# SWRC Newsletter

No 30 August 1988 Editor: Adam Jamrozik


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Social Welfare Research Centre

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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The Social Welfare Research Centre was established in January 1980 under an agreement between the University of New South Wales and the Commonwealth Government. The initial agreement was for a period of five years and in 1984 the agreement was renewed for another five years, until the end of 1989. In accordance with the agreement the Centre is operated by the University as a unit of the University. The Director of the Centre is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor and receives assistance in formulating the Centre's research agenda from an Advisory Committee and a Research Management Committee.

The Centre undertakes and sponsors research on important aspects of social policy and social welfare; it arranges seminars and conferences; it publishes the results of its research in reports, journal articles and books; and it provides opportunities for post-graduate studies in social welfare. Current research areas cover child and family welfare, employment/unemployment, social security, housing, compensation and occupational issues, services for people with disabilities, the aged and other areas of social policy.

The views expressed in this Newsletter, as in any of the Centre's publications, do not represent any official position of the Centre. The Newsletter and all other SWRC Publications present the views and research findings of the individual authors with the aim of promoting the development of ideas and discussion about major concerns in social policy and social welfare.

Compiled by Jennifer Young and Jacklyn Comer
Photographs by Lisa Coleman and Robert Nittolo
Printed at the University of New South Wales

# FROM THE DIRECTOR ....

**SWRC Research Agenda**

Included among the roles and activities the Centre undertakes is the study of the provision, administration and financing of social welfare services, and the co-ordination of social welfare policies. Not surprisingly therefore, the Centre maintains a close interest in social welfare policy developments and our research reports address many broad policy issues. We have established close links with a number of government agencies, which have proved to be beneficial to both sides. In the last year or so, for example, staff of the Centre have undertaken research on behalf of, or in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Department of Community Services and Health, the Department of Social Security, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Office of the Economic Planning Advisory Council and the Social Security Review. These activities testify to the value placed on our work by those directly providing information and advice to government. They form an important part of our work, one which we will continue to develop and expand. But we are also involved in more basic research which involves conceptualising and theorising about social welfare issues. This latter work may seem to be of less immediate relevance to the issues of the day, but is nonetheless a crucial element of our research agenda, one which forms the foundations on which much of our more specific policy work can build. We have in the past made many valuable contributions in both of these broad areas, and will I hope continue to do so. But there is a need for a fine balance between the two if we are to continue to provide helpful and timely comment on policy questions while maintaining the independence required of an academic research centre located within the university community. I believe we have managed to maintain an apppropriate balance in our work in the past and will endeavour to ensure that this continues.

**Seminars/Conferences**

The Centre has decided to sponsor and organise a major conference on Social Policy in Australia. The theme we have selected for the first of what we envisage to be a bi-annual event is **Social Policy in Australia: What Future for the Welfare State?** The Conference will be held on campus at the University of New South Wales on 5-7 July 1989. We see the conference serving two major objectives:

First, to provide a national forum for debate and discussion of social policy research results and issues.

Second, to provide, over the longer run, a means for elevating the profile of social policy discourse, thereby providing a basis for a more integrated approach to economic and social issues. Further details about the conference, including a call for papers (to which we hope there will be a large and enthusiastic response!) are provided on page 3.

Our one day inter-state conference in Hobart in May attracted over 150 people and produced a very interesting series of papers. The proceedings will be published shortly in the **SWRC Reports and Proceedings** series (see below).

For our next such seminar, we are going somewhat further afield, to Wellington in New Zealand. This seminar grew out of the contacts made by myself, Adam Jamrozik and Peter Whiteford during visits to New Zealand over the last year. Given the recent directions of economic policy in both countries, with as a consequence similar pressures emerging on social policies, the theme of the seminar, **Social Policy and Inequality in Australia and New Zealand** is particularly appropriate. Further details of the seminar programme are provided on page 4.

Finally, the Centre has organised a one-day seminar entitled **Support and Services for People with Disabilities** to take place on Friday, 23 September 1988. This is an area of research that the Centre intends to pursue more actively in the future and the seminar will provide an opportunity for us to benefit from a broad range of views on the subject to guide us in the development of our research programme. Further details are provided on page 41.

These arrangements reflect on the broad changes in our approach to the organisation of seminars and conferences foreshadowed in my report in the May 1988 SWRC **Newsletter**. I welcome any feedback on the new system as well as suggestions for further seminar topics and venues.

**SWRC Publications**

The following reports have been published in the **SWRC Reports and Proceedings** series since the last Newsletter appeared:

> No. 73 **Ethnicity and Ageing: The Anglo-Asian Experience** by Donald Chandraratna and Michael Cummins.

# FROM THE DIRECTOR ....

No. 74 **Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania: A Study in Community Development and Self-Help** by Elizabeth Dean, Cathy Boland and Adam Jamrozik.

No. 75 **Community Services Policy: Economic and Social Implications** (Proceedings of a Conference, Hobart, 27 May 1988), edited by Peter Saunders and Adam Jamrozik.

We will also be releasing in the very near future the following report in the **SWRC Research Resource Series:**

No. 3 **Poverty and Aspects of Inequality in Australia: an Annotated Bibliography, 1963-1987** by Diana Encel.

As I indicated in the last **Newsletter** the first reports in our new **Social Welfare Research Centre Discussion Paper Series** are also about to be released. Limited numbers of each report in the series are available from the Centre free of charge on a first come first served basis. The new series should provide a further outlet through which our research findings can be disseminated within the research and broader community. Further information is provided below on page 16.

**Staff**

Firstly, congratulations to Don Stewart on his promotion to Senior Research Assistant. I am also pleased to announce that the 1988 SWRC Research Scholarship has been filled by David Ingles (see p 26). David comes to us with a good deal of research and policy advice experience and is a welcome addition to our team. In his thesis, David is proposing to analyse the potential for an integrated labour market programme including a job guarantee as a means of reducing long-term unemployment. Finally, Richard Mathews has left us to return to Perth to a position with the Western Australian State government administration. We wish him all the best in his new endeavours.

Peter Saunders
Director

## SWRC SEMINARS, CONFERENCES

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL POLICY,
Sydney, 5-7 July 1989

***Social Policy in Australia: What Future for the Welfare State?***

Call for Papers - See Page 3

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JOINT CONFERENCE WITH THE NEW ZEALAND PLANNING COUNCIL
Wellington, 10-11 November 1988

***Social Policy and Inequality In Australia and New Zealand***

Registration Details - See Page 4

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ONE-DAY CONFERENCE
Sydney, 23 November 1988

***Support and Services for People with Disabilities***

Program and Registration - See Page 41

ANNOUNCEMENT

**SOCIAL WELFARE RESEARCH CENTRE**

## National Conference

# Social Policy in Australia: What Future for the Welfare State?

**5 - 7 July 1989**
**at the University of New South Wales**

The Conference will be a forum for public discussion of social policy issues facing Australian society in the forthcoming decade. Participation is expected from academic researchers, policy-makers, administrators, professionals in service delivery, and other people concerned with social policy and social welfare issues.

**The Major Themes of the Conference will be:**

1. **Ideology, Philosophy and Political Environment of Social Policy**
   Issues of equality, equity, social justice, social theory/theories of welfare, class, gender, multiculturalism, Aboriginal society.

2. **Economic Environment of Social Policy**
   Issues of employment/unemployment, private/public mix, demographic trends, welfare finance, the public sector, the private market.

3. **Income Maintenance/Income Security**
   Issues of income support, taxation, income and wealth, the social wage, fiscal and occupational welfare.

4. **Community Resources and Services**
   Issues of health, education, child care, housing, aged care, care of disabled, formal and informal care, professions, community development, self-help groups.

5. **From Policy to Practice**
   Issues of Commonwealth/State relations, the non-government sector, administration and legislation, service delivery, rights and interests of clients-consumers.

**CALL FOR PAPERS:** Abstracts (100-200 words) of papers on any of the above topics are invited for consideration. To facilitate Conference planning, abstracts are to be submitted by **30 November 1988**, to:

**Adam Jamrozik**
**Social Welfare Research Centre**
**University of New South Wales**
**P.O. Box 1, Kensington, NSW, 2033**
**Telephone: (02) 697 5149, 697 5150**
**Facsimile: (02) 398 9903**

**For general information about the Conference: Jennifer Young - Conference Secretary (02) 697 5150**

Further details of the conference will be given in the forthcoming issues of the SWRC Newsletter.

## SOCIAL POLICY AND INEQUALITY IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

A two-day seminar, jointly sponsored by the New Zealand Planning Council and the Social Welfare Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Australia.

**Date:** THURSDAY 10 AND FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 1988

**Venue:** BRAILLE HOUSE,
67 HANKEY STREET
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

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The aim of the Seminar is to provide a public forum for the discussion of important issues in Social Policy currently facing Australia and New Zealand. The seminar will address issues of income distribution, employment, taxation, and social security and welfare services. Special attention will be given to the issues affecting Maori population in New Zealand and Aboriginal population in Australia.

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Registration of $NZ 120 to be forwarded to:

**Ms Michelle Boag**
**New Zealand Planning Council**
**P.O. Box 5066, Wellington**
**New Zealand**

(The cost of Proceedings of the Seminar which will be published by the Social Welfare Research Centre is included in the Registration)

Hotel accomodation in Wellington can be arranged at an approximate cost of $NZ 135 per night, single room.

Further enquiries from:

Michelle Boag
(address as above)
Telephone: Wellington (04) 724 250

or

Adam Jamrozik
Social Welfare Research Centre
Telephone: Sydney (02) 697 5149/5150.

# EDITOR'S NOTES

Many people contribute to the SWRC Newsletter. Those who write items of interest, reporting on their activities, providing summaries of research reports, seminars, conferences and related events are mentioned by name. Lisa Coleman and Robert Nittolo have produced staff photographs and we present some of them in this Newsletter so the readers can see our faces as well as read our words. Jennifer Young and Jacklyn Comer give the Newsletter its final shape. The Newsletter is printed at the University of New South Wales.

One of the big tasks is the preparation of the Newsletter for mailing. The Newsletter (all 3000-plus copies) is bulk-posted, and all the packaging, labelling and sorting in post codes is done by Windgap Enterprises of Eastlakes under the directorship of Fiona Phipps. We are certainly grateful for the excellent work they do in making the distribution of the Newsletter possible.

**Another SWRC Newsletter**

There is another SWRC (Social Work Research Centre) on the other side of the world, at the University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland, which also publishes an SWRC Newsletter. The Centre is funded jointly by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Scottish Office to conduct studies of the effectiveness of social work. Consumers' perspectives are included in the studies whenever possible. Among the studies listed in the recent Newsletter are the following: Rehabilitation Services for Psychiatric Patients; Supported Accommodation; Community Service Orders; Old People's Homes.

The Director of the Stirling SWRC is Juliet Cheetham, and the address is:

> Social Work Research Centre
> University of Stirling
> Stirling, FK9 4LA
> Scotland
> Tel: (0786) 73171 Ext. 2134

**Readers' Contributions**

We have received two items of interest with requests to publish them in the Newsletter (pp 25-26). One comes from the United Kingdom: an interesting and rather timely cautionary note reporting the findings of Dr Colin Paterson, a specialist in bone disorders which 'mimic' injuries from physical child abuse. The other item comes from the Office of the Minister for Social Security, giving some details of the new Child Support Scheme.

What the Newsletter needs is more readers' contributions which express their views on our research agenda and our research reports, and on related issues in social policy and social welfare. It would be helpful to us and to our readers to know what people consider we should examine in our research programs and which issues in social policy and social welfare be given priority.

**Social Research and Politics**

As you would have seen, our Director makes a point in his contribution about the importance of autonomy and freedom from political interference in social research. In these days of ever-greater attempts to control conformation it is a very timely comment indeed. It also reflects the conditions of the Centre's charter which states (Article 11.2) that

> Members of the staff of the Centre and persons undertaking work on its behalf will, as individuals, be free to express opinions on policy issues in the same way as other members of the academic community, but as an integral part of the University the Centre as such will be precluded from issuing policy statements.

Coincidentally, I have recently come across a book edited by F. Heller, **The Use and Abuse of Social Science** (1986, Sage Publications). Among various contributions, a chapter by Carol Weiss 'Research and Policy Making: a Limited Partnership' seems to be particularly relevant to the role social scientists should play in policy-relevant research. Carol Weiss says, inter alia (1986:234),

> The key point is that social scientists have a responsibility to convince government agencies to allow them the opportunity to do the best social science of which they are capable. The crucial ingredients are independence of thought, conceptual sophistication, understanding of policy issues and methodological rigour. And when research has produced something worth saying, researchers have a responsibility to make serious efforts through many channels to get its message heard by the multiple participants in policy-making.

Adam Jamrozik
Editor

## SWRC SEMINARS

### RETIREMENT INCOMES POLICY
### 6 MAY 1988

### Retirement Income and Policy Incentives: Implications for Australia of US Evidence

Presented by Joe Quinn
Boston College

Summarised by Russell Ross

The central theme of the seminar was the role of microeconomic factors in influencing the retirement decisions of US workers. Unlike Australia, the US does not have a universal age pension. Instead, it has a contributions-based system (explained below). The compulsory retirement age had been 65 until recent legislation was passed which eliminated the notion of compulsory retirement age. However, an increasing proportion of US workers are choosing to retire earlier than at 65, prompting the question: why? The explanation advanced in the seminar was that for increasing numbers of workers the decision to retire 'early' (ie before age 65) was rational, given the economic provisions of most retirement funds. Workers contribute a fixed percentage of the first $42,000 (approx) of their annual earnings to a retirement fund. The annual pension they receive on retirement - lump sum payouts are not allowed - is linked to the total amount of their contributions over their employment history and the age at which they retire. Typically, the full annual pension is paid only to workers who retire at age 65 (or older) but a reduced annual pension is paid to workers who retire between age 60 and 65; for every year the retirement is delayed (up to age 65), the annual pension will be higher. For a given individual, the annual pension is increased incrementally so that if the individual retires at 61 they receive a higher annual pension then they would have received if they retired at 60, and so on up to age 65. The choice confronting a worker once he or she turns 60 is: given my expectations about how long I will live, should I retire 'now' and receive a lower annual pension but receive it for a greater number of years, or should I retire some time 'later' knowing that for every year I delay retiring (up to 65) I will receive an incrementally larger annual pension but will receive it only for fewer years. The key elements of the choice are:

**Retire 'Now'** (ie stop working and start receiving the annual pension)

* lower annual pension but receive more pension for more years
* more leisure time now
* no earnings from work

**Retire 'Later'** (ie continue working, receiving earnings and contributing to the pension fund)

* higher annual pension but receive pension for fewer years
* less leisure time now
* work still main source of income

Thus the choice can be viewed as a microeconomic cost-benefit analysis in which the net present value of early retirement is assessed each year from the youngest age at which the pension can be collected. The decision to retire will be made when the present value of the monetary and non-monetary benefits of retiring (ie including the value of increased leisure time as well as the monetary value of the annual pension) exceed the present value of the costs of retiring (forgone earnings, net of taxes and pension contributions, plus the increased annual pension).

The trend towards earlier retirement suggests that more and more workers believe that, when combined with the extra leisure time they have, the lower annual pension income is more than offset by the longer period of time for which they expect to receive the pension (which in turn is determined by how long they expect to live after retirement).

### Retirement Incomes In Australia

By Ian Manning
National Institute of Economic and Industry Research

At present retirees receive a fairly small proportion of the national income, mainly as social security payments but also asset incomes. Over the last decade, with the trend to early retirement, men aged 45-64 have come to rely more on social security and to a lesser extent on asset incomes, and less on wages and salaries. These trends have been accompanied by a trend towards using assets (and particularly superannuation) as a bridging income to finance early retirement before going on to the social security pension. The means test provides a strong incentive to do this, since it results in moderate superannuation accumulations being of little benefit to men aged 65 and over.

Policy on retirement incomes has thus to accommodate to a change in the life cycle, involving earlier retirement for men. Another feature of this life cycle is much higher married women's workforce participation, which means that more women will soon be arriving at retirement age with savings and superannuation entitlements in their own right. Even so, it must be recognised that the new life cycle places more stress on transfer incomes through savings and the social security system than did the life cycle with longer male working lives and lower married women's workforce participation.

The new life cycle would be much more easily accommodated if there were enough jobs to generate full employment, which implies that about 80 per cent of the population aged 15-64 would be employed. This in turn means that an increase in the savings rate is desirable to finance investment and generate jobs, and turns attention to superannuation as a means of achieving the enhanced savings rate. One problem is that superannuation savings are not locked in as long as they might be, with many of them being spent on early retirement. However, it is very difficult to act against such spending of lump sums when there is a shortage of jobs, and when the means test on the social security pension deprives supperannuants with modest entitlements of the benefit of those entitlements if taken after 65.

Interference between the private saving and public transfer systems of retirement benefit could be reduced if the social security system were modified in either of two directions: a reversion to the extremely stringent means test of the 1950s, or the introduction of national superannuation involving a pension free of means test, perhaps at an age later than 65. The former move would put people on notice that if they wanted anything more than a basic pension they would have to save both to supplant the pension and provide the extra, but would heavily penalise small saving; the latter would reduce the strong incentive to early retirement inherent in the present system, but would require increased outgoings compared with the present system. These could perhaps be raised if the finance of the age pension was shifted from consolidated revenue to identified contribution.

## THE STANDARDS OF LIVING OF AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES 3 JUNE 1988

### Community Views On Poverty: The Attitudinal Approach to Poverty Measurement

Presented by Peter Saunders
and Bruce Bradbury, SWRC.

The concepts of **poverty**, and the **poverty line**, have been enduring ones in social policy, despite continuing ambiguities in their definition and measurement. In many respects poverty may be thought of as a particular aspect of the broader question of the inequality of economic resources available to individuals and families. Whilst inequality may be simply a descriptive concept, poverty however, usually implies more than this. To describe a level of poverty is to describe a **social problem**, and to hope for a solution. Because the concept of poverty is thus so closely related to issues of social policy, consensus as to its measurement has been difficult to attain.

Despite the wide variety of approaches used in defining poverty, poverty measures have always derived their ultimate validity from their public and political acceptance. Thus, for example, Henderson, Harcourt and Harper (1970) defended their poverty line on the basis that,

> This is a definition of poverty so austere as, we believe, to make it unchallengeable. No one can seriously argue that those we define as being poor are not so.

This poverty line was later updated and used in the analysis of the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, becoming known as the Henderson Poverty line.

Recognition of the importance of such validation has prompted many researchers to more directly evaluate the public's consensus of what constitutes poverty.

This talk described a number of such methods whereby survey questionnaires are used to evaluate public attitudes of the link between expressions of well-being and income requirements. In particular, attention was focused on the results of the Morgan Gallup Poll 'Health and Decency' survey question which has been regularly asked for the past four decades in Australia. Since 1945 the poll has asked respondents in its general consumer surveys the following question,

> In your opinion, what is the smallest amount a family of four - two parents and two children - need a week to keep in health and live decently - the smallest amount for all expenses including rent?

In July 1987, the average response to this question was \$376 per week. Persons who themselves were living with their spouse and two children gave an average response not significantly different (\$372). This can be compared with the Henderson poverty line for the September quarter of that year, for a couple with two children and with the head in the workforce, of \$285 per week. Such a couple receiving unemployment benefit (with rent assistance and family allowance) would receive \$244 per week.

Apparently, the average Australian does not think that the level of income received by pensioners and beneficiaries is enough to 'keep in health and live decently'. However there are several reasons for caution in drawing such conclusions. To begin with, such a response certainly does not imply a preparedness to pay taxes to ensure that this level of income was received by all families. Indeed, if the question had been prefixed by a discussion of the current levels of benefits, people may well have given a lower response. On the other hand, if the question was put in the context of information of the **average** incomes of families, answers may have been higher. In the absence of such pointers, respondents to this question may have placed too much reliance upon their **own** current living standards.

This issue is emphasised by Goedhart, Halberstadt, Kapteyn and Van Praag (1977) who argue that the **average** response to living standards questions cannot be used as a valid indicator of a consensual poverty line. They argue that any poverty line derived from such methods should be based on the level of income of those who consider themselves (on average) to be at the minimum income. In this way the 'distorting' influences of those with little experience of hardship can be removed.

Using their methodology on the Gallup Poll data it is found that the average level of income required for such a family of four to evaluate their **own** income as being at the level necessary for 'health and decency' is \$333 per week. Whilst this is significantly below the overall average response to the question, it is still above the level of the Henderson Poverty line and the level of social security income support.

The results of the Morgan Gallup Poll surveys can also be used to address the question of the appropriate method for the updating of a poverty line. In the past there has been much disagreement as to whether poverty should be considered in **absolute** or **relative** terms.

People are poor in an absolute sense if they cannot afford a minimum level of consumption. Over time such a poverty line should be increased in line with changes in the prices of these goods (or prices generally). This is the method used to update the US BLS poverty line and Australian indexed pensions and benefits.

On the other hand, if necessities are to be considered as socially determined, then general increases in incomes and consumption should be mirrored in increases to the poverty line. Such a relative poverty line would be updated according to changes in community incomes, as is the Henderson poverty line in Australia. The Henderson poverty line currently uses the national accounts measure of household disposable incomes per capita (HHDIPC) as its yardstick of community incomes.

Whilst the Morgan Gallup poll question does not explicitly ask respondents how they conceptualise poverty, changes over time in the responses given can be used to throw light on this issue. Examination of these trends reveals that over the past four decades the average response has increased significantly faster than price increases, but remained at roughly the same proportion of HHDIPC.

Though there have been fluctuations within this period which cannot be fully explained by the available data, this result lends support to the method of updating currently used for the Henderson Poverty line.

**REFERENCES**

Goedhart, T.; Halberstadt, V.; Kapteyn, A. and Van Praag, B.M.S. (1977) 'The Poverty Line: Concept and Measurement' **Journal of Human Resources** XII 4:503-520.

Henderson, R.F.; Harcourt, A. and Harper R.J.A. (1970) **People in Poverty, A Melbourne Survey,** Cheshire, Melbourne.

**The Living Standards of Families with Children**

by Peter Whiteford

This paper presented the results of a preliminary analysis of the living standards of families with children, with the purpose of identifying aspects of a broader conception of poverty that extends beyond income inadequacy. An earlier version of the paper was presented by Peter Whiteford, Bruce Bradbury and Peter Saunders at the AIFS/ACOSS Conference on **Child Poverty in Australia** in Melbourne in April.

Most poverty research undertaken in Australia and overseas has concentrated on using money income as an indirect indicator of living standards. However, while income distribution data are an essential element of poverty studies, by themselves they do not show what living standards families actually achieve, ie what they do or can do with the money.

An alternative approach to the conceptualisation and measurement of poverty has been suggested by Peter Townsend in his study of poverty in the United Kingdom. Townsend argues that poverty should be understood in terms of 'relative deprivation', which occurs when families lack the resources to obtain the types of diets, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary in the societies to which they belong. Townsend developed a list of indicators of deprivation - measuring lack of an amenity or non-participation in an activity - which he applied in a survey of UK households to derive estimates of numbers of families and households experiencing deprivation.

The current paper was prepared in the spirit of Townsend's approach, although it did not attempt to duplicate it. The data source used in the analysis was the unit record tape of the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 1984. The HES was designed to collect details of expenditures, income and demographic characteristics of households living in private dwellings and caravan parks in Australia.

For the purpose of this paper the analysis concentrated only on households with dependent children where the household head was aged less than 55 years. Households containing more than one income unit were excluded from the analysis, as were those where the principal source of income was from self-employment.

The 1 224 households analysed were divided into five groups - 121 sole parent pensioners, 88 pensioner/beneficiary couples (of whom three-quarters received unemployment benefit), 209 low income wage and salary families (incomes less than $350 per week in 1984), 608 medium income couples (incomes between $350 and $700 per week), and 198 high income families (incomes over $700 per week in 1984).

The paper then described in detail some features of these households:

- the sole parent households on average were smallest (1.78 children), while the pensioner/beneficiary couples were largest (an average of 2.11 children per household);

- the pensioner/beneficiary couples were most likely to have young children (under 5), while the high income families were least likely;

- the proportion of households who owned or were purchasing their homes increased with income level - from just under 22 per cent of sole parents to nearly 88 per cent of high income families;

- correspondingly, the proportion who were renters (either public or private) declined with income from 70 per cent of sole parents and 63 per cent of pensioner/beneficiary couples, to just over a quarter of low income families and 10 per cent of high income couples; and

- expenditures (which were defined to approximate total current outgoings) were found to be distributed much more equally than incomes. For example, the range of average gross incomes was nearly 6 to 1; the range of average after-tax income was just over 4 to 1; the range of average total expenditure was just over 3 to 1; and the range of average total expenditure per equivalent adult was about 2.4 to 1 (using OECD equivalence scales). Sole parents were at the bottom of the scale in each case except that of average total expenditure per equivalent adult, where pensioner/beneficiary couples experienced the lowest average level of consumption, possibly because of the larger family size of this group.

The overall expenditure patterns of these households were also investigated, with expenditures being divided into 14 categories of spending (eg housing, fuel and power, food and beverages, clothing and footwear, transport, health, recreation, etc). For all groups except sole parents, food and beverages were found to account for the highest share of total expenditures (17 to 25 per cent), followed by housing, transport, recreation and houshold furnishings and equipment. For sole parents, the largest expenditure share was devoted to housing, followed by food, and then the other categories as with the general sample.

The paper argued that it would be inappropriate to believe that the broad expenditure categories in the HES could be meaningfully divided into 'expenditures' or 'luxuries'. This is because all broad categories of expenditure will have elements of necessities as well as luxuries, and social participation would probably require at least some spending on all broad categories of consumption.

Among the specfic expenditure items analysed, salient details include:

- spending on 'health' increases significantly with income, by a ratio of more than 10 to 1 in dollar terms. This probably reflects the availability of pensioner health beneficiary cards to social security recipients, who consequently do not have to spend as much money to insure themselves; and

- ownership of motor vehicles also varied significantly with economic circumstances. Over 95 per cent of all wage and salary families had at least one registered motor vehicle, compared with 89 per cent of pensioner/beneficiary couples, but less than 65 per cent of sole parent pensioners.

The paper then considered expenditures on 'social participation and recreation' which covered such items and activities as having a meal or a drink outside the home, having a holiday, gift-giving and donations, or using the telephone, buying books, magazines or newspapers, attending sporting events or other entertainment and owning pets. These expenditures are neither an exclusive list of social participation spending nor are they complete, but because they may be close substitutes it was felt necessary to include them. The findings of the analysis include:

- high income families were about 4 times more likely to have had a meal in a restaurant or a drink on licensed premises than were social security recipients;

- high income households with children were 8 times more likely to have had a recent holiday than sole parents, and when they did they spent 4 times as much on average;

- sole parents were about twice as likely not to have spent money on sports as high income families with children;

- they were also more than twice as likely not to have spent money on postal charges, and appeared more than twice as likely not to have a telephone in their home. They were also nearly 3 times as likely not to have spent any money on newspapers, magazines or books.

The paper then looked at spending on insurance - either medical insurance, life insurance and superannuation, and insurance of assets and personal belongings. As previously noted, social security recipients are very unlikely to have medical insurance, at least in part because they are protected by government provisions. They are also unlikely to have either superannuation or life insurance, with just under 20 per cent of beneficiary couples and under 15 per cent of sole parents being covered, compared with nearly 70 per cent of the sample as a whole.

Insurance of personal assets and belongings also showed wide variations, with nearly 85 per cent of low income working families having insurance and 95 per cent of medium and high income couples with children, compared to just over half of the beneficiary couples and around 45 per cent of sole parents.

The paper then looked at the indebtedness of families with children. In general, social security recipients were far less likely than other families with children to be making interest repayments on either fixed term loans, or credit card purchases or interest. The proportion making these payments was highest among the middle income families, but the level of indebtedness (payments as a proportion of gross income) was highest among the low income working families with children.

Finally, the paper noted that differences in expenditure patterns may reflect the composition of households and their income levels, and also the prices they face and the personal preferences of family members. Interpretation of the results presented above would depend in part on whether these observed differences reflect income constraints or personal choices. It was argued that an indication of the most important influences could be derived by comparing the cumulative performance of different income groups in relation to these expenditure items. That is, if preferences for specific expenditure items are randomly distributed in the population then households may miss out on certain items of spending because they prefer something else, eg a sole parent family may not be spending money on sports because they spend money on television or videos. If households do not participate in many activities at all, then this hypothesis is less likely to be true.

Consequently, the paper developed a broad measure of 'multiple deprivation', with households being given a score of 1 if they did not spend on a specific item and 0 if they did spend anything at all on this item. Eighteen items of expenditure were analysed in this way, fourteen of which related to the social participation and recreation and the remaining four being whether the household tenure was owner/purchaser or not, whether they owned at least one motor vehicle, whether they had superannuation or life insurance, and whether they had household assets insurance. The possible score ranged from 0 to 18, with the higher the score the more the household was deprived of these items.

The mean score for the entire sample was 7.7, with that for sole parents being 11.6, for beneficiary couples 10.8, low income working couples 8.4, medium income families 6.8 and high income couples scoring 5.9. Only around 2 per cent of social security recipients scored less than 5, compared to 25 per cent of the sample overall and nearly 45 per cent of high income families with children. Put another way, less than 1 per cent of the high income couples scored more than 11 on the deprivation index, which was the median score for sole parents.

This measure should not be taken as a reliable index of multiple deprivation since there was no attempt to weight the components according to their relative importance in household budgets. But the results do suggest a strong association between the level of family resources and non-participation in social activities.

In summary, the analysis in the paper should be regarded only as a first step towards a broader conceptualisation of poverty and living standards. Two findings of interest are that social security recipients appear far more likely to rely on other (non-cash) forms of government assistance and therefore may be more vulnerable to variations in the level of public spending. Second is the overall level of insecurity of many of these families, who are notably lacking in assets and other savings. In addition to their far lower level of social participation, the lack of these broader resources suggests that unforseen contingencies could potentially have a disastrous impact on these families and their children.

## EXTERNAL SEMINARS

### FAMILIES AND THE YOUTH LABOUR MARKET

Summarised by Bruce Bradbury

On the 16th of May Bruce Bradbury, together with Ian McRae and Lyn Woyzbun of the Department of Employment, Education and Training, presented a paper entitled **Families and early labour market experience: An analysis of siblings** to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress in Canberra.

This paper addressed the theme of the inter-generational transmission of advantage and disadvantage, with reference to the outcomes of youth in the labour market. More specifically, the paper addressed the questions of 'How much does family background matter in determining the labour market success of young people?' and 'What role does education play in the transmission of advantage from one generation to another?'

Studies which have examined observable family characteristics have generally concluded that family background has only a moderate influence upon labour market outcomes, and that this influence is generally mediated through educational attainment.

However the relevant family characteristics are typically difficult to identify, let alone measure. This paper examined a sample of siblings from the Australian Longitudinal Survey (ALS) in order to capture the effects of unobservable family characteristics. Siblings, by definition, have their families and associated environments in common. Thus the extent to which siblings have similar outcomes in the labour market is an indicator of the effect of family background (defined broadly) on labour market success.

The examination of sibling correlations undertaken in this paper suggests that the influence of families, and the family environment, on youth labour market outcomes is very substantial. Education, unemployment, earnings and income all 'run in families'. Whilst the limitations of the sample make precise estimates of these associations impossible, the results for same sex pairs suggest that around 20 to 40 percent of the variation in these outcomes derives from family effects. This increases further when the effects of short term transitory variations are removed.

These correlations between siblings suggest a much stronger effect of families than studies which have examined the observable characteristics of families. It appears that coming from 'the right family' does matter, even if we are only able to identify such families **post hoc**.

In broad terms these results confirm Griliches' (1979) conclusion that, after making some allowance for transitory variations, about half the variation in outcomes is due to differences between families. As he also points out, whether one focuses upon the half of the variation between families or the half within depends upon the point of view of the observer.

Whilst broadly similar results seem to hold for both brothers and sisters the associations between mixed sex pairs are generally much lower. It would seem that there are significant differences in the ways that families influence sons and daughters. Possibly families act, consciously or not, to confer advantage on daughters only when there are no sons. Such a conclusion must remain tentative at this stage pending further research.

The other main question addressed in this paper was of the extent to which the strong influence of families implies that estimates of the returns to education may be upwardly biased. The evidence here suggests that such biases do exist. Estimates of the effect of education on outcomes which controlled for unmeasured family influences were consistently lower than estimates which did not control for family based effects. In other words, the direct effects of education on labour market outcomes may not be as large as previous estimates have suggested.

This result must be qualified by the fact that this paper employed only a very simple measure of educational attainment. However, whilst the precise estimates of the effects of education might change for different measures, the conclusions of this paper of the importance of family (and ability) variations are likely to continue.

The main caveat on all these conclusions is the sample, which is biased towards those youth in the labour force still living at home. The significance of this restriction will be able to be tested as the ALS continues in duration and a more representative sample becomes available.

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## IMPRESSIONS FROM ANZAAS CENTENARY CONGRESS, SYDNEY, MAY 16-20, 1988.

### I. The Social Construction of Gender

Summarised by Marilyn McHugh

The symposium examined ways in which gender is socially and historically constructed, and considered some of the implications for Australian women in contemporary society.

Professor Genevieve Lloyd, University of NSW, began the day with a thought provoking paper on the distinction between sex and gender. Drawing on the work of Catherine McKinnon and Simone de Beauvoir, Professor Lloyd explored the concept of gender difference as a product of social power. Fundamental to this view is that maleness is the standard for the the human 'norm'. Women the 'other' is constructed in relation to the male standard - it is a social construct and keeps women in subjection suggests Lloyd. Finding more adequate ways in thinking of mind and body, sex and gender sparked lively discussion amoung a predominantly female audience. The interest of the audience was maintained throughout the day as various speakers addressed questions in relation to the general theme and more specifically for some the connection between racism and sexism and the impact of white assumptions of gender on Aboriginal society.

The highlight of the day for this reader was the paper by Margaret Power et al., University of Sydney which examined women's place in the economy. Power et al. suggested that while women have a place in the masculine economic world they remain in a subordinate place. There has been a devaluing of women's contribution to economic activity and well-being in the arena of domestic labour market activity in full-time and part-time work, outwork and unpaid welfare services. Significantly it has lead to the development of economic theory that by its very language and methodology excludes women in its analysis. The consequences of the neglect of women is not only problematical for theoretical economics it also results in policy makers emphasising the male world and the interests of men, and the interests of women are negated or marginalised.

This is reflected in the philosophy which underpins an area of social policy, the social security system; of whom the majority of clients are female. The Department of Social Security thinks about women in a particular way, suggest the authors,

> the idea of female economic dependence is embedded in all aspects of the social security system. Women are treated as housewives not workers; they need no compensation when they cannot get a job. On the other hand, the state must assist mothers, as well as women without the support of a male breadwinner.

The importance of benefits for predominantly poor sole parent families is recognised by the authors who support the changes to enforce child maintenance payments. One aim of this government policy is to assist in ending child poverty in this country by 1990. A somewhat contradictory aim noted by this reader is the reduction of the Federal Government's responsibility for the care and nurturing of children by cutting back social security expenditure to sole parents. All support received by custodial parents - whether capital or 'in-kind' will be subject to a separate income test - $15 a week will be the free area for a spouse and one child plus $5 for each other child. Savings of about $200 M are expected in the first full year of operation.

Such a policy reflects the concern of Power et al. that such measures increase women's dependence on their husbands (or ex-husbands) and/or on the state. They do little to reduce women's dependency and vulnerablity which could be ameliorated as the authors suggest by 'increasing access to employment, to cheap public housing, to child care facilities'.

**II Happily Ever After? The Family in Australia**

This symposium looked at the ideology of the family, economic and legal issues, aspects of the history of the family in Australia and the Australian family cross-culturally.

The first paper by Associate Professor Marie de Lepervanche looked at how 'the family' is viewed in a political sense of being 'in the national interest' and what the reality of family life is for many women who are expected to breed and mother. As she pointed out, the gap between what actually happens and the rhetoric from prominent spokesman about the family is enormous.

Papers by Dr Michael Gilding and Dr Peter McDonald looked at what has happened to the Australian family in theoretical and historical terms. Joanne Kalowski and Reg Graycar gave papers which particularly appealed to this reader. Both were based on observations of social processes occurring in Australian society today giving shape to two particular forms of families - Immigrant families Down Under, by Kalowski; and Legal Ideology and the Family: A Motherhood Debate which focused on the sole parent families, by Graycar. Those of us attending who were expecting a keen insight into how many such families survive in situations of conflict, compromise, poverty and dependence were not disappointed. That structures of family forms have provided oppressive and constraining bonds for many women has long been recognised by feminist writers.

## THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF COMPENSATION

Centre for Multicultural Studies/
SWRC Joint Seminar
University of Wollongong, 9 June 1988

By Don Stewart.

This one-day seminar was organised with three aims in mind: to discuss some of the findings of SWRC Reports and Proceedings No. 71, **Workers' Compensation and Migrant Workers in New South Wales**, prepared by Caroline Alcorso from the Wollongong University's Centre for Multicultural Studies (reviewed in SWRC Newsletter No. 29); to outline other work being done at the SWRC in this area; and thirdly, by means of a panel-led discussion, to highlight other issues associated with workers' compensation, occupational health and safety, and post-injury rehabilitation.

The panel consisted of Megan Pickett (Illawarra Community Legal Resource Centre), Jane Thorne (Tenosynovitis and Other Overuse Injuries Association of NSW), Larry Strange (Lidcombe Workers' Health Centre), and Graeme Roberts (Port Kembla Ironworkers Association). With the assistance of comments from the floor the panel canvassed a number of issues. Discussion focused on the pros and cons of the various administrative compensation models which have recently been adopted or proposed for adoption in most Australian States and compared them with the common law/statutory models they are largely replacing.

Most of the discussion session was taken up with the specifics of accident prevention, compensation and rehabilitation as they relate to NSW. However, many of the comments referred to the sorts of issues which affect all work-injury schemes to a greater or lesser extent. Included were problems of service delivery, the growth of social security dependency amongst work-injured persons, the restriction of access to information, both for purposes of injury-prevention and rehabilitation; and the discrimination of certain groups in the treatment of work-injury.

While certain aspects of administrative schemes were welcomed, strong reservations about these same schemes were also expressed. Perhaps chief among them was the fear that severely injured persons may in fact be no better, or even worse off, under the amended schemes primarily because preventative mechanisms are still under-resourced, compensation payments are insufficient (requiring additional private top-up insurance as a mechanism to retain previous levels in some instances), and insufficient resources are being channelled into rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation and under-resourcing of rehabilitation was identified as a major factor in determining the success or failure of administrative schemes. The net effectiveness of rehabilitation based on the redeployment of injured persons was questioned on two fronts: firstly, the assumption that employment-based rehabilitation was automatically available, (and failing this that alternative redeployment of work-injured persons with permanent disabilities was inevitable) was challenged as it is contingent on a high demand for labour, and as this was clearly not the case in many areas, and in the Wollongong/Illawarra region particularly. It was felt that the long-observed reticence of employers to employ people with disabilities or persons who may be recovering from injury would not be easy to dispel. It was pointed out on several occasions that current levels of technical education and retraining, which has proven to be a very effective mechanism for the rehabilitation of injured persons, if sufficiently resourced, is under threat in NSW. Access to certain courses, including English language courses, is effectively being restricted through the imposition of fees or 'administrative charges', while other courses, particularly the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) series are being effectively suspended due to restrictions placed on the employment of part-time tutors.

It was felt that reducing expenditure in the TAFE area ultimately removes the most viable alternative to work-place rehabilitation, and further discriminates against those many employees who have traditionally been excluded from rehabilitation services. Rehabilitative services, for example, have traditionally offered very limited services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds (particularly NESB women). Restricting access to the very technical courses which have proved to be a particularly effective remedy for enriching the social and employment skills of NESBs (particularly many work-injured migrant women excluded from rehabilitative services), it was argued, was effectively introducing a major barrier to rehabilitation where one had previously not existed.

Another aspect of rehabilitation which gave rise to specific concerns was the observable tendency for rehabilitation providers to concentrate on the more profitable 'quick fix' cases for which relatively common and effective remedies are available. Such cases not only ensure higher case turn-over rates and a better economic result for insurer and rehabilitative providers alike but also introduce a considerable economic incentive to speedy rehabilitation, which while desirable on a personal basis could on a general basis, also operate as an incentive to provide inadequate rehabilitation treatments and services, if not appropriately monitored.

The long periods required for complete rehabilitative treatments in some instances was seen as being a primary factor contributing, not only to the disproportionate exclusion of NESBs from rehabiliation (often on the basis of their having a poor command of English), but also to the exclusion of complex cases, including many work-related diseases, from rehabilitation services. The specific point of concern raised at the seminar was that exclusions could become more prevalent, considering the increased emphasis given to private rehabilitative services in administrative schemes. As well, it was pointed out that many insurers are instigating their own in-house rehabilitation services, and that potential for conflicts of interest to emerge in the future existed because of this.

Another major concern expressed in respect of migrant services was the apparent lack of means available (in the new NSW scheme at least) to counter the systematic exclusion of persons employed in less organised and/or less regulated (often high risk) areas of the labour market. People from non-English speaking backgrounds, and NESB women particularly have commonly been employed in these areas and there are significant problems in getting information to and empowering employees in these sectors.

Other problems, associated with providing multi-lingual information about injury-prevention and the rights and obligations of employers and employees were raised in the context of NESB workers. It was pointed out that multi-lingual preventative policies were largely based on the incorrect assumption that all employees (Anglo or NESB) were literate and could understand accident prevention literature and the complicated legal language used in the construction of legislation. This was pointed to as being a serious barrier to the effectiveness of current prevention and rehabilitation services. The current under-resourcing of work-place multi-lingual information and on the job preventative education was noted.

A number of interesting observations on the prevention of injuries were raised by Larry Strange of the Workers' Health Centre, Lidcombe NSW who noted the poor regulation and enforcement of health and safety policies which has existed in the past. He suggested that this, coupled with inadequate measurement and recording of injury rates, contributed to the generally limited recognition of the causal elements involved in the production of employment-related injuries observable within the community. While welcoming recent changes to the legislation and to the legal obligations of employers in respect of safety, he noted that the newer preventative strategies, by concentrating on the physical causes of injury, were possibly still overly reliant on a 'medical model' approach to injury. Failure to recognise the multiplicity of factors which contribute to the development of most industrial injuries, (social, industrial, technological and human), Larry Strange suggested, was to neglect many fundamental causal factors in the production of employment injuries. He then pointed to a need for all these potential sources of injury to be addressed if occupational health and safety policies were to be significantly improved upon present levels.

The general message gained from the seminar, and particularly from the panel-discussion session, was that significant shortcomings will have to be overcome if problems associated with work-injury schemes are to be adequately addressed. Implicit within this was the suggestion that reforms have to be ongoing. Failure for this to occur will inevitably lead to greater levels of work-related social security dependency and to greater Federal costs in this area. Reducing the costs of injury for employers was and remains a legitimate aim of compensation reform. However, this should be achieved by reducing injury rates and by promoting the effective rehabilitation of injured employees, not by passing costs to the Federal welfare sector. Promoting further development of social security dependence also inevitably increases the personal costs of injury amongst injured workers. A pension, it should be remembered, is not a personal wage-related compensation, but a poverty-line payment the receipt of which is contingent upon other household income.

**NATIONAL EVALUATION CONFERENCE 1988**

Comments by Adam Jamrozik

The fifth National Evaluation Conference organised by the Australasian Evaluation Society was held in Melbourne on 27-29 July 1988. It attracted over 200 participants from all Australian States and from New Zealand. In a program of plenury and concurrent sessions, 65 papers were presented at the Conference and 5 round-table sessions were held.

Most papers were concerned with the evaluation of policies and programs in the public sector. This was rather interesting, considering the current trend towards privatisation of services and the belief propagated (but rarely substantiated by evidence) that the private sector can do things better, more efficiently and more effectively than the public sector. Perhaps more evaluation of performance of the enterprises in the private sector would yield some explanation about Australia's rising external debt, inflation rates and unemployment.

In the public sector, health services, education, housing, family suppport, workplace rehabilitation, recreation, these were the major areas that were examined in many of the papers. Areas examined ranged through the whole organisational spectrum, from management to service delivery, and from broad policies to specific programs.

As for the methods used, evaluation of specific programs did not seem to present undue methodological difficulties. More complex issues in evaluation were those of values, interests, bureaucratisation and the ever-present political issues in evaluation. Evaluation for whom, by whom, and for whose benefit - these are the issues that came up strongly in some of the papers and in round-table discussions. People's resistance to provide information to government-sponsored evaluation studies was particularly noted. The tendency to suppress publication of results of contracted evaluation studies was also of concern to many participants.

The Annual General Meeting of the Australasian Evaluation Society was held at the same time (8.30 am on Friday!). The Society elected a new President Mr Bryan Lenne (NSW Office of Public Management, GPO Box 2, Sydney 2001). The members also paid tribute and extended warm thanks to the retiring Foundation President, Dr Anona Armstrong, who played such an important role in establishing the Society and guiding it over a number of years (since 1982).

The next national conference of the Australasian Evaluation Society will be held on 27-29 July 1989, on the Gold Coast, Queensland. The Chairman of the Conference Committee is Michael Hill (Research and Evaluation Unit, Queensland Health Department, 147 Charlotte Street, Brisbane 4000).

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# READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

From:

**Community Care**
Carew House
Wallington
Surrey SM6 0DX

## DOCTOR WARNS OF CHILD BONE DISORDERS WHICH MIMIC INJURIES FROM PHYSICAL ABUSE

Parents are being wrongly accused of child abuse because doctors and social workers have had difficulty in diagnosing the difference between injury caused by rare bone disorders, according to a medical expert.

Writing in **Community Care,** the leading social work weekly, Dr Colin Paterson, a specialist in bone disorders, alerted professionals to the startling similarities between fractures from adult violence and those from any one of 10 disorders which lead to abnormal fragility of the bones.

Dr Paterson claimed that out of a recent survey of 773 U.K. child patients suffering from brittle bone disease in no less than 93 cases parents had been accused at some stage of non-accidental injury. In 13 of these, a case conference was held into the alleged abuse or care proceedings were taken. One child was put into the local authority's care for more than three years and nearly adopted because the bone disease, known as **osteogenesis imperfecta,** was confused with physical attack and was undetected later on.

The disease is the most hereditary disorder of the bones and occurs in all races with an incidence of about 1 in 20,000. It is not a single disease, but a group of at least 10 disorders, which vary in severity. Some children are born with fractures and may have as many as 400 during their early years. Others have only a few and live a virtually normal life.

Dr Paterson, who is a senior lecturer in biochemical medicine at the University of Dundee, has assisted as an expert witness in cases of alleged non-accidental injury in Tayside for 14 years. He points out that a characteristic of bone disorder fractures is that they may occur with little or not trauma and can be caused be deficiency in vitamins D, C and copper, the former particularly among the Asian community.

Generally, bruises are much more common than fractures in genuine non-accidental injury, yet if the child is suffering from bone disorder the chances are there may be little bruising around the fracture.

In **Community Care** Dr Paterson urges any social worker presented with an infant with unexplained fractures to look carefully at the history leading up to discovery of the injury. Seek a detailed family history, he says, and where appropriate specialist laboratory tests, additional radiographs and consider the chances of child assault happening in the family.

Professionals have a tendency not to recognise the problem because bone disorders are such a rarity today. But Dr Paterson warned that the price for diagnostic error was serious.

'There is no need to spell out the potential danger resulting from a mistaken diagnosis of bone disease, but a mistaken diagnosis of child abuse may be disastrous for the family, not least the child itself,' he said.

Contacts for more information (in the United Kingdom):

Jane King (**Community Care** deputy editor) 01-661 4886

Terry Philpot (**Community Care** editor) 01-661 4860

Dr Colin Paterson 0382 60111

From:

**The Office of the Minister for Social Security**

## NEW CHILD SUPPORT SCHEME

Under the new Child Support Scheme, child maintenance will in most cases be deducted from the salaries and wages of non-custodial parents by a new **Child Support Agency,** part of the Australian Taxation Office, and paid into the bank accounts of custodial parents by the Department of Social Security.

If the non-custodial parent is not an employee, he or she will make direct monthly payments to the Child Support Agency.

# READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

From 1 June 1988 this collection system will immediately cover child maintenance payments to -

* Custodial parents who receive an income-tested Social Security, Veterans' Affairs or educational pension, benefit or allowance (other than the Family Allowance, Family Allowance Supplement and some other benefits and allowances), regardless of their separation date;

* Other custodial parents, where they separate from the non-custodial parent **after** the scheme starts;

* Other custodial parents who have not lived with the non-custodial parent, where the child is born after the scheme starts; and

Over the next year or so coverage will also extend to custodial parents who currently use a State or court-based maintenance collection agency (the new Child Support Agency will progressively take over the collection functions of these agencies).

In some cases - especially where the parents separate after the scheme starts - the maintenance agreed to by the parents or ordered by the court will automatically be collected under the new system. For others, the **custodial** parent will be able to choose whether or not to use the scheme.

For parents who have already separated and who receive a sole parent pension, the new collection system will usually have to be used if maintenance payments have been ordered by a court within the last three years but are not being regularly received from the non-custodial parent.

However, sole parent pensioners will not have to use the new system if they are already receiving maintenance under voluntary arrangements between the parents, or in accordance with a court order or court-registered agreement. Exemptions will also apply in special cases, including situations where the collection of maintenance might lead to fears for the safety of the custodial parent or the children. Stringent safeguards will apply to ensure the privacy of parents and children is protected.

(Researchers who are interested in the area of child support and would like further information on the scheme or would like to exchange ideas, options or research findings should contact by post Marilyn McHugh at the Social Welfare Research Centre.)

# NEW RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Our new research scholar is David Ingles. David is a graduate from Sydney University (B. Ec., M.Ec.Hons.) and is also well known for his work in various parts of Federal administration. He has worked with the Commonwealth Departments of Social Security, Treasury, and the Economic Planning Advisory Council. He has also been an advisor to the former Minister for Social Security, Senator Don Grimes, and to the then Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Ralph Willis. He has published a number of research papers on social security issues.

David's study for the Ph.D. degree in the School of Economics at the University of New South Wales concerns the feasibility of a job 'guarantee' for the long-term unemployed which, in theory, could completely replace unemployment benefit for this group. Such a scheme already operates (in effect) in Sweden, and has been seriously advocated in the United Kingdom. He also hopes to examine the desirability of extending such a principle to some of the short-term unemployed, implying in its most radical form a system of 'guaranteed full employment'. David sees this part of the topic as a highly speculative exercise, but one which should nonetheless prove useful in highlighting issues relevant to the economics of labour market programs.

Readers who would like more information from David about his study can contact him on (02) 697 5146.

# NEW SWRC PUBLICATIONS

**ETHNICITY AND AGEING: THE ANGLO-ASIAN EXPERIENCE**

**SWRC Reports and Proceedings No.73**

by

Donald Chandraratna
and Michael Cummins

Care of the aged is a major concern of social welfare policy and with increasing numbers of elderly persons this concern is likely to remain high on the social policy agenda. An important aspect of the policy on aged care is the aim to develop a network of services which would enable the aged to remain in the community and lead as normal a life as possible for as long as possible. Residential care in hostels and nursing homes is seen to be the last, though often unavoidable, resort. A particular issue in aged care policy is the provision of services for the aged population in various ethnic minorities. Provision of ethno-specific services in the community, as well as in residentail institutions, needs urgent attention. The creation and maintenance of informal support networks of relatives, friends and the ethnic community organisations is an important part of service provision, but their importance needs to be recognised and encouraged at the policy level.

This report records the experiences of life in retirement of a specific group of Anglo-Asian immigrants from Burma, India and Sri Lanka currently residing in Perth, Western Australia. The research for the report was commissioned by the Social Welfare Research Centre to Dr Don Chandraratna, Senior Lecturer in the School of Social Work at the Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia. Dr Chandraratna, together with Michael Cummins (now at the Department of Welfare Studies, Hobart Technical College), conducted the research and wrote the report.

The analysis of ethnicity as a factor in old age exploits a body of data drawn from these three ethnic population groups from the Asian region who now live in Perth. It provides an insight into how ethnic continuity in old age is evident in the migrants of the early post war years in Australia. Given the current concerns with multiculturalism and with old age, the convergence of these two areas is a high priority in social policy provision. The paucity of research into the ethnic aged from the Asian region prompted this project.

The high degree of westernisation, English language proficiency and urbanisation distinguish the Anglo-Asians from other migrants from the region. Nevertheless, the cultural heritage, ethnicity and religion are factors which they share in common with others. These common elements make the observations more than partially applicable to many ethnic groups outside the Anglo-Asians.

It is evident that background characteristics associated with the process of migration have a life-long influence. The strength of contacts with family, friends and church make the retirement years of Anglo-Asians in the sample content and happy. Moderate expectations regarding financial and material comforts in retirement are evident in these population groups. The popular expression of old age as a social problem cannot encompass these groups on the strength of data from this study. However, the future for these people in 'very old' age seems unplanned and bleak, and consideration should be given to the provision of ethnospecific accommodation services.

As readers will see, the authors give an interesting and informative insight into the lives of people who have succeeded in achieving a remarkably contented though modest life in retirement. This has been due in no small measure to the support of those included in the study receive from the network of family members, friends and the church community in which they are actively involved.

The report raises some important issues for aged care policy. The authors provide strong evidence of the significance of informal support networks in the maintenance of elderly people in the community. At the same time they also point out that those networks are unlikely to be sufficient as people grow older and become frail. A 'partnership in care' of formal services and informal support groups will then be necessary to provide an adequate level and standard of care.

# NEW SWRC PUBLICATIONS

### NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES IN TASMANIA: A STUDY IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-HELP

**SWRC Reports and Proceedings No.74**

by
Elizabeth Dean, Cathy Boland
and Adam Jamrozik

Community development, self-help, community work - these are terms which are frequently encountered in social welfare literature. The meaning given to these terms is often varied and not always clear. Similarly, the concept of a neighbourhood house or neighbourhood centre has found its place in discussions on community services but the concept lacks clarity. There are very few studies of programs in which these concepts have been applied in practice and then systematically analysed.

This report is concerned with self-help and community development actitivies which take place in Australia today. It is a study of one form, or one type, of such activity, namely the development of neighbourhood houses and the function these houses perform in urban and rural communtities.

The concept of a neighbourhood house has developed as an innovative form of self-help, as a meeting place, and in information exchange, and particularly as a family and child care service. A neighbourhood house is a multi-functional service, based in a local community and using labour which may be paid or voluntary. It functions as a focal point for local community organisations, providing a venue for meetings and various activities, such as adult education, youth groups, parents' groups and after school activities. These activities offer a way for participants to develop friendships and skills. Activities vary widely from one house to another, and it has been said that the type of services offered is so varied that 'it is difficult to outline what services do'. The name itself also differs from one State to another; they are referred to as 'neighbourhood centres', 'neighbourhood houses' or even 'community centres'.

The operation of neighbourhood houses depends upon the input of local labour. There is also some indication that local initiative and management enhances self-reliance and self-help in low income and socially disadvantaged communities, thus lessening the need for professional welfare services.

This study records the experiences of people involved in the development of a neighbourhood house program in one Australian State - Tasmania. The study was not intended to be, and should not be seen as, an evaluation of that program. Rather, it was undertaken as a case study with the purpose of examining and illustrating the processes which took place in the development of the program and identifying some of the issues that arise in the application of the concepts of community development and self-help. As such, the study should be of interest to the readers and of particular value to those social welfare workers who are interested in becoming (or already are) involved in community work.

The report analyses the events and processes through which the concept of a neighbourhood house came to be translated into a State-wide program and identifies some of the dilemmas faced by community groups and professionals in commmunity work. For professional social welfare workers as well as for government and non-government organisations this study poses the question: how can social movements 'from below' be promoted and/or assisted without the movements and the ideas they might want to pursue being 'taken over' and integrated into the system of welfare services directed 'from above'? Can the state through its provision of material and human resources be an enabler without being a controller?

The project on which this report is based was commissioned by the Social Welfare Research Centre to Elizabeth Dean who conducted the research and was also the main author of the report. Cathy Boland and Adam Jamrozik contributed to the report by further analysis of the data, extending the background bibliography, writing of some parts of this report, and editing.

### COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

**SWRC Reports and Proceedings No.75**

Edited by
Peter Saunders and Adam Jamrozik

This report contains the proceedings of the Conference held in Hobart, Tasmaina, on 27 May 1988. The theme of the Conference, **Community Services Policy: Economic and Social Implications,** was a further step in our addressing issues of social policy through the medium of interstate conference. Like the previous conferences held in Adeiade, Perth and Brisbane, the

Hobart Conference was jointly sponsored by the Social Welfare Research Centre, and local organisations. In this case, the joint sponsors were the Department of Welfare Studies of the Hobart Technical College, and the Australian Association of Social Workers (Tasmania Branch).

The seven papers in this report cover a wide range of issues in community services issues of efficiency, redistribution, equity, equality, administration of services, service delivery, and occupational welfare. This nexus of interrelated issues lies at the heart of contemporary debate over the role of community services in the welfare state and social welfare. Together, the papers represent analysis of the spectrum of problems and issues confronting the welfare state from a social policy perspective. While this perspective acknowledges the importance of economic developments to the welfare state debate, it places these in a broader social framework that is central to the discussion. Despite the undoubted importance of the economic arguments, improvements in welfare state provisions must encompass this broader perspective.

The discussion forum at the Conference raised a number of issues of direct relevance to community services. Problems of measurements in evaluating costs and benefits, economic integration of qualitative aspects of services, the role of local government, particular problems identified in the Home and Community Care (HACC) program, rural/urban difference, and the limitations of the resources in certain geographical areas were some major concerns that the participants thought needed more consideration in policy and the allocation of resources.

The interstate conferences such as the one reported here have become important events on the Social Welfare Research Centre's agenda. They enable the Centre to perform its national role in generating and disseminating social research data and in promoting public discussion of social policy and social welfare issues.

**Content of the Report:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Veronica Coulshed | : | Welcome - Introductory Remarks |
| Fran Bladel | : | Keynote address - 'Community Services' |
| Peter Saunders | : | Efficiency, Equality and the Welfare State |
| Adam Jamrozik | : | Human Resources in Community Services: Inadequate Investment or Welfare Overload? |
| Donald Stewart | : | Community Services and Occupational Welfare: Who Benefits? And Who Pays? |
| Ralph Chapman | : | Opportunities for Innovation: The example of HACC, Tasmania |
| Lyndall Scott | : | Redefining Roles - The Dilemma for Local Government. |

**POVERTY AND ASPECTS OF INEQUALITY IN AUSTRALIA: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPY, 1963-1987**

**Research Resource Series No.3**

by Diana Encel

The focus of this bibliography is on works with a central interest in poverty in Australia. Originally the year 1966 was chosen as the beginning of our time span, this being the year when a survey of poverty was carried out by R. F. Henderson and his coleagues in Melboure. However our search discovered a few important references from the years 1963 to 1965. We do not claim a comprehensive inclusion for those early years but we have included citations of works by R. G. Brown, R. T. Appleyard, and David Scott which draw attention to the existence of poverty which had not seemed to be an important issue in post-war Australia, although works, also included here, which have appeared since then, and have an historical perspective, discuss poverty in the pre-Federation era and in the depression of the pre-war period.

The bulk of references cited here, are clustered around a few focal points within the main period: the studies associated with the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, chaired by Ronald Henderson and more recently, the papers prepared for the Social Security Review being conducted within the Department of Social Security, directed by Bettina Cass. But the concern with poverty has not been associated only with those major foci: work has been appearing in an increasing stream throughout the period, as the bibliography shows.

# NEW SWRC PUBLICATIONS

The original intention for this bibliography was that it should deal with poverty in Australia. However, the difficulty of defining 'poverty' which is revealed in some of the works cited here, mirrored the difficulties encountered by many researchers in deciding where poverty ends and the effects of inequality begin. In the attempt to be comprehensive about the major focus, the scope of the bibliography has been extended to cover such aspects of inequality that have a direct bearing on poverty, particularly in the area of income inequality and the distribution of wealth. However, there is a vast literature on inequality and we make no claim to comprehensiveness in this area; indeed the choice of some items and not others may appear arbitrary. We hope that users of the bibliography will be led in the direction of their interest by referring to such entries as have been included.

Apart from inequality there are other areas which are difficult to disentangle from poverty. Unemployed is one such; citations appear here where the emphasis of the item is on the poverty of the unemployment or the unemployment of the poor. Readers interested in other aspects of unemployment are directed to the two bibliographies (and forthcoming third) which have been produced at the Social Welfare Research Centre with direct reference to unemployment in Australia. A further area which merges with discussions of poverty and the incomes of the poor is that which deals with taxation policy and income schemes which could alleviate poverty or redistribute incomes with a greater degree of equity. Many such works have been cited here though, again, it is not a comprehensive inclusion.

This bibliography is purely descriptive. Works have not been selected on any criteria except subject matter. Statements by members of both major political parties are included, and works are cited which espouse different points of view and propose opposing policies. No evaluation is made, no comments offered upon the works cited. Apart from being about a variety of poverty-related subjects, the works cited here come from a variety of sources and have a variety of purposes. Facts are presented, drawn from diverse data collection. Research is described and results reported. The approaches to disscusion of poverty cited in this bibliography are thus extremely varied and drawn from many sources. The material cited includes whole books, chapters of books, journal articles and pamphlets. Newspaper articles are not included, nor is unpublished material (theses, conference papers, submissions) even when these have been referred to in the literature. Where an author has published similar material in more than one place, citations refer the user to more than one source.

Each annotation uses, as far as possible, the language of the work, in order to give a further indication of its nature. Quotations from the publications are sometimes used as part of an annotation where some annotations consist entirely of quotations from the work or its published abstract. The annotations in the bibliography are designed to give the reader a useful indication of the nature and scope of the works. The length of the annotation bears no relationship to either the length or the importance of the item cited. Where it has been possible to summarise the contents within the annotation, this has been done. However some works are long or carry too many strands of argument for this to be possible. In these cases the annotations have been more general and sometimes shorter.

The themes which are discernible in the literature can be identified by referring to the key-word index. All items in the bibliography have been assigned one or more key-words to describe their content. The key-words allow users to find their way more easily through over 500 works which have been sighted and annoted here.

# HOUSING ISSUES

**HOMES AWAY FROM HOME**
**The Final Report of the National Review of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program**

Prepared by Colleen Chesterman
For the Commonwealth, State and Territory Welfare Ministers

Summarised by Clare Stapleton

The primary objective of the national review of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), conducted in 1987, was to assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting the needs of the homeless and to recommend appropriate future directions for the program. Given the complex structure of the program and the multi-faceted nature of homelessness this was not a simple task.

SAAP, introduced in 1985 under the Commonwealth/ State Housing Agreement, funds non-government organisations to provide support services to people who are experiencing housing programs as part of or in conjunction with other .life crises. The program is divided into three sub-programs: Women's Emergency Services Program; Youth Supported Accommodation Sub-program; and the General Supported Accommodation Program.

The report of the SAAP review is divided into two sections. The first provides an overview of SAAP, its structure, objectives, history and an assessment of its achievements since its inception. This section apart from setting the scene for the recommendations of the review provides a useful overview of the nature of services to homeless people as well as a summary of the current issues pertaining to the delivery of these services.

The second half of the report sets down the review's recommendations concerning the future of SAAP. The context of these recommendations is positive, calling primarily for streamlining and simplification but reinforcing the importance of the Commonwealth and State governments maintaining their commitment to the program.

In an attempt to simplify the many recommendations made by the review the second section is divided into six sections. In brief the recommendations lent emphasis to the following:

* the importance of concise program objectives with emphasis upon assisting users to live independently; the review criticised SAAP objectives for being ambiguous, poorly structured and philosophically confusing;
* the usefulness of the sub-program structure was called into question, given the variety of groups using the SAAP services; attention was also called to the needs of special groups such as ex-prisoners, ethnic minorities the disabled and the drug and alcohol affected;
* the need to develop mechanisms to protect user rights; and the importance of maintaining a trained, experienced and committed workforce;
* the importance of data collection, research and consultation in planning services;
* the problems of needs-based planning and the importance of developing alternative models for resource allocation which will ensure equity, simplicity and accessibility;
* the importance of not duplicating services but of maintaining a commitment to SAAP from two tiers of government.

Two additional volumes of the SAAP review are available. Volume Two contains a detailed evaluation of the SAAP sub-programs. Volume Three contains a series of background papers commissioned by the review but prepared by independent authorities.

The complexities of SAAP can at times make these reports tedious reading. However for those who are already familiar with SAAP or who are interested in the services affecting SAAP consumers these reports will undoubtedly be of interest and of use.

Copies of the three volumes are available from the Department of Community Services and Health.

# HOUSING ISSUES

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HOUSING

by Lisa Coleman

Year 1988 has seen a lot of concern and coverage of housing issues. A number of reports and documents have been published this year focusing on homelessness.

Many of the reports and publications followed as contemporary of the 1987 IYSH proceedings such as the Kendig/Paris/Anderton Report **Towards Fair Shares in Australian Housing** and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Review **Homes Away From Home.** Other reports continued debate reflecting the increasing housing crisis such as the Cummings Report **Sydney: But What About the Residents**, available from the Inner Sydney Tenancy Advice and Referral Service.

With homelessness on the increase, particularly in Sydney, housing organisations and community groups have been active in raising the debate and have facilitated various seminars and conferences.

In the beginning of the year in NSW, pending the state elections, organisations such as Shelter, the Housing Information and Referral Service (HIRS), the Tenants Union, Tenancy Advice and Housing Referral Services all over the state and other community organisations were active in campaigns informing the public about the housing policies proposed by the various political parties. Series of public forums were held inviting members to speak, literature outlining political party platforms dissemminated, and information booths set up in shopping centres.

The New South Wales Council of Social Service (NCOSS) in conjunction with the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU) sponsored a series of public seminars **Housing Issues in 1988 and Beyond.** The first seminar held in March asked the question: **Government Policy Involvement in Housing: Where to Now?.** This seminar originally intended to address the Kendig/Paris report consultations but focus was also given to the changed situation with the newly elected Liberal state government. Notably, there was great concern raised about the pending liberal policies on housing, particularly, the sell off of public housing stock. Dr Sophie Watson discussed the detrimental effects this policy would have in the long term.

Other seminars in this series have focused on **Private Tenancy** and **The Ministerial Inquiry into Homelessness and the Provisions of Affordable Accommodation in the Inner City Area** (June 1988).

Shelter NSW has joined with NCOSS and BWIU to establish the NSW Housing Forum Group, which plans to continue holding housing forums throughout the year.

At the end of April the new Liberal NSW Minister for Housing announced **The Ministerial Inquiry into Homelessness and the Provision of Affordable Accommodation in the Inner City Area**, calling for submissions from interested parties by 30 June 1988.

Again, the community housing sector responded by arranging forums to discuss and raise issues concerning the inquiry, and to assist groups in formulating their submissions. A workshop of non-government organisations was organised by the Combined Pensioners Association in conjunction with HIRS and the Inner Sydney Tenancy Advice and Referral Service on 2 June.

HIRS will be making available their submission to the Homelessness Inquiry in the form of a publication.

On 25 July, 1988 the Committee of the **Ministerial Inquiry into Homelessness and the Affordable Accommodation in the Inner City Area** held a public meeting, inviting representatives of community housing organisations, investors, builders and proprietors of residential rental accommodation and other interested persons to attend the forum for discussion and exchange of views.

The Committee of Inquiry includes Max Raine (Raine & Horne Real Estate Agents) as chairman, Shirley Ball (Boarding house proprietor) and Trevor Wilton (Regional Manager Parramatta, NSW Department of Housing.)

Guest speakers were invited from various community organisations and a representative of the Real Estate Agents Institute.

Amongst the debate and concerns raised one recommendation from the floor was that the Committee of Inquiry should have representatives from the community housing sector.

At the closing date **over 100 submissions** to the Inquiry were received, the majority from the community housing sector. The chairman announced at the meeting that further submissions would be accepted if any organisations had not already made submissions and wished to do so.

On a local level more local councils are taking an interest in housing issues. **Warringah Council** has just completed a local housing study (Northern Beaches, Sydney). The new **Waverley Council** has expressed concern about the housing problems in its local area. Regular Housing Strategy Meetings are established and the council has applied for funds through the NSW Department of Housing's Local Government Housing Initiatives Scheme to employ a housing worker. The council is also formulating proposals for a research project. One area of concern is the impact of tourism on the housing market. Bondi is particularly affected by increasing tourism.

**North Sydney Muncipal Council** has also this year employed a housing worker. Simon Rosenberg is currently in the process of updating the housing study that was carried out in 1982, and developing housing policy. North Sydney is another area which had traditionally a high proportion of boarding house stock. The last few years have seen, as in other inner city areas, an increased conversion of this type of low cost accommodation. The council is concerned with the retention of low cost accommodation and considers the retention of this stock more cost effective than replacement. The council under section 94, State Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, has a levy of $800 for every bedroom lost which is accumulated in a 'low cost accommodation fund'. Both Waverley and North Sydney Councils lodged submissions to the 'Ministerial Inquiry into Homelessness and the Provision of Affordable Accommodation in Inner Sydney' as did many other community organisations.

With the loss of many boarding houses and low cost accommodation to toursim development, **the impact of tourism on low cost accommodation** is an area of concern that has raised some debate in the inner city and eastern regions of Sydney.

**Social Documentary Photography**

In addition to attending various housing forums and continuing project work I lectured to students in the School of Town Planning, University of New South Wales, and gave an internal seminar at SWRC on **my social documentary photographic and audio-visual work** which focuses on housing issues. One of the works discussed was the display **FOCUS: A Response to International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,** which was funded by the Federal IYSH Secretariat and toured nationally. (The display is still available to interested groups and an audio-visual package is available from either Lisa Coleman or the Publications Unit, Federal Department of Community Service and Health.)

In August I have been invited to speak on a radio program 'Tenancy and Homelessness' organised by the Inner City Legal Centre to discuss housing issues for women. The programs are broadcast on 2SER FM at 11 am on Fridays and repeated 1 pm Saturdays.

I am continuing photographic work of a social documentary nature maintaining contributions to various housing journals and exhibited work at the Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney University in a group show 'Australia Your Standing In It Again'.

I have developed an extensive library of photographs documenting different housing circumstances. If any organisations are interested I am available to pursue photographic work of this nature.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**ADDICTIONS**

**Jara Krivanek**

Allen & Unwin Australia, 1988, pp 147
$14.95 (paperback)

Reviewed by Jacklyn Comer

This book contains five chapters each devoted to separate areas of drug misuse, abuse or addiction. It is not another case history study designed to shock people into looking at the drug situation, but a concise attempt to clarify issues surrounding the drug problem. It draws on various studies conducted both in Australia and overseas, to support the ideas presented by Krivanek in this edition. Jara Krivanek is the Director of Clinical Drug Dependence Studies at Macquarie University and has been involved in the area of drugs and drug dependence for over 20 years.

The main issue in the book is heroin and heroin addiction, although this is not exclusively the case. Krivanek draws many fairly obvious parallels between heroin use and other drugs, including legal substances such as alcohol and nicotine.

The basis of this study is that physical symptoms are only part of the addiction process, and that in fact, it is the psychological side of addiction that is the stronger and more controlling factor.

Chapter One examines the various myths surrounding drug use, abuse and addiction. It also takes a closer look at how and where addiction begins. Despite constant research into the area of drug abuse, myths and stereotypes still exist at all levels of our society. Everyone prefers to blame 'peer group pressure' and 'the pushers' or 'Mr Bigs' for all the problems associated with addiction, although as Krivanek argues, these are only a part of the problem. We have to look at each individual involved and examine his or her reasons for their involvement with drugs.

Studies done by Johnston (1985) and Kandel and Yamaguchi (1985) are also examined in Chapter One. They list statistics of young people experimenting with various drugs and at what age this experimentation occurs. The young people examined in this study were also observed through subsequent years to see what percentage (if any) continued to use drugs and how many of them moved on to try harder drugs and become addicts.

Chapter Two examines the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Memorandums (pp 51-56) regarding drugs, the medical ideas of 'addiction as a disease' and the moral and legal implications of drug addiction.

Chapters Three and Four produce further evidence to support the psychological addiction idea. The reasons why people begin to take drugs; why people who are not addicted continue to use; why addicts lives are totally structured around their addiction and supply and use. These chapters also examine the stereotypes that exist, not only in the general public but also in the 'helping professions' (ie medicine, social work, etc).

Cases are examined where all indications seem to lead to the fact that the lifestyle of the addict is the attraction. For some it is the attention they receive; for others it is the ability, through their addiciton, not to be held responsible for their actions, and for others a way of not having to 'cope' with their problems.

Chapter Five sums up most of the arguments presented throughout the book and examines the problems involved with withdrawal. The patterns of the addiction and the treatment that should be given are also examined. Each individual needs to be looked at on an individual level, the extent of the addiction, the size of the doses and the psychological reasons behind the addiction all need to be examined before throwing the addict into a rehabilitation program.

Jara Krivanek is not proposing to have all the answers to society's drug problems. She does, however, take a refreshing look at these problems and try to clarify them so we can start to look more closely at the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment of addicts.

**THE WELFARE STATE IN TRANSITION: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF WELFARE PLURALISM**

**Norman Johnson**

Sussex, Wheatsheaf Books, (Harvester Pr.), 1987
243 pp. $87.50 (Hardback) $29.95 (Paperback)

Reviewed By Jenny Doyle

The notion of 'crisis' has for some time been a matter of debate amongst those interested in the role of the welfare state. General concern over the alleged growth in public expenditure, government 'overload', fears of increasing centralisation and bureaucratisation, together with alleged declines in revenue, investment and economic growth has provided fertile ground for the emergence of pluralist thinking in most capitalist welfare states.

As the title suggests, welfare states have undergone significant change (albeit to varying degrees) during the last decade in terms of welfare policy and the provision of services (eg public expenditure restraint via reductions in the real value of welfare payments, the raising of eligibility criteria, reductions in level of service, sale of assets such as public housing stock, the contracting of services to the private sector and so on). These changes, supported by the myth of 'crisis', find their theoretical expression and defence in the form of welfare pluralism ie 'a reduction or reversal of the State's dominance in welfare provision and an increase in the role of the informal, voluntary and commercial sectors' (p 54). The pervasiveness of welfare pluralism rests on the fact that 'there is something in welfare pluralism for all shades of political opinion' (p 60).

As Johnson argues, however, talk of 'crisis' and 'failure' (keywords for welfare pluralists) is not only premature but destructive, leading as it does to the 'politics of despair'. While acknowledging many of the criticisms directed towards state-provided welfare (eg inequalities of access and use according to class, gender, ethnic divisions and so on), he suggests improvement within the existing framework rather than the transfer of responsibility to the private, informal or voluntary sectors. Indeed, such transfers would serve to exacerbate rather than remedy the current weaknesses. Furthermore, it is the public sector alone which can 'guarantee rights of access and rights of use, procedural rights and substantive rights' (p 159). Unlike the other three sectors, the public sector is accountable for its actions and more likely to achieve the goals of equity and redistribution.

Although Johnson envisages a participatory/socialist future for the welfare state, he admits that 'events seem to be moving in the opposite direction' (p 198). This provides further reason for the maintenance of statutory services which 'offer much more scope for participation than commercial services, and ... more scope for **political** participation than voluntary services' (p 162).

The first three chapters are concerned with defining the welfare state, describing the emergence of the so-called 'crisis' and loss of consensus. The next four chapters are devoted to the four welfare sectors (informal, voluntary, commercial and public), their characteristics and varying contributions to the provision of welfare in selected countries (principally the US and those of Western Europe, although passing reference is made to Australia). The concluding chapter provides a brief outline of the ideologies underpinning differing scenarios for the future of the welfare state.

Johnson establishes the major themes and criticisms propounded by welfare pluralists and cites evidence dispelling much of the myth and rhetoric surrounding claims made by those who advocate minimal state intervention, or decreased state intervention (ie the financial, regulatory role only) and increased voluntary, informal and commercial involvement (ie the providing role). This discussion necessarily touches on a number of issues: privatisation, occupational welfare, the ethical aspects of state support of private welfare-providing enterprise, the sexual division of labour and the role of the family, notions of self-help, decentralisation and participation, social and personal cost.

In exposing the theoretical and practical inadequacies of pluralist arguments, Johnson refers to a broad selection of research from various countries and representing a range of political perspectives. Given the task he has set himself, however, discussion of the issues involved and the implications for social policy and the provision of services is by necessity fairly brief. While this at times can be frustrating, it does allow the canvassing of a wide range of issues, themes and research. Indeed, it provides a lucrative starting point for those readers concerned about the trend towards the privatisation of welfare and the legitimation of increased social and economic inequality.

## PARADISE LOST? THE NORDIC WELFARE STATES AND THE RECESSION 1975-1985

**Staffan Marklund**

Lund Studies in Social Welfare, Arkiv forlag,
£6.95 in the UK

Reviewed by Peter Saunders

Do the following summaries of social policy initiatives since the mid-seventies sound familiar? '... changes can also be seen in terms of selectivity, re-privatisation, increased use of means-tests and more restricted access to welfare', '... changed indexation rules and a slower rate of increase in benefit levels ... seems to have been the ... way to curb automatic cost expansion'; '... welfare cuts predominatly took the form of increased fees for medical and other services, medicines and transport in relation to sickness'; and '... few dramatic cuts have been instituted but strong measures to reduce automatic welfare expansion have been instituted.' They describe **not** the Australian attempts by recent governments to restrain the growth of the welfare state, but policies instituted since 1975 in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, respectively. They are all taken from this fascinating and thought-provoking book by Staffan Marklund, part of the work on which was undertaken while the author was a Visiting Fellow at the Social Welfare Research Centre in 1986.

The main theme of the book is to describe and analyse the social policy responses in the four Nordic countries to the deteriorating economic conditions following the first oil shock in 1973-74. Discussion focuses on the areas of income support, health insurance, occupational health and accident insurance, and housing policies. Public services such as education, child care and medical services do not feature directly in the analysis although they are addressed indirectly in the context of income distribution and labour market policies.

In Chapter 2, the author describes developments in welfare spending in the four Nordic countries over the period 1973-1985. He uses three measures for this purpose, the share of social expenditure (excluding education and labour market policies) in gross national product, social security spending per capita of those in labour force ages (ie 15-64 years), and the share of social welfare in the total budget. Although the diagrammatic presentations are sometimes difficult to follow - a problem I encountered throughout the book - what emerges is that whereas Denmark and Norway were curtailing welfare, Sweden was reducing welfare growth, with Finland steadily expanding. (The textual description of Diagram 2.2 on page 27 seems, however, to be somewhat at odds with the diagram itself.)

After describing the major welfare changes in Chapter 3 (refer to the earlier quotations), Chapter 4 explores the major techniques that have been used in the Nordic countries. The five techniques employed were modified indexation rules, introduction of income tests, increased service fees, benefit freezes and reduced compensation levels. This discussion is then followed by an assessment of the impact on three indicators of welfare performance - poverty, unemployment and inequality. Two important lessons emerge from this analysis, First, labour market policies have a crucial role to play in relieving the unemployment consequences of economic recession, even in countries where welfare is being cut back. Second, the shift from universal to selective welfare payments appears to cause increased rather than reduced inequality when it is accompanied by decreased levels of transfers. While there appears to be increasing recognition of the first of these in Australia, there appears no recognition among policy makers that current trends in relation to the latter are likely to produce the opposite results to those intended, at least in the longer run.

In the remainder of the book, the author discusses economic policies, the role of politics, and the social integration role of the welfare state. Chapters 7 to 9 should be required reading for all those interested in Australia's current welfare difficulties. It is here that the consequences of the real commitment to the welfare state that has been embraced in the Nordic countries can begin to be appreciated. The contrast with Australia is stark and depressing. As the author notes (p 92) '... the evident message of the Swedish system is that those who have a better labour market value and a safer position get a better protection. The welfare system is an incentive to work ... (furthermore) a welfare state whose provisions are work orientated are more likely to survive economic hardship'. This requires not only a commitment to the social goals of welfare, but also a system which embraces and integrates both welfare and labour market policies. At the very end of the book, the author provides an eloquent discussion of the distinction between inequality and redistribution in selective and universal systems. He argues that selective systems **appear** to be more redistributive precisely because they create more poverty and inequality in original income. If what matters - as it surely does - is the ultimate degree of inequality rather than the extent of redistribution, then selective systems appear to be far inferior to those based on priciples of universalism.

It is always difficult to provide a totally balanced review of a book with which the reviewer has so much in sympathy. My main criticism relates to the poor diagrammatic presentation and the occasional grammatical lapse. More fundamentally, I do not share the author's view that governments took a long time to perceive the first oil shock as a major economic crisis. The reason why there was a switch in policy towards the end of the seventies was a reflection of the second oil shock in 1979 rather than a delayed response to the first oil shock. Macroeconomic policy thinking had itself changed in the intervening years - driven by the need to reduce inflation - away from the accommodating response to the first oil shock in order to reduce the unemployment consequences and towards a non-accommodating policy response aimed at controlling inflation.

This does not, however, detract from the immense value of the analysis in this excellent book. I cannot resist finishing with the following quotation attributed to the Swedish Minister for Social Affairs in the late 1930s: '... the touchstone of a good welfare system is not what we can achieve in good times and a prospering economy, but the degree of stability in living conditions for ordinary people when the economy is in crisis'. Isn't that what social justice is ultimately all about?

### RIDING THE GALE

A film by Genni and Kim Batterham

Excepts from a review by
Elizabeth Young, Client Service Co-ordinator
Technical Aid to the Disabled

Genni Batterham, who is severely handicapped by Multiple Sclerosis, made the film 'Riding the Gale' together with her husband Kim and Director Hugh Piper. Despite being blind, Genni is still able to operate her wheelchair. Her speech, too, is now severely impaired, but her alert brain and sense of humour are still well and truly intact.

The film simultaneously explores Genni's spirited personality and the problems surrounding her disability. It weaves interviews with Genni together with scenes from her past, when the early stages of Multiple Sclerosis were beginning to manifest themselves. It juxtaposes comments by friends with conversation at family dinners and a birthday party. And it ends with a wonderful sense of achievement and freedom as Genni and Kim enjoy a camping holiday with friends in the Flinders Ranges.

The Batterhams have clearly used the adventure film to emphasise their ideas about the issues and predicaments surrounding disability. Coping with day-to-day living, relationships, sex, technical aids, the grief suffered in losing one's independence, the courage required to survive - these are what 'Riding the Gale' is all about.

Genni is the narrator of the subject matter but for most people her speech is unintelligible. Subtitles are therefore provided. These are done cleverly and effectively, not with an instant printed phrase, but running onto the screen as each word is said.

Health professionals, teachers, recreation officers and doctors will have a particular interest in the film.

The VHS video format film which runs for 57 minutes, is available for loan **(for one week period)** from:

The Librarian
Technical Aid to the Disabled
P O Box 108
RYDE NSW 2112
Phone: (02) 808 2022

or can be purchased from:

Ronin Films
P O Box 1005
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608
Phone: (062) 48 0851

HOME CARE POLICY PAPER:
**HOME CARE'S FUTURE DIRECTION,**
(NSW Home Care Service, April 1988, 40pp)

**HOME CARE SERVICE BILL,**
NSW PARLIAMENT,
26 May 1988

AUDITOR-GENERAL:
**EFFICIENCY AUDIT REPORT OF THE HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM**
May 1988 (AGPS, 74pp)

Reviewed by Robert Nittolo

New South Wales has recently seen a number of developments affecting the Home Care Service. A policy paper was issued by Home Care which was intended to outline the future directions of its service planning and delivery policies within the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program over the next three to five years. In May the NSW Government, with only a few days notice, introduced a Bill into Parliament which will bring the Home Care Service under the direct control of the Minister and Director-General of the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and implement a new administrative structure.

The Home Care Service began in 1943 as the Housekeepers Emergency Service. It was organised by representatives from a number of voluntary organisations to help care for women who were ill or pregnant and were unable to obtain assistance as many husbands were absent on War service, and friends and relatives who would have normally assisted had either moved to defence areas or were employed fulltime in defence industries.

The Service continued to offer child care and family assistance until the 1960s when emphasis turned to the needs of the frail aged. This trend was consolidated with the passage States Grants (Home Care) Act in 1969 which funded services for the aged in their homes; in 1985 this Act was subsumed under the HACC Program and the Home Care Service became a major provider of services under this program. The HACC Program provides a wide range of non-residential services to frail aged and younger disabled persons. **The Home Care Service is the largest single service agency** under this program in NSW; in 1986/86 it received $26.9m from the Commonwealth (58 per cent of the HACC funds allocated to NSW) and a further $24m from the State Government; it serviced over 38,000 households, seventy-two per cent of which consisted of aged persons.

The period since the introduction of the HACC Program has seen an emphasis on administrative reforms, many of which were introduced in response to the recommendations of a report conducted by the NSW Public Accounts committee. These reforms were introduced to build a stronger administrative structure, to standardise both the types and quality of services offered, and to make individual branches, and the organisation as a whole, more accountable. The administrative changes have largely been implemented, and it was the intention of Home Care to devote greater attention to services and service delivery, and to more clearly formulate the role of the Home Care Service within the HACC Program as a whole. The **Future Directions** Policy paper was the first step in this direction.

The first sections of the paper present the background to the HACC Program (including a very clear diagram outlining the complex HACC administrative arrangements in NSW) and the role of Home Care in HACC; the guidelines of the paper; and details of the consultative process used to arrive at the various recommendations.

The paper sees the main priorities within the HACC Program over the next few years as being: better assessment, co-ordination and integration of services, with particular emphasis on people with multiple service needs; better planning, using an adequate data base; Statewide coverage of quality services; and changed structural arrangements to achieve the first three priorities. Each of the recommendations and points made in the paper have something to say on how these priorities can be achieved. The actual recommendations themselves comprise only fifteen pages; they are divided into subject areas and are presented in point form, with a short general discussion relating to each area.

The areas examined are of central importance both to HACC and to Home Care, and are directly related to one or more of the thirteen principles and goals of the HACC Program (ie comprehensive and integrated services; co-operation between levels of governments and with community organisations; equal access for all; priority for those most in need; effective and integrated assessment; regional equity and responsiveness; cost-efficiency; testing and evaluating services; evaluating the program and its priorities; integrating health and community services; community participation; adequate information base; and effective planning and co-ordination).

The recommendations made in the report can be divided into two general streams: those that the Home Care Service can implement itself, and those involving areas over which Home Care has no direct control, but which affect it in some way. Since Home Care is the major service deliverer under HACC, then it felt it had the experience and expertise to comment on certain aspects of the Program, even if it did not have the authority to implement those recommendations.

A brief summary of some of the major recommendations of the **Future Directions** paper are that: there should be a better information service (including translation) to allow consumers to make more informed choices; Home Care should improve co-ordination with Geriatric Assessment Services; Home Care should provide a range of standard 'core services' throughout the State; there should be a complaints mechanism for consumers; co-ordination could be improved by better and more consistent information, referral and assessment procedures and linkages at a planning level between services; all departments and statutory authorities with administrative responsibility for HACC services should be involved in funding and other key decisions; there should be improved linkages between Branch Committees and HACC Forums; there must be an adequate data base for improved planning; and that Home Care continues to offer assistance to families and others outside the HACC target group.

The observations and recommendations made in the **Future Directions** Paper are both timely and appropriate. In fact, many are repeated to varying degrees in the **Auditor-General's Efficiency Audit Report** into the HACC Program. The Report stated that many of the programs were not being achieved, though it should be remembered that they were included in the HACC agreement precisely because traditionally they had constituted the major problem areas in community services for the aged and disabled and were therefore the areas where greatest attention needed to be paid.

One comment made by the Auditor-General was that even after two years of operation the commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health (DCS&H) was 'unable to find out details of specific services being provided, who is being serviced and to what extent' (p 1). The Department was not in a position to assess the administrative effectiveness of the scheme. Despite this, what information there was available showed that there were problems with integration, assessment, regional equity and problems with monitoring the effectiveness and rationalisation of services.

The major findings were that new programs were not integrated with existing services and were therefore increasing the difficulties for the aged and disabled; there were inequities in the allocation of funding; there was a need for improved accountability of Program funds. Improved co-ordination and assessment procedures would enable the program to direct its services to those most in need; though the entrenched position of the States would make improvements to the assessment procedures difficult.

The Auditor-General made twenty-four recommendations, twelve of which should be implemented 'without delay'; these of course concern the planning, integration, co-ordination, and rationalisation of services; review of assessment procedures; improved financial accountability; re-considering the draft national guidelines (with special emphasis of senior citizens centres [they are still 'clubs'], and day care centres) and assessing projects against the principles and goals of the Program. It is no wonder then that reading the Auditor-General's Report is very much a deja-vu experience, one could be just as easily be reading the **Seaman Report** of 1975, the **Holmes Report** of 1977, or the **McLeay Report** of 1982.

The problems with community services for the aged and the disabled have been well documented and are well known, and both the **Future Directions** paper and the **Auditor-General's Report** make a number of recommendations which, if implemented effectively and efficiently, could go some way towards resolving some of these problems, or at least lessen the impact that they had on community services for so many years. The Home Care Paper saw its recommendations being implemented over a three to five year time span, while the Auditor-General's Report stated that the DCS&H believed that an overall strategy for the aged and disabled would take 15 to 25 years to implement.

The NSW Government has moved to implement what it sees as necessary changes to the Home Care Service; on 26 May it introduced the Home Care Service Bill which has effectively brought the Home Care Service under the direct control of the Director-General and Minister for FACS. The stated reason for the change was that it would improve the accountability of Home Care to the Government. Home Care has now been made a statutory authority, though it is outside the Public Service. The twelve-person Board consisting of seven elected members, three Government appointees, and the Chairperson and Executive Director will be replaced by a seven-person part-time Board appointed by the Minister. The role of the Branch Committees will now become advisory. The Executive Director will become a General Manager and an ex-officio member of the Board.

The main concerns with the changes are the lack of consultation prior to the introduction of the Bill; the degree of direct control exercised by the Minister, the Director-General (or whoever is delegated by them to manage Home Care); and the degree of independence that Home Care would have in formulating and implementing service and administration policies (including the role Future Directions paper) and the independence of Home Care officers on HACC bodies (such as on the Joint Officers Group).

At this stage, until the composition of the new Board and the new General-Manager and deputy are decided it is very much a wait-and-see situation. If Home Care is permitted a degree of autonomy and flexibility at the local level while maintaining a strong central administrative structure, then the changes could be beneficial to the Home Care Service and, most importantly of all, beneficial to the recipients of Home Care Services. If on the other hand Home Care becomes overly bureaucratised and subject to inflexible centralised control with token community participation then the Home Care Service could go the way of the HACC Program in general, and an enormous opportunity for real and effective reform to community services (as opposed to cost-cutting exercises) would be well and truly lost.

The **Future Directions** paper is available from the Home Care Service (02) 689 266; the Auditor-General's Report is available from the Australian Government Bookshops. For further information of the Home Care Bill contact Home Care and/or the Ministerial spokesperson Steve Gibbs.

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8.45 - | 9.15 | **Registration** |
| 9.15 - | 9.30 | **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**<br>Dr Peter Saunders<br>Director, Social Welfare Research Centre |
| 9.30 - | 10.15 | **Trends in Disability Services in NSW**<br>Mr David Richmond<br>Chairman, Disability Council of NSW |
| 10.15 - | 10.45 | **Morning Tea** |
| 10.45 - | 11.30 | **The Transition to Community Care of People with Developmental Disabilities: Recent British Research**<br>Dr Sara Graham<br>Social Welfare Research Centre |
| 11.30 - | 12.15 | **Deinstitutionalisation of People with Developmental Disabilities**<br>Dr Helen Moloney<br>Department of Community Health,<br>Prince of Wales Hospital |
| 12.15 - | 1.30 | **Lunch** |
| 1.30 - | 2.15 | **The Home and Community Care Program**<br>Garth Nowland-Foreman<br>Assistant Director<br>Home and Community Care<br>Department of Family and Community Services |
| 2.15 - | 3.00 | **Short and Long Term Perspectives on Policy Development**<br>Dr Anna Howe<br>Lincoln School of Health Services<br>La Trobe University |
| 3.00 - | 3.30 | **Afternoon Tea** |
| 3.30 - | 3.45 | **Overview**<br>Discussant: Jane Woodruff<br>Disability Council of New South Wales |
| 3.45 - | 4.30 | **Open Forum** |

**Registration:** $20 per person (includes morning and afternoon teas, lunch and copy of report of proceedings)

**Information:** Jennifer Young, Publications Officer - (02) 697 5150

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