipt of income above the amount allowed to recipients of unemployment benefits.

## Electricity Account Concession

**13 December 1982:** A concession of \$50 a year on electricity accounts was introduced. Pensioners and beneficiaries — including unemployment beneficiaries who had dependants and who had been in receipt of benefits for more than six months — would be eligible if they were the persons responsible for payment of the account, provided they were not residing with persons who were in receipt of income.

## Western Australia

### Child Welfare Act Amendment

**22 September 1982:** Assent was given to the Child Welfare Amendment Act 1982. A major amendment was to set up a system of Community Service Orders. The Children's Court had operated such a system by administrative arrangement for some years but the amendment would create a statutory system. That portion of the Amendment Act had not been proclaimed by the end of the year. However, the principal Act now enabled delegation of powers from the Minister to the Director and Deputy-Director of the Department, but gave special right of appeal to the Minister against the Director's decision where it affected the status of a child. Other changes included a provision for an uncontrolled child, or a child waiting for an appeal to the Supreme Court, to be apprehended by a police officer or an authorised Departmental officer and brought before the Children's Court in the former case, or a Judge of the Supreme Court in the latter. Proceedings of the Children's Court might not now be published without the express authority of the Court.

### Report on Juvenile Justice System

**15 October 1982:** The report of an extensive study of the juvenile justice system in Western Australia was made available for public comment. It was prepared by Professor Eric Edwards, a former Professor of Law at the University of Western Australia, and contained a number of proposals for changing the treatment of juvenile offenders in the courts and in Departmental detention. In particular, it proposed that there should be a clear separation in the system between children who were offenders and those who were not, and

that it should be the court that determined, at least in the first instance, whether a child who had committed an offence should be detained in custody.

## Australian Capital Territory

### Child Care

**12 August 1982:** An amendment to the ACT Child Welfare Ordinance, limiting the number of children who might be in the care of an unlicensed child minder, was announced by the Minister for the Capital Territory. The amended Ordinance permitted minders to care for four children under 6 years of age, or eight children under 12, without being licensed. The minder's own children would be included in the numbers.

### Additional Concessions for Pensioners

**17 August 1982:** Persons eligible for pensioner fringe benefits would also be eligible for a 50 per cent concession on the cost of drivers' licences and vehicle registrations granted or renewed as from 18 August. The new concession was announced by the Minister for the Capital Territory in his comments on the 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget.

## Northern Territory

### New Concessions for Pensioners

**1 January 1982:** The Pensioner Concession Scheme was extended to allow an annual concession of \$3 on the cost of drivers' licences. **24 February 1982:** The Minister for Community Development announced a modification of the Pensioner Concession Scheme to allow concessions to people generating their own electricity, or purchasing it from sources other than the NT Electricity Commission.



## Child Care

**19 March 1982:** The Child Minding Regulations of the Child Welfare Act were amended to provide for registration of child care centres which only offered occasional care (less than 3 hours in 24) without the usual requirement for the outdoor play space.

## Child Abuse

**28 June 1982:** The Child Welfare Act was amended to introduce mandatory reporting of child abuse by all citizens of the Northern Territory.

## Social Welfare Regulations Repealed

**6 August 1982:** The Social Welfare Regulations of the Social Welfare Act were repealed.

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# Employment, Unemployment and Training

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## Ministerial and Departmental Responsibilities

**7 May 1982:** The Prime Minister announced the abolition of the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs and the Department of Industrial Relations, with a reorganisation of most of their functions in the new Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. The reorganisation was in line with the close links seen by the government between its policies on employment and industrial relations. The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Mr Macphee, replaced the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs, Mr Brown, as Minister responsible for employment and training.

## Employment and Training for Youth

**22 January 1982:** A \$12 000 grant for continuation of the West Heidelberg Youth Employment Scheme in Victoria was announced by the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs. Other grants announced in 1982 for community-based projects assisting long-term unemployed youth with employment and training included a further \$20 000 for the West Heidelberg scheme, \$690 000 for the Sydney City Mission to expand its activities in Sydney's western suburbs and \$616 000 for continuation of the program in Hobart run by Centacare Catholic Family Welfare. **17 August 1982:** The 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget allocated \$86 million to youth work experience and training programs, including major increase for the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP). **10 January 1983:** A joint Commonwealth Employment Service/Rotary youth employment promotion

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project in the Australian Capital Territory and south-eastern New South Wales was launched by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and the District Governor of Rotary. **12 January 1983:** The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations announced funding for a training and work experience project in Queensland as part of a new \$1 million series of experimental training projects for unemployed youth. The project would train 12 young people to be hardware sales assistants. **19 January 1983:** A meeting of Federal and State Ministers, chaired by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, agreed that 50 per cent of the \$200 million provided for employment projects under the 'wage pause program' should be used to provide assistance to the young unemployed. **28 February 1983:** A \$127 000 experimental training course devised by the Australian Resources Training Centre in Perth was announced by the Minister. The course would train 40 young unemployed for roustabout positions in the drilling industry.

### Training in Industry and Commerce

**25 January 1982:** Training development grants totalling \$300 000 for Industry Training Committees were announced by the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs. The grants, made on the advice of the National Training Council, were for the following industries: building and construction, clay and ceramics, dairy processing, fishing, furniture, local government, plastics, road transport, textiles, clothing and footwear, timber, tourism and hospitality, and wool producing. **2 August 1982:** The Minister invited applications for 1982-83 training research grants and stated that apprentice selection and the impact of technological change on the non-trade workforce were priorities for research. **15 August 1982:** The appointment of Mr P. Macdougall as the new Chairman of the National Training Council was announced by the Minister.

### Skills in Demand Program

**26 January 1982:** The Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs stated that the Skills in Demand Program would help eliminate skill shortages identified in a report by the Australian Federation of Construction Contractors on the expected demand for construction workers on major development projects. **23 April 1982:** The Minister announced the twenty-ninth project funded under the Program which to date had provided 3445 training places at a cost of \$7.97

million. Further projects announced during 1982 included the provision of skills in draughting, computer programming, non-destructive testing, catering and food and wine waiting. **15 November 1982:** A promotional package to encourage greater industry use of the Program was launched by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations.

### Community Youth Support Scheme

**27 January 1982:** Continuation of CYSS under new guidelines was announced by the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs, following Cabinet review of the task force report on the Scheme. The new guidelines provided for a greater emphasis on training and work experience, closer links with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES), funding through grants-in-aid paid in advance and the appointment of a young person to each of the State CYSS Committees. The new guidelines would come into effect after the end of the current funding period on 28 February. Funding for CYSS projects which conformed to the new guidelines would continue from 1 March, though all existing and new projects would need to apply by 1 May for 1982-83 funding from 1 July. **24 February 1982:** The Minister announced that 260 CYSS projects, 95 per cent of the total, conformed to the new guidelines and would continue to receive funds from 1 March to 30 June. \$5 million had been allocated for funding during this period. **3 June 1982:** The standard grant levels for CYSS projects in 1982-83 were announced by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. Three grant levels of \$34 000, \$54 000 and \$74 000 would apply for the 12-month period. **30 June 1982:** The Minister announced that \$16.3 million had been allocated by CYSS for 1982-83, with grants approved for 276 projects, including 23 new projects. **17 August 1982:** The 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget allocated \$16.4 million to CYSS and provided that all CYSS projects would be funded for an extra four months from 1 July to 30 October, to bring CYSS into line with the normal budgetary cycle.

### Employment and Training for Migrants

**19 February 1982:** A migrant employment information package, *Working in Australia*, was launched by the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs. **21 December 1982:** Legislation to replace the British subject requirement for employment by the Commonwealth government with an Australian citizenship requirement was foreshadowed by the

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Federal Affairs. The proposed action followed the government's consideration of the evaluation of the Galbally Report by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs.

## Trade Training

**23 February 1982:** A \$50 000 contribution to the establishment of Work Skill Australia by the Evatt Foundation was announced by the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs. The principal objective of Work Skill Australia was to raise the standard and status of the skilled trades by conducting skill competitions. **5 May 1982:** A progress report on implementation of the recommendations for trade training made by Commonwealth and State Labour Ministers was released by the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs. Progress detailed in the report included assistance to 14 group apprenticeship schemes training 1180 apprentices, a discussion paper on pre-employment trade courses, training of an additional 377 apprentices during construction of the Bayswater power station, and moves through the National Labour Consultative Council to remove inflexibility in federal awards dealing with apprenticeship training.

**17 August 1982:** The 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget allocation for trade training was \$89 million. \$84 million was allocated to the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprenticeship Full-Time Training (CRAFT) scheme, under which rebates would be adjusted in line with wage movements over the previous two years and increased a further 10 per cent to make the scheme more attractive. The new rebates would take effect on 1 January 1983. \$1.2 million was allocated to the Special Assistance Program for out-of-trade apprentices, which would be extended to government undertakings, and \$1.2 million to the Group Apprenticeship Support Program.

**10 November 1982:** A scheme to train 105 apprentices in the Queensland coal industry and involving a number of new approaches was announced by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and the Queensland Minister for Employment and Labour Relations. **1 December 1982:** The Federal Minister announced that the Commonwealth and NSW governments had agreed on a unique scheme to continue training for 50 retrenched apprentices through lease of a currently unused training centre. **9 December 1982:** Negotiations with State governments to increase by 2000 the number of full-time education places in trade-based pre-employment courses were announced by the Minister.

**8 February 1983:** The Minister announced agreement with the Queensland government to provide an extra 420 full-time pre-apprenticeship course places in technical and fur-

ther education (TAFE) colleges. Similar agreements with the NSW and South Australian governments to provide an extra 777 and 301 places respectively were announced later by the Minister.

## Employment and Training for Aboriginals

**26 February 1982:** The Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs announced provision of \$186 000 for five courses for 74 Aboriginal trainees in the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia.

## Bureau of Labour Market Research

**12 March 1982:** The Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs announced that grants for labour market research projects through the BLMR had reached \$60 000 to date in 1981-82. Further grants in 1982 and 1983 included \$2 million for studies of the long-term unemployed. **27 August 1982:** Three annual prizes and awards recommended by the BLMR Advisory Council to encourage labour market research were launched by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations.

## Special Youth Employment Training Program

**12 April 1982:** The Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs announced a concerted drive by all CES offices and agencies to find SYETP positions for job seekers who left school at the end of 1981 and would become eligible for SYETP assistance in April. **17 August 1982:** It was announced in the 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget that from 1 September the standard SYETP subsidy would be increased to \$75 a week and the extended SYETP subsidy to \$100 a week. A change in the guidelines to allow eligible people to directly seek work experience with an employer, and a one-third increase from 1 January 1983 in the Commonwealth intake of SYETP trainees, were also announced. 1982-83 funding for SYETP would allow assistance to 55 000 young people under standard SYETP and 15 000 under extended SYETP, increases of one-third on 1981-82 levels. **23 January 1983:** The Prime Minister announced that the government had agreed in principle to

reintroduce SYETP into State governments and government authorities and instrumentalities for 1983. Discussions were being held at officer level with State governments in order to commence programs as soon as possible.

## Discrimination in Employment

**17 June 1982:** The release of comprehensive guidelines to eliminate discriminatory practices in employment recruitment was announced by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. The guidelines were developed by the National Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation and were supported by the Confederation of Australian Industry and the Australian Council of Trade Unions. **2 November 1982:** The Minister announced the appointment of Miss Pauline Griffin, a Commissioner of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, as the new chairperson of the National Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation.

## Extent of Manpower and Training Programs

**17 August 1982:** The 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget allocated \$254.7 million to manpower and training programs.

## Commonwealth Employment Service

**17 August 1982:** The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations announced that a promotional campaign to explain the programs and services available through his Department, particularly the CES, would be launched in October. **23 September 1982:** The first of a new quarterly series of publications of CES statistics on new job-seeker registrations, new vacancies notified and vacancies filled was released by the Minister. **9 December 1982:** The Minister announced an immediate increase of 400 full-time staff and 84 part-time staff in the CES. The additional staff would augment CES assistance to the mature-aged, migrants, young people and Aborigines and the occupational information and guidance service. **10 February 1983:** The first stage of Job Bank, the CES's nation-wide computer-based job vacancy information system, was launched by the Minister at the opening in Adelaide of the first installation. The complete system was expected to be fully operational throughout Australia early in 1984.

## School to Work Transition Program

**17 August 1982:** The 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget allocated \$9.6 million for continuation of the transition allowance and \$1.4 million for two new initiatives. The new initiatives were a books and equipment allowance of \$30, payable to eligible trainees attending transition courses in TAFE, and the provision of \$1 million for the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations to fund directly special courses in TAFE colleges.

## Special Assistance for Large-Scale Retrenchments

**1 September 1982:** The Acting Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations said the government had invited major companies in the steel industry and the relevant unions to put forward proposals for manpower programs to assist workers leaving the steel industry. **9 December 1982:** The Minister stated that special training assistance, similar to the arrangements being developed for redundant workers in the steel industry, would be made available whenever large-scale retrenchments were concentrated in particular industries or areas.

## Employment and Training for the Disabled

**4 November 1982:** The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations launched a booklet, *Disabled People — Working for a Better Future*, prepared by the National Labour Consultative Council, and endorsed the NLCC's commitment to guaranteeing equal employment opportunities to the disabled.

## Employment and Training for Women

**26 November 1982:** A vocational video program, *Women in Professional Engineering*, designed to promote career opportunities for women in professional engineering, was launched by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. The program was produced by the Women's

Bureau of the Department. **19 January 1983:** A meeting of Federal and State Ministers, chaired by the Minister of Employment and Industrial Relations, agreed that each State should aim to recruit equal numbers of males and females for employment projects funded under the wage pause program.

### **Employment and Training for Long-Term Unemployed Adults**

**9 December 1982:** The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations announced that a new scheme, similar to SYETP, for long-term unemployed adults would commence on 1 March 1983. A subsidy of \$100 per week for 17 weeks and \$75 per week for a further 17 weeks would be paid to employers taking on adults who had been unemployed for eight out of the past twelve months. Employment of those aged over 45 who had been continuously unemployed for twelve months would attract a subsidy of \$125 per week for a full year.

### **Wage Pause Program**

**15 November 1982:** The Acting Prime Minister called a meeting of the Premiers to discuss, inter alia, proposals for a 12-month wages pause, which would result in budgetary savings which could, in part, be devoted to employment-related activities. **14 January 1983:** The Prime Minister announced the allocation to the States and Territories of \$200 million of the savings expected from the wage pause for employment projects. \$100 million was to assist the young unemployed and \$100 million to assist the older unemployed and others disadvantaged in the labour market. The announcement included proposed guidelines for employment projects under the wage pause program. **19 January 1983:** A meeting of Federal and State Ministers, chaired by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, agreed on guidelines for employment projects under the wage pause program. Recruitment would be targeted at the long-term unemployed, 50 per cent of the funds should be devoted to assisting the young unemployed, and each State and Territory should aim to recruit equal numbers of males and females. Projects would be managed by local government, State government bodies and voluntary organisations, should be labour-intensive and should have a skills training component. Projects would have to be approved by 31 December 1983 and would not receive funding beyond 30

June 1984. The States and Territories were requested to submit within the next week their detailed employment programs for Commonwealth approval. **8 February 1983:** The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and the Tasmanian Minister for Industrial Relations announced agreement on details of the wage pause program in Tasmania. Further announcements were made in February of the agreements between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales.

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# Family Law

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## Payment of Stamp Duty under Family Law Act

**24 December 1981:** The High Court delivered judgement in the case of *Gazzo v. Comptroller of Stamps, ex parte The Attorney General for the State of Victoria* (1981) F.L.C.

By majority, the High Court held that Section 90 of the *Family Law Act*, which exempted agreements of deeds executed under Part VIII of the Act from the payment of any duty levied by a State or Territory, was invalid. As a result of the decision in *Gazzo's* case, several States passed legislation during 1982 which exempted certain agreements or deeds arising out of the operation of the Family Law Act from the payment of duty.

*See:* Stamp Duties (Amendment) Act 1982 (NSW)  
 Stamp Duties Act Amendment Act (No. 2) 1982 (SA)  
 Stamp Duties Act Amendment Act (No. 3) 1982 (Tas)  
 Stamp Amendment Act (No. 3) 1982 (WA)  
 Stamp (Matrimonial Settlements) Act 1982 (Vic).

(Queensland legislation has not yet been passed but an administrative arrangement is in operation which exempts from payment of duty in appropriate cases.)

## Family Law Amendment Bill

**16 March 1982:** The second reading debate on the Family Law Amendment Bill (introduced in Parliament on **20 October 1981**, *see* 1981 *Diary*, p. 14), was resumed in the Senate and was subsequently adjourned. **16 and 24 March** and **18 August 1982:** The Bill was debated but it had not been passed by the end of 1982.

## Custody under Family Law Act

**23 April 1982:** The High Court delivered judgement in the case of *Fountain v. Alexander* (1982) FLC 91-218. The case involved proceedings for wardship and care and control of a 15-year-old boy born to the defendants during their marriage, which was dissolved in 1971. The proceedings were originally brought in the Supreme Court of New South Wales by the applicant, who had lived with the boy's mother for several years. Their relationship broke down when the boy was eight and subsequently the boy and a girl born of the de facto relationship lived spasmodically with the applicant and spasmodically with their mother. The question arose as to the Supreme Court's jurisdiction to make the orders sought in relation to the child.

*Held:* (by the whole court)

The effect of S.4(f), read in conjunction with S.81(a), S.39(1) and other relevant sections of the Family Law Act is that an application for the guardianship or custody of a child of a marriage made by a stranger to that marriage against a party to the marriage who has previously been granted custody of the child under the Family Law Act or the repealed act (Matrimonial Causes Act) may be instituted only in Courts exercising jurisdiction under the Commonwealth legislation. Therefore, the Supreme Court of New South Wales had no jurisdiction to make the orders sought by the stranger to the marriage.

# State Adoption Legislation and Policy Events

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## New South Wales

### Foreign Adoptions

**1 January 1982:** The clause of the 1980 Act amending the Adoption of Children Act 1965 with respect to the recognition of foreign adoptions took effect. This provision removed the requirement that adoptive parents be resident or domiciled in the country where the child's adoption order was made at the time of the making of the order.

### Protection for Adoption Tribunal

**5 May 1982:** Assent was given to the Adoption of Children (Amendment) Act 1982, which amended some provisions of the 1980 Adoption of Children (Amendment) Act. The 1982 Act provided full protection (against civil actions) for members of the Adoption Tribunal and enabled proclamation of the 1980 Act in stages as required. Neither the 1980 or 1982 Adoption of Children (Amendment) Acts have been proclaimed in full.

## Western Australia

### Subsidised Adoption in Special Circumstances

**25 February 1982:** A policy statement was issued by the Director-General of the Department of Community Welfare concerning the use of subsidised adoption in special circumstances. In specific cases relating to the special needs of the child and financial circumstances of the proposed adopting parents, a subsidy may be paid to enable the applicants to adopt the child where adoption would not otherwise proceed or be viable because of financial circumstances. The two groups of children most likely to benefit from such a provi-

sion were seen to be long-term foster children and handicapped children.

## Queensland

### Adoption Legislation Discussion Paper

**2 June 1982:** The Minister for Welfare Services released an Adoption Legislation Discussion Paper to promote further discussion and to canvas public opinion prior to the introduction of new or amending adoption legislation. The discussion paper sought views on a number of adoption issues including: eligibility criteria and selection procedures for adoptive applicants; the adoption of children with special needs; adoption of children by relatives, including step-parents; intercountry adoption; access to birth information by adopted persons, and the appropriateness of an Adoption Tribunal.

### Adoption of Children Amendment Bill

**1 December 1982:** A Bill to amend the Adoption of Children Act 1964-81 was introduced. Its provisions included: (1) the establishment of an Adoption Tribunal, comprising a judge as presiding member and two Justices of the Peace, with the power to hear and determine appeals from registered adoptive applicants and applications to dispense with the consent of natural parents to the adoption of their child; (2) extending the grounds for dispensation of parental consent; (3) the introduction of multiple adoption lists (in place of the existing single list) providing for four separate lists of adoptive applicants, i.e. those seeking to adopt and infant, a special needs child, a child from an overseas country and a relative child; (4) provision to be made allowing special arrangements to apply in respect of special needs children to prevent those children being lost in the system and (5) provision enabling a step-parent to adopt the child of his or her spouse without the previous requirement for the natural parent to adopt his or her own child when the child is adopted by his or her spouse.

## Northern Territory

**17 June 1982:** The Supreme Court heard an application to adopt a child made jointly by the child's mother and her spouse, both of whom the child believed to be his natural parents. The Court held that the best interests of the child require that he be aware of his true identity and parentage. An adoption order was made by the Court but only on the condition that the child be told within twelve months of his adoptive status.

# Immigration

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## Immigration Review Panel

**18 January 1982:** The establishment of an Immigration Review Panel was announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The panel would investigate disputed decisions on a wide range of immigration and citizenship applications. It would report to the Minister and would be independent of the Departmental officers who were involved in such cases. Specific 'review rights' had been created, allowing some of those affected by adverse decisions to be guaranteed a ministerial review of their cases upon request. **20 January 1983:** The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs announced that the Immigration Review Panel would be expanded to handle the increasing number of appeals. Over 2000 applications had been received in the twelve months of operation, causing a backlog.

## Migrant Policy

**24 March 1982:** An agreement in principle had been reached between the Australian and Vietnamese governments, for an orderly departure program of migrants from Vietnam. The emphasis of the program, announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, would be the reunification of families. **1 April 1982:** Details of the new migrant selection system to be introduced on 19 April 1982 were announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Under the new system, brothers, sisters and non-dependent children of Australian residents would have a better chance of acceptance. A new migrant handbook containing instructions to migrant officers and details of the new system would also be available. The Minister also announced the abolition of the 'patrials' category, under which children and grandchildren of people in Australia could immigrate on a concessionary basis. **4 April 1982:** The second annual review of Australia's demographic trends was outlined by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in a ministerial statement in the

House of Representatives. The government's migration policy for 1982-83, based on this review, was then announced by the Minister. Between 115 000 and 120 000 people would be selected to migrate to Australia, including 24 000 refugees and excluding New Zealand citizens. This program would be effective from 19 April 1982. **17 April 1982:** A special migrant fare scheme for people selected in the United Kingdom for migration to Australia was announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. **22 August 1982:** The Minister warned against people using marriage to an Australian purely as a means of entering the country. Entry would only be approved where both fiance and sponsor met migration requirements. **12 December 1982:** Changes to the Employer Nomination Scheme were announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. New procedures being developed would ensure overseas workers were not coming to Australia at the cost of Australian workers' jobs. **9 January 1983:** The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs announced that, following the release of the latest occupation demand schedule, the number of migrants entering Australia under the labour shortage category would fall by more than 1000, from its planned level of 31 000.

## Refugees

**7 February 1982:** An increase in the intake of both Polish refugees and migrants was announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, after consultation with the government of Austria, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and leaders of the Australian Polish community. **16 March 1982:** Decisions on refugee policy and procedures, following a review of the government's refugee and special humanitarian programs, were detailed in a ministerial statement given by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in the House of Representatives. **31 March 1982:** A report, *'Please Listen to What I'm Not Saying'*, on the settlement experiences of Indo-Chinese refugees, was released by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The report was based on a survey conducted over the period 1978 to 1980. **17 April 1982:** Two hundred Eastern European refugees arrived in Australia on the first of six special Qantas flights from Vienna. **2 December 1982:** A government decision to set a special target of 3000 places for refugees settled under the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme was announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. **3 February 1983:** A cheque for \$50 000 was presented to the Committee for the Allocation of Loan Funds to Refugees in Centres by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. It was the first instalment of a total payment of \$250 000. **10 February 1983:** An increase



amounting to more than \$21 000 in the financial support to community groups sponsoring refugees under the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme was announced by the Minister.

## Migrant Services

**10 March 1982:** The development within the Victorian Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs of a legal interpreting unit, jointly operated by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments, was announced by the Federal and State Ministers for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

**12 March 1982:** An action plan to help resolve the special difficulties faced by migrant women following marriage breakdowns was formulated at a conference of the Australian Ministers for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Discussion at the conference also covered the Telephone Interpreter Service, the requirement of Australian citizenship for future enrolments on State electoral rolls and proposals to develop a national language policy. **25 July 1982:** Details of a package of welfare, education and legislative measures developed in response to the evaluation of the *Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants* 1978 (the Galbally Report) by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs were announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. **7 August 1982:** A six-point plan to upgrade adult migrant education programs was announced by the Minister. The plan arose from the evaluation of the Galbally Report.

**17 August 1982:** It was announced in the Budget that \$7.2 million would be spent on migrant services in 1982-83, as against \$5.4 million in 1981-82. The major increase in spending would be on grants to enable ethnic welfare agencies to employ social welfare workers. **10 September 1982:** Federal and State Ministers concerned with immigration and ethnic affairs held a conference, attended also by the New Zealand Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The expansion of translator and interpreter services and the Grant-in-Aid welfare worker scheme were discussed, as well as the current migration program and action taken against illegal migrants.

**17 December 1982:** The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs announced that a review of the Commonwealth government's manpower and training programs would be undertaken by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. The review would assess the extent to which these programs met the needs of migrant and refugee youths. **18 January 1983:** The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs said that accommodation at migrant centres would be available to those with the greatest need for the government's 'on arrival' programs.

## NAATI

**14 April 1982:** The membership of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) was changed as NAATI entered the final phase of its operations, leading to the devolution of its functions to a national registration body. The changes were announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

## Australian Citizenship Act

**6 May 1982:** Proposals for changes to the Australian Citizenship Act (1949) were detailed in a statement by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The proposals were the outcome of a review of the Act and would be drafted into a Bill to change the Act after a process of consultation had been completed. **16 June 1982:** The Minister announced that public forums would be held in all capital cities to allow public discussion on proposed changes to the Act.

## Ethnic Media

**23 July 1982:** Changes to the Commonwealth government's advertising policy to increase the level of advertising in the ethnic press were announced by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. **1 December 1982:** He released a discussion paper outlining options for the development of ethnic radio.

## Illegal Immigrants

**1 August 1982:** The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs announced that his Department would undertake an examination of the increase in the number of overseas visitors taking up permanent jobs in Australia. **5 September 1982:** Action to be taken to reduce the number of illegal migrants working in Australia was detailed by the Minister. **19 December 1982:** He announced that a 240 per cent increase in detection of illegal immigrants had taken place since September.

## Population Forecasts

**29 October 1982:** The first official government population forecast was released by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, who said the forecasts would be an annual series designed to meet the needs of government planners formulating migration programs.

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# Housing

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## Emergency Housing

**24 February 1982:** Details of a new \$2 million program to help house families in distress were announced by the Ministers for Social Security and Housing and Construction. The funds would be used to construct, purchase or lease suitable dwellings for crisis accommodation. Aboriginal Hostels Ltd would receive \$100 000, the remaining funds being allocated among the States in accordance with their populations. **17 August 1982:** The Commonwealth Budget allocated \$4 million for this program for 1982-83.

## Housing Advisory Body in Northern Territory

**3 March 1982:** The establishment in the Northern Territory of a committee of the Indicative Planning Council for the Housing Industry was announced by the Acting Minister for Housing and Construction. The Indicative Planning Council is the major advisory body to the Commonwealth on short, medium and long-term trends in the housing industry at both the State/Territory and national levels. The Chairman of the Northern Territory committee would be Mr Bernard Rowan.

## Bank Lending for Housing

**18 March 1982:** The nationally operated savings banks would increase their level of lending for housing by \$400 million in the twelve months to March 1983, following agreement between the Commonwealth and banks. However, the maximum interest rate charged by savings banks on home loans would rise by one percentage point to 14.5 per cent.

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## Grants for Home Purchase

**18 March 1982:** The replacement of the existing Home Savings Grant Scheme by a new scheme, the Home Deposit Assistance Scheme, was announced in a ministerial statement by the Treasurer. Features of the new scheme, which would be available to persons contracting to buy or build their first home from 18 March 1982 onwards, included a maximum grant of \$3500 payable on savings of \$2500, grants of \$1 for \$1 saved, a means test to direct assistance to low and middle income earners, no value limit on eligible homes, abolition of the nine-month waiting period, provisions which did not disadvantage people in transitory occupations such as servicemen, policemen and teachers, and the removal of anomalies in the old scheme which disadvantaged some migrant families. **8 April 1982:** Adjusted income limits for eligibility for grants, under the Home Deposit Assistance Scheme were announced by the Minister for Housing and Construction. The grant would taper off to zero at 155 per cent of the current Australian Bureau of Statistics average weekly earnings figure, corresponding, for the December quarter of 1981, to an earnings cut-off of about \$470. **29 April 1982:** The Home Deposit Assistance Bill, to give effect to the new policies announced on 18 March, was introduced in the House of Representatives. **2 June 1982:** The period of overlap (from 18 March 1982) between the Home Savings Grant Scheme and Home Deposit Assistance Scheme concluded upon the completion of the legislative process giving effect to the latter scheme. **17 August 1982:** The Commonwealth Budget provided \$147 million for the Home Deposit Assistance Scheme in 1982-83.

## Tax Concessions for Housing Loan Interest

**18 March 1982:** Tax rebates based on the interest attributable to the first five years of ownership of a first sole or principal residence in Australia were announced by the Treasurer. Buyers could rebate their total interest up to a limit of \$700 in the first year of occupancy, if they had children, or up to \$500 if they did not, with the rebate limit reducing by \$100 each year thereafter. The estimated cost of this measure for 1982-83 was \$100 million. **17 August 1982:** The 1982-83 Commonwealth Budget provided for a further scheme of rebates on housing loan interest, whereby a rebate of 30 cents in the dollar was available on that part of the interest on a loan for purchase, construction or extension of a principal place of residence that exceeded 10 per cent. This rebate would apply to the first \$60 000 of a home loan and would come into effect from 1 November 1982. First home buyers could move on to this rebate scheme at their discretion.

## Mortgage and Rent Relief Scheme

**18 March 1982:** The provision of up to \$20 million to assist both low-income house buyers under extreme difficulty in meeting their mortgage repayments and low-income private renters under similar difficulty in meeting their rent repayments was announced by the Treasurer. This funding required dollar for dollar matching by the States. **17 August 1982:** The Commonwealth Budget allocated \$20 million for these purposes for 1982-83, and also provided for an increase from November 1982 in the supplementary assistance paid to pensioners renting in the private market, from \$8 to \$10 a week, following a \$3 a week increase in the maximum grant from February 1982. Total expenditure on the supplementary rental assistance measure would be \$150 million in 1982-83. **24 November 1982:** Provision of \$5.3 million each in a year under the mortgage and rent relief scheme by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments was announced by the Minister for Social Security and the Victorian Minister for Housing. Rent subsidies of up to \$20 per week would be available to persons on pensions or benefits and to those earning less than the limit for Health Care cards (currently \$184 per week for a couple, plus \$20 per child), where more than 50 per cent of present income was paid in rent. These subsidies, together with further assistance with bonds and other relocation expenses, would comprise \$7.95 million of the total allocation.

## Housing Policy Publicity Campaign

**23 March 1982:** An immediate Australia-wide advertising campaign to explain people's entitlements under the new Federal housing policy measures was announced by the Minister for Housing and Construction.

## Australian Housing Research Council

**26 March 1982:** Five new research proposals planned by the Australian Housing Research Council for 1982-83 were announced by the Minister for Housing and Construction. The Council consists of the Federal, State and Territory ministers with responsibility for housing, and its role is to initiate and co-ordinate technical, economic and social research of concern to the public and welfare housing sections. The five proposals involved studies of the use of manufactured housing units to cope with changing family

numbers, of the effect on families of increasing housing costs leading to mortgage defaults, of the alterations and additions sector of the building industry and its effect on the demand for new dwellings, of the impact of adult unemployment on demand for public housing, and of the cause of vacancies in public rental housing. Advertisements would be placed for researchers to undertake the work, subject to the availability of funds. **22 October 1982:** A report commissioned by the Australian Housing Research Council on issues relating to accommodation for the disabled was released by the Council's Chairman, the Minister for Social Security. The report drew particular attention to the need for a reassessment of current funding arrangements with a view to providing funds for services to disabled individuals living or wishing to live outside institutions.

## Welfare Housing

**7 May 1982:** The Prime Minister announced the abolition of the Department of Housing and Construction, and the transfer of the welfare housing activities of the Department to the Department of Social Security. **24 June 1982:** Commonwealth direct funding to the States and Northern Territory for welfare housing in 1982-83 would be increased by grants of \$71 million, as a response to increased demands for welfare housing and the expected reduced activity in the housing and construction industry. The Minister for Social Security announced that this would bring total funding for 1982-83 to \$332 million for welfare housing, the greater part being provided as direct grants and the balance as low interest advances, repayable at 4.5 per cent per annum over 53 years. States could nominate for extra funds from the total State works and housing program, these funds being also repayable at 4.5 per cent per annum. **13 December 1982:** \$100 million of the \$300 million Budget savings expected from the wages pause would be allocated to the construction of additional welfare housing in 1983. The Minister for Social Security said that these additional funds would be distributed among the States and Territories according to their populations, and should result in extra public housing commencements of over 2000 units.

## Youth Accommodation Assistance

**28 October 1982:** Applications were invited from non-government organisations for Commonwealth grants to assist homeless youth establish themselves in longer-term accommodation. The Minister for Social Security announced

that grants totalling \$300 000 would be available as an interim provision pending further consideration of reports on the subject of youth homelessness.

## Accommodation for Aged and Disabled Persons

**11 August 1982:** The Commonwealth would make some \$207 million available by mid-1984 for capital projects providing special accommodation such as hostels and nursing homes for the elderly and disabled, and other facilities for handicapped people. The Minister for Social Security said that of the total amount, about \$74 million would comprise grants for additional facilities, so that he was inviting proposals for the application of an additional \$18 million in 1982-83 and \$35 million in 1983-84 for the aged, and of an additional \$6 million in 1982-83 and \$15 million in 1983-84 for the disabled.

## Housing Costs Action Program

**17 August 1982:** The Commonwealth Budget provided \$50 000 for 1982-83 to help develop and mount a housing costs action program. Industry, State and local governments would be asked to join the Commonwealth in funding and participating in the program, which would involve the development of publications and audio-visual material for use in field discussions with local government and industry to illustrate how savings in residential development costs might be achieved.

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# Health

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## Hospital Funding

**24 February 1982:** An increased grant to Tasmania of \$4 million for 1981-82 was announced by the Minister for Health after a review of estimates of likely revenue that could be raised following increased hospital accommodation charges. **25 March 1982:** The Health Legislation Amendment Bill of 1982 was introduced into the House of Representatives to give the Minister for Health power to approve public hospital charges for professional and outpatient services for which basic hospital benefits were payable. This complemented the Minister's power to approve public hospital standard inpatient accommodation charges. **9 June 1982:** Assent was given to the Act. **31 May 1982:** The Grants Commission *Report on State Tax Sharing and Health Grants* was released. The Commission had been asked to identify the relativities to be used in the 1983-84 and 1984-85 distribution of the identified health grant paid to all States other than South Australia and Tasmania. (These two States have 10-year hospital cost-sharing agreements expiring in 1985.) The Commission concluded that the ratios between the States should be: Victoria (1.00); NSW (1.110); Queensland (1.232) and WA (1.360). **28 June 1982:** Victoria received an additional \$3.8 million following a review of its revenue raising capacity for 1981-82. Similar reviews resulted in additional grants to Western Australia (\$4.6 million) and the Northern Territory (\$4.8 million). Reviews for 1982-83 were also conducted for Queensland, resulting in a reduction in its assessed revenue raising potential of \$0.8 million (and hence a grant increase of that amount), and for the Northern Territory, involving a reduction of \$6.6 million.

## National Health and Medical Research Council

**10 March 1982:** A report from the Australian Science and Technology Council on medical research in Australia was tabled in Parliament. The report recommended that a

Medical Research Council (Australia) be established to carry out the medical research advisory and funding functions currently undertaken by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) and to have responsibility for the development, co-ordination and optimal utilisation of the resources available for medical research and development in this country; and that a National Health Council, replacing the NH&MRC, be formed to have responsibility for matters relating to public health and health care services. **18 March 1982:** A report from the NH&MRC on health hazards of asbestos was tabled in Parliament. The report contained a number of recommendations concerning labelling of, education about and use of asbestos. **2 June 1982:** A review of the NH&MRC conducted by Dr B. J. Shea and Dr J. Coghlan was submitted to the Minister for Health. The review proposed maintaining the NH&MRC with both medical research and public health functions but proposed major changes in the composition of the Council and restructuring of the committee system, including the establishment of a Board of Medical Research, a Board of Public Health and a Board of Health Services. **3-4 June 1982:** The NH&MRC conducted its 91st session in Hobart. The Council considered and issued reports on hypnosis in professional practice; heart transplants (recommending that a heart transplantation program be established in a Sydney or Melbourne hospital) and psychosocial management of people involved in major disasters. The Council also adopted a set of dietary guidelines and revised its occupational health guidelines.

## Medical Fraud and Overservicing

**24 March 1982:** Commonwealth and State Health Ministers, meeting at the Australian Health Ministers' Conference, agreed to commence discussions at officer level on ways in which they could be of mutual assistance in combating fraud and overservicing by doctors. **25 March 1982:** The government introduced legislation (the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 1982) to ensure that services provided by a medical practitioner found guilty on two or more charges of fraud would not attract medical benefits for a three-year period. **25 May 1982:** The Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts announced that the Committee would conduct a formal inquiry into payments made under the Medical Benefits Schedule with particular reference to; (1) estimates of the extent of fraud and overservicing by practitioners in relation to payments made by or on behalf of the Department of Health under the Commonwealth Medical Benefits Schedule, and (2) present arrangements in relation to such fraud and overservicing and the possibilities for improvement in these procedures. **9 June 1982:** Assent

was given to the Act. **17 August 1982:** Special additional funding of \$371 000 was granted to the Department of Health in the 1982-83 Budget to enable it to expand its activities in the detection of medical benefits fraud and overservicing. **9 December 1982:** Joint Public Accounts Committee Chairman, Mr D. M. Connolly MP, tabled a progress report of that Committee's deliberations on fraud and overservicing, designed to provide the government with an indication of the Committee's views on areas where urgent action should be taken and to offer a number of options for administrative and legal changes to improve current arrangements for pursuing fraud and overservicing by doctors. The Committee concluded: '(1) There are significant problems in the Department of Health's Fraud and Overservicing Detection System (FODS), which cause much fraud and overservicing to go undetected, and also result in some doctors being falsely suspected of fraud or overservicing. A significant factor has been the failure to allocate adequate priorities for staff resources. (2) Long delays in the investigation of suspected fraud cases have been brought about by: (a) insufficient allocation of staff by both the Health Department and the Australian Federal Police; (b) inadequate guidelines on what constitutes fraud and how it should be handled; (c) flaws in the procedures for handling suspected fraud cases, and (d) inadequate training of both Health Department and police investigators in this specialised area'. It made a number of recommendations for further legislative action and changes in departmental procedures.

### Health Ministers and Director-General Changed

**19 April 1982:** Senator Peter Baume replaced Mr M. J. R. Mackellar as Minister for Health, following the latter's resignation. **7 May 1982:** Mr J. J. Carlton MP was appointed Minister for Health in a ministerial reshuffle. **23 November 1982:** The Minister for Health announced that Mr L. J. Willett had been appointed Director-General of Health from **1 January 1983**, succeeding Dr G. Howells. Mr Willett is the first non-medical Director-General of Health.

### Family Medicine Program.

**17 June 1982:** A report on a review of the Family Medicine Program by Dr T. J. Hurley, a Melbourne physician and former Chairman of the Research Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council, and Dr C. J. Cummins, a former Director-General of Public Health in

New South Wales, was released by the Minister for Health. **9 November 1982:** After consideration of the report, the Minister for Health and the President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Dr R. Finch, announced major changes to the Family Medicine Program, the national post-graduate program of the RACGP. The revised program would provide a more structured education (replacing reliance on self-directed learning) with formal certification on completion. State Ministers would be consulted on whether training of the type planned for the Family Medicine Program should be compulsory for those wishing to enter general practice.

### Medical Fees and Benefits

**24 June 1982:** An inquiry to determine fees for medical benefits purposes, to be conducted by Mr W. J. Locke, a Sydney chartered accountant, was announced by the Minister for Health. **23 September 1982:** The report of this inquiry, released by the Minister, recommended increases in fees for general practitioner attendances (a 10 per cent increase); consultant physician services (9.7 per cent); specialist attendances, obstetric and surgical services (9.8 per cent); anaesthetic services (8.9 per cent); pathology services (8.9 per cent); and radiology services (10.3 per cent). The Minister said that the government had accepted the determination made by Mr Locke. **6 October 1982:** Increases in fees for optometrical services were announced by the Minister. A 9.7 per cent increase would apply from 1 November 1982, the same date as the new medical benefits schedule would come into effect.

### Pharmaceutical Benefits

**28 June 1982:** A review of payments to chemists under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) led to an increase in chemists' remuneration of 7 cents for ready-prepared items and 25 cents for other items, effective 1 July 1982. **17 August 1982:** The Budget provided for a major overhaul of the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme to replace the 'two tier' system under which eligible pensioners and their dependants received PBS items free, while all other people paid \$3.20 for each benefit item on a PBS prescription. (See *Diary* 1981, p. 24.) The new scheme implemented a 'three tier' arrangement whereby: (1) pensioners with Pensioner Health Benefits cards and sickness beneficiaries with Health Benefits cards, and the dependants of both groups, would continue to receive benefits free of charge; (2) people in special need who

held Health Care cards, together with Social Security and Veterans' Affairs pensioners who were not eligible for either a Pensioner Health Benefits or Health Benefits card, and dependants of these groups, would pay a reduced contribution of \$2 per benefit item, and (3) all other people would pay an increased contribution of \$4 per benefit item. The Health Minister said amendments to the National Health Act would be introduced during the Budget session of Parliament and the new arrangements would come into effect on 1 January 1983. **9 November 1982:** The Minister for Health announced the government's response to a number of items outstanding from the 182nd Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts on chemists' remuneration. (See 1980 *Diary*, p. 20; 1981 *Diary* p. 24.) He said the government had rejected the recommendation for a Bureau of Health Economics and had asked the Bureau of Industry Economics to speed up its inquiry into the retail pharmacy industry. On the question of excess payments made to chemists, the Committee had not made any recommendations, as three independent legal opinions had indicated that recovery of past excess payments was not possible, and the government had accepted this advice. **6 December 1982:** Mr C. W. L. de Boos, a former General Manager of the Bank of New South Wales and former Commissioner of the Jamison Inquiry into the Efficiency and Administration of Hospitals, was appointed as a part-time member of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Remuneration Tribunal in place of Mr R. Boyer, who had resigned. The Tribunal also commenced its fourth review of chemists' remuneration for the supply of pharmaceutical benefits.

## Health Insurance

**1 August 1982:** A levy on hospital insurance organisations came into effect in Victoria. State legislation exempted contributors from paying outpatient charges at public hospitals but required the funds to pay a tax direct to the State Treasury instead. The levy was set at 80 cents per week for each family contributor to a fund and 40 cents per week for each single contributor. **10 August 1982:** The Minister for Health announced that a new health fund, sponsored by the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union, AMWSU Health Care Limited, had been granted registration under the National Health Act. **14 October 1982:** The Minister introduced into the House of Representatives the Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 1982, designed to implement changes to pharmaceutical benefits announced as part of the Budget and also to overturn the Victorian outpatient levy. **28 October 1982:** The Minister announced that changes to the Articles of Association of the NSW-based

Hospitals Contribution Fund, which gave the New South Wales government effective control of the Board of the Fund, had been notified to his department as required under the National Health Act and that they could thus be implemented. **28 October 1982:** The Senate amended the Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 1982 by deleting those parts which attempted to overturn the Victorian outpatient levy. The House of Representatives agreed to the amendments on the same day and assent was given on **8 November 1982**. **3 November 1982:** In line with increases in unemployment benefits, Health Care card eligibility limits were increased to \$184 per week for married persons or persons with dependants and \$111 per week for persons without dependants. The \$20 allowance for each dependant remained unchanged. **10 November 1982:** The Minister for Health introduced the Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 3) 1982 to overturn the Victorian outpatient levy. **15 December 1982:** This Bill was defeated in the Senate. **31 December 1982:** The Minister for Health announced that he had imposed a new condition of registration on the health insurance funds: that they not pay the outpatient levy which took effect in Victoria in August or the New South Wales levy which was to take effect on 1 January 1983.

## Advisory Panel on Health Technologies

**24 August 1982:** The membership of the National Health Technology Advisory Panel (established in March 1980, see 1980 *Diary* p. 19) was announced by the Minister for Health. The Chairman would be Dr D. B. Travers, First Assistant Director-General, Medical Services Division, Commonwealth Department of Health.

## Effects of Herbicides and Atomic Tests

**20 October 1982:** The Ministers for Health and National Development and Energy jointly announced that a study of persons connected with the United Kingdom atomic test programs at Monte Bello, Emu and Maralinga in the 1950s had been commenced. This study followed a pilot study announced on **10 November 1981** (see 1981 *Diary* pp. 25-26). **9 December 1982:** The Minister for Defence tabled a report on the use of herbicides, insecticides and other chemicals by the Australian Army in Vietnam and a similar report for the Royal Australian Air Force. **13 December 1982:** Defence Department files relating to the use of those chemicals in Vietnam were released to the public.

## Nursing Homes and Private Hospitals

**21 October 1982:** Nursing home benefits would be increased substantially from 4 November, the Minister for Health announced. Following the annual review, new weekly benefits rates would be: NSW and ACT \$196.35; Victoria \$293.30; Queensland \$168.00; SA and NT \$225.40; WA \$151.55 and Tasmania \$177.45. The additional benefit for extensive care patients remained at \$42 per week. (For 1981 benefit levels see 1981 *Diary* p. 22.)

funding; and (e) the Extended Care Program to be funded through a grant without matching conditions. (3) The Commonwealth to establish a Nursing Care Program to replace the current Nursing Home Benefits paid under the National Health Act 1953 and the Nursing Home Assistance Act 1974. The major recommendation on the transfer of responsibility was for the transfer of the restructured accommodation and home care programs to the States, over a five-year period, initially through grants but moving towards eventual absorption in the tax-sharing arrangements.

## Home Care and Accommodation for the Aged

**October 1982:** *In a Home or at Home: Accommodation and Home Care for the Aged*, a report prepared by a sub-committee of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure (chaired by Mr L. B. McLeay MP), was published. Major recommendations on general matters were: (1) A change to present arrangements to achieve: a reduction in the number of programs; responsibility to one Minister; modifications to financial arrangements so as to remove disincentives for the expansion of home care services; similar forms of control over all categories of program expenditure and a reallocation of resources between institutional and community care. (2) The number of programs to be reduced to an Extended Care Program and a Nursing Home Care Program, with subsidised housing provided under the Housing Assistance Act 1981. (3) All programs providing home care and accommodation for the aged to be brought under the control of one Minister. On balance the Committee considered the appropriate Minister to be the Minister for Health, with housing assistance to remain with the Minister responsible for the Housing Assistance Act 1981. Major recommendations on housing, extended care and nursing home care were: (1) Housing assistance to be provided to those most in need and all assistance for the construction of aged persons' accommodation to be directed through the Housing Agreements. (2) The following strategy for extended care be implemented: (a) an Extended Care Program to be introduced to replace the States Grants (Home Care) Act 1969, the States Grants (Paramedical Services) Act 1969, the Home Nursing Subsidy Scheme and the Delivered Meals Subsidy; (b) the Extended Care Program to include an Attendant Care Allowance to replace the Domiciliary Nursing Care Benefit and the Personal Care Subsidy; (c) the range of services to be funded to be decided in consultation with the States to encourage a diversity of services to meet local need; (d) resources to be distributed so as to achieve a basic provision in all areas, rather than solely in response to submissions for



# Appendix: Health 1979

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## Peer Review in Health Services

**9 January 1979:** A grant of \$50 000 to the Australian Medical Association for the establishment of a Peer Review Resources Centre was announced by the Minister for Health. The functions of the Centre would include: (1) fostering and encouragement of peer review initiatives by the medical and other professions, health authorities and individual institutions; (2) provision of training and advice, including courses and seminars and assistance with the development of research protocols for the medical and other professions, health authorities and individual institutions; and (3) development of possible methods for evolving widespread systems of peer review in hospitals. **13 November 1979:** The Minister for Health tabled a report in Parliament on the nursing workforce. Entitled *Nursing Personnel: A National Survey*, the report called for further investigation into nursing and other predominantly female occupations; career and educational opportunities for nurses, and staff turnover and employment patterns.

## Medical Fraud and Overservicing

**17 January 1979:** The establishment of an Optometrical Services Committee of Inquiry was announced by the Minister for Health. The Committee was empowered to examine conduct of practice of optometrists with respect to the provision of services which attracted health insurance benefits. **8 August 1979:** The Minister for Health announced the establishment of a Medical Services Review Tribunal to hear appeals from Medical Services Committees of Inquiry. The President of the Tribunal would be Sir Sydney Frost, a former Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea, the other members being Dr Robert Wall, a specialist paediatrician, and Dr Myles Kehoe, Deputy Chief Director (Medical Services) of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. **13 August**

**1979:** The name of a doctor ordered to repay medical benefits received as a result of providing excessive medical services was published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette. This was the first such gazettal since the establishment of Medical Services Committees of Inquiry in 1977.

## Medical Fees and Benefits

**8 February 1979:** The Minister for Health announced that fees for pathology services for the purposes of medical benefits were to be increased. The pathology section of the medical benefits schedule is based on a system of 'relative value units'. Prior to the fee increase, the monetary value per unit was \$12.50 in NSW and Victoria, \$11.50 in Queensland and \$10.50 in other States. The new level would be \$12.84 in all States, representing the introduction of uniform fees as recommended by the Pathology Services Working Party. The increase, of 2.69 per cent in NSW and Victoria and larger percentages in other States, came into effect on 15 March 1979. **1 March 1979:** The Minister for Health announced that Mr Justice Ludeke would conduct an inquiry into medical fees for medical benefits purposes. **14 June 1979:** The Inquiry was suspended for two weeks because of disagreement between the Australian Medical Association and the Commonwealth as to the information to be provided to the Inquiry. It was eventually agreed that the AMA would provide aggregated data on doctors' incomes. **22 July 1979:** The report of the inquiry was released. It recommended increases in scheduled fees for general practitioner attendances (14.5 per cent); pathology services (12.9 per cent); radiology and radiotherapy services (10.7 per cent) and other services (11.7 per cent). The increases to apply from 1 November 1979.

## Aboriginal Health

**20 March 1979:** A report on Aboriginal health prepared by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs was tabled in the House of Representatives by the Committee Chairman, Mr P. M. Ruddock MP. The Committee recommended that: (1) Aboriginal communities be given the opportunity to determine the type of health service that would best suit their needs and available resources and that a Task Force be established to place the full range of alternative health care services before them; (2) an inquiry be held into the implementation of the policy of self-determination as it affected community development;

(3) Aboriginals be involved to the fullest possible extent in all stages of the provision of health care services and that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs assess the number of Aboriginals required, the time it would take to train them to assume responsibility for the health of their own people, and to this end, develop, in consultation with relevant Ministers, suitable training programs; (4) Aboriginal cultural beliefs and practices which affected their health and their use of health services, such as their fear of hospitalisation, their attitudes to pain and surgery, the role of traditional healers and the differing needs and roles of Aboriginal men and women, be fully taken into account in the design and implementation of health care programs; (5) the highest priority be given and immediate action taken to provide clean and adequate water supplies to all Aboriginal communities; (6) a determined effort be made to eliminate as soon as possible the unhygienic sanitary pan system in Aboriginal communities; and (7) training hospitals for nurses, university medical facilities and other tertiary institutions introduce into their curricula, both at undergraduate and graduate level, a component dealing with Aboriginal health.

## Health Insurance

**24 May 1979:** The Minister for Health announced a major revision of Australia's health insurance arrangements, including: (1) abolition of the 40 per cent Commonwealth universal benefit, so that patients would only receive a Commonwealth benefit if the scheduled fee was over \$20, the benefit paying for that part of the scheduled fee which was in excess of \$20; (2) an increase in inpatient charges in public hospitals from the current levels of \$40 per day for a shared room (\$60 single room) to \$50 per day (\$75); (3) the establishment of an inquiry into hospital efficiency and administration to identify the factors affecting rates of growth in public hospital expenditures and ways in which these growth rates might be reduced. Hospital funding would be limited to the 1978-79 levels for the duration of the inquiry; (4) \$500 000 to be made available for health promotion programs. The new arrangements would take effect on 1 September 1979.

## Hospital Inquiry

**24 May 1979:** The Minister for Health tabled a Discussion Paper on Hospital Rationalisation in the House of Representatives to stimulate debate in this area. **8 June 1979:** The

Commonwealth and State Health Ministers met to consider the Hospital Inquiry foreshadowed by the Commonwealth when announcing its new health insurance arrangements (q. v.). **29 August 1979:** The Minister for Health announced the composition and terms of reference of the Inquiry. The three Commissioners initially appointed were Mr J. H. Jamison (Chairman, a retired Sydney chartered accountant); Mr J. S. Yeatman (a former Medical Superintendent of the Royal Melbourne Hospital) and Mr M. R. H. Holmes a'Court (a Western Australian businessman). (Details of the terms of reference and the conclusions of the Inquiry were included in the 1980 *Diary* pp. 19-20.)

## Health Promotion

**8 August 1979:** The Minister for Health released a paper entitled *Promoting Health: Prospects for Better Health throughout Australia*. **19 September 1979:** The Minister released a compendium of statistics on the Australian alcohol industry and the effects of alcohol consumption, entitled *Alcohol in Australia: A Summary of Related Statistics*. **13 November 1979:** The Minister for Health tabled *Health Promotion in Australia: 1978-79 — A Report*. Prepared by Professor L. Davidson, Mr S. Chapman and Ms C. Hull of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine (now known as the Commonwealth Institute of Health) at the University of Sydney, the report recommended: (1) that the Commonwealth government develop national objectives and priorities for health promotion and actively publicise, encourage and facilitate the pursuit of these priorities; (2) that a National Health Promotion Unit be established under the Director-General of Health, to develop proposals and recommendations in each of the following areas: (a) legislative and fiscal policy for health promotion; (b) future manpower needs in health promotion throughout Australia and the training and educational needs of this manpower; (c) research and evaluation in health promotion, and (d) the use of mass media in health promotion; (3) that a Health Promotion Special Projects Grant Scheme be established to fund health promotion projects and (4) that expenditure on health promotion be increased.

## Pharmaceutical Benefits

**21 August 1979:** The Treasurer announced revisions to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as part of the 1979-80 Budget. The patient contribution was increased by 25 cents

to \$2.75 per prescription and eligibility for free prescriptions was extended to supporting parents and their dependants from 1 November 1979 and for certain veterans of allied forces and their dependants from 1 February 1980.

**20 November 1979:** The Minister for Health announced that, following a review by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, the government had decided for purely economic reasons not to prune the list of drugs available under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

## Pharmaceutical Industry

**19 September 1979:** The Report of the Inquiry into the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Industry was tabled in Federal Parliament by the Minister for Health. The Inquiry, under the chairmanship of Mr J. T. Ralph, Executive Director, Conzinc Riontinto of Australia Limited, was established in September 1978\* to examine, among other things, the role of the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry and the relationship between industry viability and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) pricing practices and policies. Other members of the Inquiry were Mr C. W. Conron, a Commissioner of the Industries Assistance Commission (subsequently Chairman, Price Justification Tribunal), and Mr A. H. Luckin, a management consultant. The report proposed a number of changes in the PBS scheme, including a recommendation that the government set the amount it was prepared to pay towards the cost of each PBS product, with the consumer payment varying according to the selling price. Other recommendations in the report were: (1) that manufacturers be allowed (subject to certain constraints) to determine the price of their products on the pharmaceutical benefits list; (2) that doctors be kept informed of the competitive cost of comparable drugs, and encouraged to prescribe by generic name rather than proprietary name; (3) that competition between pharmacies be encouraged, providing that the list price of PBS items, and thus the amount to be paid by the patient, be a maximum only and that pharmacists be allowed to charge less than the maximum and to advertise that they did so; (4) that the Commonwealth liberalise pharmacy ownership legislation within the Territories and discuss this matter with the States, with a view to encouraging more rapid restructuring of the retail pharmacy sector; and (5) that the National Drug Information Service be allocated resources to expedite the establishment of drug profiles and other information services.

\* See R. B. Scotton and Helen Ferber (eds), *Public Expenditures and Social Policy in Australia, Volume II*, Longman-Cheshire, 1980, pp. 361-362.

## Nursing Homes and Benefits

**25 October 1979:** Following the annual review of benefits, the Minister for Health announced new levels of benefit for nursing home accommodation. The weekly benefits, to take effect on 8 November 1979, were: NSW and ACT \$107.10 per week (old level \$95.55); Victoria \$158.90 (\$142.80); Queensland \$96.95 (82.60); SA and NT \$143.85 (\$132.30); WA \$96.95 (\$82.25) and Tasmania \$110.95 (\$103.95). The extensive care benefit remained at \$42 per week. (See also Social Security 1979 supplement in 1981 *Diary* p. 29.)

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## **Diary of Social Legislation and Policy**

This is the third in a series of annual publications produced by the Institute of Family Studies in co-operation with the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne, and the Social Welfare Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

The **Diary** summarises the legislative and administrative changes made by the Commonwealth government in the areas of social security and welfare, employment, family law, immigration, housing and health, and the main policy changes at State level in the fields of social security, welfare and adoption, during 1982.

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