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SWRC Newsletter

No 25

June 1987

Editor: Heidi Freeman

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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 handicapped, the aged and other areas of social policy.

The views expressed in this Newsletter, as in any of the Centre's publications, do not necessarily represent any official position of the Centre. The Newsletter and Reports and Proceedings are published to make available the views and research findings of the individual authors, and thus to promote the development of ideas and discussion about major concerns in social policy and social welfare.

The Conference in Perth on **Social Welfare in the Late 1980s: Reform, Progress or Retreat?** was a great success. The quality and breadth of coverage of the papers was impressive and they produced a lively and stimulating debate on many aspects of social welfare policy in Australia. The Centre is in the process of preparing the conference papers for publication in the **SWRC Reports and Proceedings** series and the Report should be available in the near future. I am confident that it will contribute much to broadening the scope of the welfare state debate in Australia. It provides some balance against the continued emphasis in recent years on the objective of expenditure restraint which has detracted from more fundamental issues relating to equity, social justice, the living standards of the disadvantaged and the efficiency and effectiveness of social programmes.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the very warm hospitality with which we received in Perth, and in particular to Professor Laki Jayasuryia and Jim Ife who, along with Adam Jamrozik, were responsible for the organisation of the Conference. The Conference gave me the opportunity to meet and talk with officials from the Western Australian Department of Community Services and the Family and raise with them how the SWRC research agenda could best address the issues they see as most important. In light of the overall success of this Conference and the Adelaide Workshop last year, we intend to hold seminars or conferences outside of Sydney on a continuing basis. Further details will be provided through the SWRC Newsletter in due course.

I reported in the last Newsletter on the workshop on Housing Policy which the Centre organised in conjunction with the Social Security Review. The

workshop was attended by experts on income support and housing policy, who discussed the issues raised in the paper prepared for the workshop by Joan Vipond. The workshop proceedings, including Joan's paper, the comments of two discussants and a summary of the general discussion is to be published shortly as one of the Social Security Review Background/Discussion papers.

Some of you may already have seen the important study recently published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics entitled **The Effects of Government Benefits and Taxes on Household Income**, (ABS Catalogue No. 6537.0). The study provides a wealth of information derived from the 1984 Household Expenditure Survey and estimates how government education, health, social security and housing benefits and income and indirect taxes affected household incomes in 1984. For those who want more information on how household income inequality is influenced by welfare state expenditures (and the taxes used to finance this spending) this study is invaluable. It presents estimates of the effects on households classified according to household income, principal source of household income, age of household head, number of employed persons, family composition and nature of housing occupancy.

In light of the importance of the ABS study, I have organised a one-day workshop which was held on May 13 to discuss its methodology and the implications of the results. The main speakers at the workshop were Ian Castles, the Australian Statistician and Dr. John Piggott from the University of Sydney. Their papers, along with the ensuing discussion will be published soon in the **SWRC Reports and Proceedings** series.

SWRC publications: In addition to the proceedings of the Perth Conference and the ABS Workshop, we have a number of **Reports and Proceedings** which will appear in the near future. The following three are currently very close to completion and should be published within the next two months:

- . Living on the Age Pension: A Survey Report (David Wiles)
- . Review of Commonwealth and State Policies and Services Concerning Accommodation and Employment of Disabled Persons (Jill Hardwick)
- . A Study of the Extra Costs Borne by Families Who Have a Child with a Disability (Sara Graham)

In addition to these, as indicated earlier, the Centre will publish the proceedings of the May 13 workshop.

By the time this Newsletter appears, the first two Reports in our new **SWRC Research Resource Series** will also be available. We have in the past published several bibliographical reports in the **SWRC Reports and Proceedings** series. I thought it might be more appropriate to establish a new series for such work, which has proved to be of immense value to many working in the social welfare area. The first two reports in the new series are:

- No.1: Guide to the Publications of the Social Welfare Research Centre (Diana Encel)
- No.2: Community Care of the Elderly: An Annotated Bibliography, 1980-85 (Lynn Sitsky)

We shall continue to compile and publish such reports, as they represent an important way in which the SWRC can contribute to the social welfare community in Australia.

Subscriptions to SWRC publications:

The three forthcoming Reports listed above, along with the proceedings of the Perth Conference and the Fiscal Incidence Workshop and the two Reports in the **SWRC Research Resource Series** will comprise the remaining Reports available under the 3rd series of subscriptions. Now is the time to be thinking of subscribing to the 4th Series which will include the next fifteen Reports published in either the **Reports and Proceedings** or **Research Resource Series**. By paying \$60 in advance you will receive the full set of these Reports automatically and at a discount of 20% on the normal price. Further details on how to receive SWRC publications by subscription are contained on page 15.

SWRC staff: I am pleased to welcome back to the Centre Peter Whiteford and Jenny James, both of whom have been on leave for some months. I should also like to welcome Eileen Campbell who has started with us on a part-time basis to assist with publications and general administration. Two offers of appointment to Senior Research Fellow positions in the Centre have been made following interviews in March, although I am unable to report further on this matter at this stage.

SWRC seminars: Dates for the SWRC seminars for Session 2, August to November 1987 have now been finalised. They are 14 August, 11 September, 9 October and 6 November. We have not yet finalised the programme, although one of the speakers on 11 September will be Dr. Janet Finch, Senior Lecturer in Social Administration, University of Lancaster. Details of the full seminar programme will be provided in the near future.

Peter Saunders
Director, SWRC

16th CONFERENCE OF ECONOMISTS: CALL FOR PAPERS AND EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The 16th Conference of Economists is being held at the Holiday Inn on the Gold Coast, August 24th to 28th, 1987.

The theme of the conference is 'Economics - 2000 and Beyond'. Papers on any topic applying economic theory and practice to issues which are seen as affecting our society in the future are welcome.

If you wish to be put on the mailing list and for further information please write to:

Organising Secretary,
Conference of Economists 1987,
P.O. Box 8
NORTH QUAY,
BRISBANE QLD 4001

1987 MEETING OF THE ECONOMETRIC SOCIETY ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

The 1987 Australasian meeting of the Econometric Society will be held at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand on 26/28 August. Proposals for papers on economic theory, econometric theory and applied econometrics should be forwarded by 30 April to:

Prof. David E.A. Giles
Department of Economics and
Operations Research
University of Canterbury
CHRISTCHURCH N.Z.

9th AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE OF HEALTH ECONOMISTS - CALL FOR PAPERS

The 9th Australian Conference of Health Economists will be held at the

Australian National University,
Canberra, on 24-25 September 1987.
Papers on any topic applying economic theory to the health sector are welcome. The proceedings are published and further information can be obtained from:

D.P. Doessel
Department of Economics
University of Queensland
ST. LUCIA QLD 4067

OR

J.R.G. Butler
Department of Marketing and
Economics
Brisbane C.A.E.
P.O. Box 117,
KEDRON QLD 4031

TERTIARY EDUCATION ON DRUGS

A national conference will be held on **July 6-9, 1987** at Basser College, **University of New South Wales.**

The aim is to provide an opportunity for discussion of the recommendations of the Task Force on Training Requirements of persons entering the drug and alcohol field.

Some of the available workshops are Social Work-Welfare Work, School Teaching, Preventive and Health, Police, Nursing, and Aboriginal Studies.

The keynote address will be by Norman Swan.

Enquiries and applications:
Cathy O'Brien, (02) 523-9494.
Tertiary Education Research Project
Sydney,
P.O. Box 500,
Cronulla,
N.S.W. 2230.

S.W.R.C. HOUSING POLICY WORKSHOP

Reviewed by Clare Stapleton

The Social Welfare Research Centre hosted a housing policy seminar in Sydney on March the 3rd. The seminar was initiated by the Social Security Review which hoped to achieve, via the workshop, the stimulation of policy debate concerning appropriate income support responses to after-housing poverty. The central focus of the workshop was a paper presented by Joan Vipond from the SWRC. This paper was titled **Policy Options for Relieving Housing Problems Among People on Low Incomes**. The workshop was chaired by Peter Saunders and formal responses to the paper were made by Judith Yates (Sydney University) and Greg Black (South Australian Housing Ministry).

Participants at the workshop represented a wide range of community organisations, State and Federal government departments and academics who have contributed to housing policy and income policy debates in recent years.

The paper presented at the conference **Policy Options for Relieving Housing Problem Among People on Low Incomes** had two principle objectives. Its first objective was to develop the analysis previously undertaken at SWRC on after-housing poverty. Its second objective was to examine a variety of income support measures which have been recommended recently as a means of dealing with after-housing poverty.

In tackling these objectives the paper undertook the survey in a number of subject areas. The first of these was an examination of the problem of poverty in Australia. This analysis included an overview of recent poverty research in Australia. This section noted the high levels of poverty among

particular forms of housing tenure and particular demographic groups. For example the paper called attention to the fact that one in five families with children and one in five private sector tenants live in poverty.

The second area of concern was that of housing policy. Within this section of the paper a number of issues were examined including the tenure bias in government housing policy and the problems of supply and demand in the private rental housing market.

The paper then moved on to examine the appropriateness of rent allowances as a means of overcoming housing-related poverty. Within this section a number of schemes were examined but particular attention was paid to those recommended by the Social Security Review and the National Working Party on Private and Community Rental Housing. The paper suggested that while there are a number of optional approaches to the problems of poverty among private sector tenants, rent assistance must be deemed the most appropriate of these options. The primary reasons for this include the fact that rent allowance payments directly assist those who have the greatest need; secondly the relief is immediate; and thirdly rent allowance schemes are relatively inexpensive.

This section of the paper then went on to address a number of concerns which have been expressed regarding the effectiveness of rent allowance. Using an economic model the paper examined the proposition that if rent allowances are increased there will be a rise in demand and hence rent prices will increase. The conclusion reached in the paper was that there will be no increase in the cost of rent due to the fact that increasing rent assistances will not increase demand. The reasons why there will be no increase in demand include the fact that rent assistance represents only a

proportion of the total cost of rent paid by a tenant and therefore there is an incentive to economise on rental costs. There will not be an increase in the demand for better quality and more expensive dwellings because rent allowances are not paid at a level which makes such dwellings affordable. The effect of increasing rent allowances will be merely to make it easier for recipients to pay their current rents.

The final section of the paper examined the way in which social security payments, Federal Government rent allowances and State housing authority rent rebates act as poverty traps. Attention was called to recent research which demonstrates that tenants receiving rent allowance, face higher effective marginal tax rates than other non-renting social security recipients. The paper also demonstrated that the effective marginal tax rates faced by public housing authority tenants in N.S.W. are even higher.

In its conclusion the paper pointed to rent assistance as the most appropriate means of dealing with after-housing poverty and also as a useful means of redressing the traditional bias in government policy which favours home-owners.

This paper and the proceedings of the workshop are to be published as a Social Security Review Discussion Paper.



AUSTRALASIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY NATIONAL EVALUATION CONFERENCE 1987

PARKROYAL HOTEL,
CANBERRA

JULY 29 — 31, 1987

The Conference will bring together practitioners, managers, academics, researchers and users of evaluation.

This major event provides the opportunity for exchanging ideas and experiences. Keynote speakers review the current state of the art both here in Australia and internationally. A rich feast of speakers during Paper Presentations and Round Table Discussions will enable participants to obtain valuable information on evaluation methods, concepts and evaluations conducted over a cross section of policies, programs and services.

The popular Pre-Conference Workshops will be held during Wednesday, July 29, leading into registration and the plenary opening Conference session at 8.00 p.m. on Wednesday evening.

Over 200 delegates attended the Third Conference in Sydney last year, even more participants are expected this year to share a mutual wealth of knowledge and experiences.

We are looking forward to your company.

For more information contact:
Dr. Anona Armstrong
President, AES.
telephone: (03) 51 1467

SWRC INTERNAL SEMINAR

RECENT CHANGES IN AGED CARE POLICIES

presented by Robert Nittolo

The new Minister for Community Services, Mr. Chris Hurford, recently announced a number of major changes to the administration of nursing homes. These changes include the introduction of specific quality of care requirements, a new method of fees determination for nursing homes and an increase in the Personal Care Subsidy for hostel residents.

The changes have been introduced on the basis of the Giles Report on **Private Nursing Homes in Australia**, and the **Review of Nursing Homes and Hostels**. Essentially, the principal recommendations concerning the nursing home and hostel industry arising from these inquiries relate to the lack of overall planning and the need for growth control; the need for standards of quality of patient care; the need for more consistent inspection; the role of rehabilitation and assessment; and a system of funding that provides incentives for efficiency.

These are the issues which the Department of Community Services is seeking to address through the changes. A public seminar was held in Sydney on 15 April to brief the industry and other interested parties on the new changes.

Standards

The general philosophy relating to standards is that a nursing home should have a 'homely and caring environment' conducive to appropriate care. The specific issues being addressed in regard to standards relate to the quality of care, the

quality of life and the quality of staffing. Standards of service are to be judged in terms of their outcome; 'outcome standards' primarily relate to the quality of life of the patient, that is care practices are to be judged on the degree to which they enhance the health, social independence, privacy and dignity, freedom of choice, the variety of experience and safety of the patient. As far as the nursing home institution itself is concerned the outcome standard applicable to it is that it has a 'home-like environment'. These standards will be monitored by multi-disciplinary teams of inspectors who will visit homes at least once a year (forewarning of routine visits), but little indication was given as to how the inspectors would monitor and enforce the regulation of nursing homes so as to ensure that outcome standards would be achieved.

In principle the proposed outcome standards are undoubtedly commendable but the question must be raised as to how the standards are to be applied in practice. Many of the standards are geared toward 'enabling' patients to achieve certain outcomes, for instance, to 'make informed choices about their treatment programs', 'to feel secure in their accommodation,' to have visitors of their choice' or to 'to maintain, and, if possible, improve their mobility and dexterity'. Outcomes such as these reflect the view that a nursing home has a much greater role to play in rehabilitation. This view was expressed in the discussion of assessment procedures.

Assessment

The goals and philosophies of the assessment program are that the elderly should be maintained at home whenever possible. This of course has been a goal of aged care for some time and is by no means new. However,

admission to a nursing home should not necessarily be considered permanent, there will be a greater emphasis on rehabilitation and a recognition of the possibility of discharge if appropriate. This perhaps is why so much emphasis is put on 'enabling and encouraging' the patients to achieve certain outcomes.

Assessment will be carried out in the residence of the client wherever possible, and will be conducted in consultation and negotiation with the client and their care-giver. The outcome standards and the assessment principles stress that clients and their care givers are able to make 'informed choices' regarding admission and treatments, but who informs the choosers? Multi-disciplinary assessment teams will be able to inform the client and their families but the patient's general practitioner will remain the primary medical care-giver, even within the confines of a nursing home, and in all probability will still remain the patients most trusted primary informant.

Freedom of choice implies alternatives. One of the reasons for the high degree of institution-alisation of the frail aged was the lack of appropriate alternative forms of treatments. The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program is attempting to address this imbalance, but its success depends on the knowledge and availability of services.

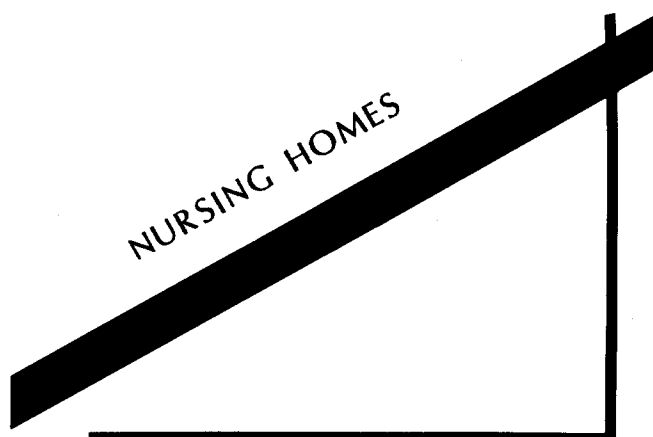
Funding

The new funding arrangements are based on a two-fold component to be phased in over a five-year period. One component includes the cost of nursing and personal care (N & PC) and the other is a 'standard aggregate module' (SAM) which consists essentially of infrastructure costs and a return on investment. The standard module will be set at \$27.60 per day per patient

and will be indexed by a weighted average of Average Weekly Earnings and the Consumer Price Index. At present a third (35%) of nursing homes have infrastructure costs above that provided by the standard aggregate module: these homes will be brought into equivalence over the next five years. These homes will be expected to either lower their profits or make better use of their resources.

It has been found that there is no correlation between infrastructure cost and quality of services: these costs have ranged from \$7.33 to \$50.05 per occupied bed day, and State averages have ranged from \$16.30 per day for deficit financed homes in Tasmania to \$26.80 for participating homes in Victoria.

The new changes are designed to provide incentives toward efficiency in the operation of the homes, and the outcome standards will ensure that services are directed toward promoting a quality of care for individuals that will enhance their quality of life. The planned changes will be introduced over the next five years and there will be avenues for appeal and review; As yet we will have to wait and see what the consequences of the new changes will be. The Department's intention over the next 20 to 25 years is to provide extended care in nursing homes (at a level of about 40 beds per thousand) and personal care in hostels.



SWRC Seminar Friday, 13th March

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS & SOCIAL POLICY

LABOUR MARKET TRENDS AND SOCIAL SECURITY EXPENDITURE

Dr Peter Saunders
Director,
Social Welfare Research Centre

This paper analysed developments in social security expenditure on unemployment benefit, sickness benefit and invalid pension over the period 1966-67 to 1985-86. A major focus of the paper was on the impacts on expenditure of labour market developments, particularly the rise in unemployment. The level of unemployment rose over the period from just under 91 thousand in 1966-67 to 539 thousand by 1985-86. As a proportion of the total labour force, the unemployment rate increased from 1.83 per cent to 7.29 per cent. Accompanying this overall increase in unemployment was a substantial rise in the average duration of unemployment, from about 3 weeks in 1966-67 to 46.5 weeks by 1985-86.

In the first half of the paper, the growth in expenditure on each of the three categories was decomposed into four contributing factors. These reflected, respectively, the impact of inflation, of demographic and other developments which result in more people becoming eligible for income support, of coverage ratio extensions as more of the eligible population actually received cash support, and of changes in the average real level of support for recipients.

In the case of unemployment benefit expenditure, the analysis indicated an

average annual increase in expenditure of over 34 per cent between 1966-67 and 1985-86. Of this, some 8.5 per cent reflected inflation, leaving an increase in real expenditure of just over 24 per cent a year. The most significant factors contributing to this growth were the rise in unemployment itself (9.8 per cent a year), and the increase in coverage - the proportion of the unemployed in receipt of unemployment benefit (8.3 per cent a year). The average real benefit level for those receiving unemployment benefit increased overall by 4.2 per cent a year, although the average benefit level had actually fallen in real terms in the 1st decade.

Total expenditure on sickness benefits increased on average over the period by almost 24 per cent a year, or by 14.3 per cent a year after adjusting for inflation. Of this, demographic factors contributed almost 2 per cent a year, coverage extensions contributed over 8 per cent a year, while the average real benefit rose on average by 3.8 per cent a year. Again, the average benefit level declined in real terms in the last decade.

Total expenditure on invalid pensions rose on average by 17.5 per cent a year over the period, or by 8.3 per cent a year after adjusting for inflation. Demographic factors again contributed some 2 per cent a year to this growth, coverage extensions contributed 2.8 per cent a year, while average benefit levels rose by almost 3.4 per cent a year in real terms. In this case, however, average benefit levels had continued to increase in real terms in the last decade, by just over 1 per cent a year on average.

The paper drew attention to the fact that in all three cases, the growth in real expenditure reflected increases in the number of recipients much more

so than higher real benefit levels. In the case of unemployed benefit, for example, the analysis indicated that if unemployment levels and coverage rates in 1985-86 had been as they were in 1966-67, expenditure on unemployment benefit in 1985-86 would have been about \$115 million, compared with actual expenditure in 1985-86 of \$3122 million. The paper also highlighted the decline in average real benefit levels since 1966-67, despite the introduction of indexation in May 1977. The average real unemployment benefit level in 1985-86 was 8 per cent below its 1976-77 level, while the average sickness benefit level declined by 11 per cent in real terms over the period. These declines reflected changes in the composition of beneficiaries, but also the non-indexation of some benefits, combined with the failure to index additional benefits and allowances which many beneficiaries receive.

The second half of the paper focused on attempts to pinpoint more specifically the causal impacts of labour market developments on trends in the coverage ratios as defined above. It was shown that the unemployment rate had a positive impact on both unemployment and sickness benefit coverage, but not on coverage of the invalid pension. Further analysis suggested that this effect was probably due to the increased average duration of unemployment, rather than the rise in unemployment itself. However, these effects acted alongside changes to the income test, the work test for unemployment benefit and the average real benefit level itself, all of which appeared to have an impact on coverage. These latter results were, however, somewhat preliminary and required further investigation before their magnitude could be assessed with any certainty.

JOB REWARDS AS LABOUR SEGMENTATION DETERMINANTS

Dr Krzysztof Zagorski
Department of Sociology
Research School of Social Sciences
The Australian National University

The aggregation of Australian industries, based on relative and absolute values of job rewards in terms of income and occupational prestige, results in the division of the economy into two economic sectors. The first sector consists of social services and agriculture, while the second sector consists of material production and distributive, municipal and personal services. Such an aggregation reflects post-industrial features of labour relations as well as a specific position of agriculture in the Australian economy. The sectors differ not only in absolute and relative (to the quality of their workforce) work rewards but also in detailed patterns of rewards' determination by workforce characteristics. The first sector rewards employees much better in terms of occupational prestige than it does in income. Moreover, when all other income determinants (workforce characteristics) are kept constant, income is even negatively influenced by employment in this sector.

The personal characteristics of the workforce have a greater explanatory power in respect of rewards' determinants in the first sector than in the rest of economy. The job rewards in material production and distribution are subjected to much more transient and irregular influences. The post-productive or social services sector seems to be more meritocratic in a very broad sense.

Employment in different economic sectors differently influences the opinions about government spending on social services. When facing the alternative, the public prefers to reduce taxes rather than to increase social expenditures. However, more than a half of the Australian workforce share the opinion that the government spends too little on education, science and technology, medical care, roads, military defence, and some other programs. At the same time, less than fifty per cent believe that the government spends too little on pensions assistance for the unemployed, and other social services. Those who work in the social service sector are more inclined to increase social spending than those who work in manufacturing and in distributive municipal or personal services. The agricultural workforce is even less inclined to increase government expenditures.

SWRC Seminar

Friday, 10th April

THE WELFARE OF THE AGED

COMMUNITY CARE IN AGEING: THE POLICY AGENDA

Dr Adam Graycar
Commissioner for the Ageing,
South Australia.

Adam Graycar's presentation was divided into four parts. First he dealt with general issues and outlined the demographic and policy issues that

are part both of our reality of ageing and of the myths and stereotypes that creep into planning in aged care.

Second he dealt with the distinction between conditions and problems noting that conditions are general circumstances which are tangible, while problems are those situations or conditions that are brought for solution or help. A great deal of skill is required in understanding the transition from condition to problem. After listing a dozen of the major problems in ageing policy he then turned to the third part, namely how do problems in ageing get on to the policy agenda.

There is clearly an important political process involved in determining whether a condition is a problem, and he outlined the types of interest group activities that are most likely to thrust problems on to the policy agenda. He described three types of lobby groups and argued that group demands that transcend individual interests are the key to our welfare future.

The fourth part of the presentation dealt with the development of an agenda for ageing and here he listed specific issues: Income Support; Health Services; Accommodation; In-home Services; Services to facilitate access information and communication; Employment; Transport; Recreation; Education; Life Enrichment. He then focused on in-home services, highlighting Personal Care, Housekeeping, Linen/Laundry, Household Support, Social Support, Centre Based Food Services, Home Delivered Food Services, Home Nursing, and outlined the various provision auspices, and invited discussion on how these substantive issues might get on to the policy agenda and the strength of different interest group approaches to getting these on to the agenda.

RECENT CHANGES IN AGED CARE POLICIES AND ATTITUDES.

Dr Robert Nittolo
Social Welfare Research Centre

The paper presented examined the changes recently taking place in relation to the provision of community care for the aged. For a long time successive governments have supported the policy that whenever possible home care is preferable to community care. This philosophy has underlined in some way nearly all service programs for the aged, even those programs which are institutionally based. For instance, the **Old Age Pension** was originally proposed as a means of keeping the aged out of government asylums; the **Aged Persons Home Scheme** of 1954 was introduced to provide an alternative to Government institutions for the aged in which persons could 'reside in conditions approaching as nearly as possible normal domestic life'.

The various changes to the **National Health Act** of 1953 which were introduced over the years were intended to provide an alternative to hospitalisation; and the **Aged Persons Hostels Act** of 1972 was introduced to provide an alternative to nursing homes, it was argued for on the undesirability of forcing the elderly 'through the lack of any ready alternative, to accept a nursing home when they had no real need to do so. Similarly, the **Nursing Homes Assistance Act** of 1974 was intended to allow nursing homes to expand services to 'visiting patients', the aim was to 'enable the aged to be kept in the community for as long as possible with the knowledge that the nursing services that they need will be available'.

These programs were in addition to those such as the **Home Nursing Subsidy Act** of 1956 and the bulk of the **Home Care Program** of 1969 which were introduced specifically to provide services to the aged in their homes.

If there has been such a strong commitment to the principles of community and home care then why was there such a large increase in the numbers of persons being institutionalised in comparison to the number of services being provided for persons in their homes, and why were so many persons institutionalised unnecessarily?

The reasons for this were discussed in relation to the McLeay Report **In a Home or at Home**. Essentially the reasons for this were: The 'generous' rates of nursing home benefits, the lack of an effective screening system for admission to nursing homes, the lack of community care alternatives and the nature of Commonwealth/State relations (the Commonwealth provides the money but the States determine the standards).

Some of these problems were addressed in various ways over the years, the key years were 1969 and 1972 which saw many changes to aged care services, the bulk of which were designed to promote alternative forms of care but failed to address many of the fundamental problems associated with the development of programs for the aged. More recently the present decade has seen a good deal of activity in field of aged services. Policy considerations have gone beyond the 'board and lodging' issues of the sixties and seventies', emphasis has shifted away from the provision of accommodation for the elderly, especially through the provision of capital subsidies for homes and hostels and benefits for nursing homes.

Today the debate on aged care has shifted from the provision of services to determining the impact that these services have on the aged themselves. More recently the emphasis has been on such issues as appropriate assessment; quality of life and quality of care; residents rights; standards of service and methods for evaluating service outcomes; community participation and consultation; integration and co-ordination of services have all become major issues within the last few years.

Since the beginning of the 1980's an enormous base of knowledge has been built concerning the care of the aged. This has occurred at a research level, for instance, a bibliography on community care recently published at the Centre contains 391 works written since 1980, prior to this there were only a handful of works dealing with the aged in Australia and most were articles written for specialist journals. (Prior to 1980 there were only two major readily available works dealing with the aged in Australia: Bruce Ford's **The Elderly Australian** (1972) and Hutchinson's **Old People in a Modern Australian Community** (1954).

At a Government level there have been no less than six inquiries carried out into various aspects of aged care services within the last five years (prior to 1980 there had only been one, **Care of the Aged** (1975). The McLeay Report (**In a Home or at Home**) (1982) and the **Nursing Homes and Hostels Review** (1986) seem to be setting the policy agenda for planning aged services for the remainder of the century.

Furthermore, a number of organisations for the aged have also emerged in recent years: at an official level there is the Office of the Aged (Commonwealth), and Offices for the Aged have been formed in SA, WA and NSW; there are now a number of aged

representative groups (Council of the Aged, Combined Pensioners Association, Voice of the Elderly). Then there are the formal research institutes specifically devoted to the study of ageing (Australian Association of Gerontology; National Research Institute for Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine; and Ageing and the Family Project (now deceased)). Other research institutes have an aged studies unit as part of their research agenda. Many welfare organisations, now have an Aged Officer of some sort who deals almost exclusively with aged problems.

The most recent initiatives in community care has been the **Home and Community Care (HACC) Program** (1985) which was discussed in some detail. Services offered by the HACC Program are designed to provide basic maintenance and support for the frail and at risk aged, the younger disabled and their carers. First, the program incorporates a number of specific principles which emphasise three areas: There must be equal access to all groups and equity between regions with need being determined by assessment. Second, services are to be tested and evaluated for planning, co-ordination and integration, and are to be monitored for efficiency and effectiveness. Third, community organisations and clients must be involved in determining the needs and priorities of the program.

One very important issue is that of Commonwealth/State relations. The HACC Program has involved extended negotiations between the Commonwealth and the States on long-term funding arrangements and the status of certain services have only recently been finalised.

The HACC Program has not been without its critics. It has been argued that the desire for co-ordination and planning has led to a high degree of

bureaucratisation; proposals must pass through a hierarchy of review from sub-regional levels to final ministerial approval. This has also meant extensive delays between proposals and the actual receipt of funds.

Many programs prior to HACC originated as responses to past problems; HACC is itself a response to the problems outlined in the McLeay Report. Although the HACC Program does attempt to de-institutionalise there is the danger that instead of the community being taken out of the institution, the institution is being taken into the community.

COMMENTS AND COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS

Professor Jordan Kosberg

International Exchange Centre on Gerontology,
University of South Florida

The Social Welfare Research Centre was honored to have with us Prof. Jordan Kosberg from the International Exchange Centre on Gerontology, University of South Florida. Although Prof Kosberg did not deliver a formal paper he did make a number of interesting comparative comments and observations concerning the care of the aged from an American viewpoint.

Assessment

On the question of assessment he said that there were two issues: that of

individuals who are assessed as needing long term care but who do not wish to receive such care, and that of individuals who wish long term care but who, on assessment do not require it. Essentially this question revolves around the wishes of the client and their family versus the determination of the status of the client by an official, it really comes down to a question of removal versus self-determination.

The question of family care was viewed in terms of another opposition, namely those families which are willing but do not have the capacity to care, and those who have the capacity but who are unwilling. In the US, particularly under Reagan, there has been a re-emergence of the idea that the family is the panacea for aged care. There has also been an associated re-emergence of the concept of the 'sanctity of filial piety'. The introduction of legislation to compel families to take care of their aged members is being increasingly suggested; however, it has been tried before and has been found unconstitutional.

Indiscriminate Placement

Professor Kosberg spoke of the effects of indiscriminate placement, not only in a nursing home but with the family. Indiscriminate placement can lead to ineffective care (at its very worst, elder abuse) and it can have adverse consequences of the family for the patient. So accordingly, 'we are viewing the aged person in more of a family context and saying what will the impact of our professional decisions, not only on the older person but on the family system as well.' Inappropriate placement of a person in a family may result in higher cost to a municipality, state or government.

Lobby Groups

Lobby groups tend to be of two types: recipient and provider groups. Recipient groups are characterised more by their diversity than by their commonality of interest and concern. Individuals are often as influential in determining policy as organisations (Charlton Heston recently testified on a hearing into nursing homes drawing much publicity to the issues involved). On the other hand, provider groups represent different interests and often clash with recipient groups.

Socio-economic Status

In the US socio-economic status is important in determining the type of care and the attitudes toward care policies. The inequalities associated with status are merely magnified with old age, as is to be expected there are many more options and opportunities for the affluent aged. Furthermore, the more affluent aged tend to be a little more hostile toward government programs that support the elderly, or, for that matter any group in need requesting government support.

Whose responsibility?

Whose responsibility is the care of the aged? In the US, polls have shown that Government responsibility is perceived as the necessity of doing more for the aged than care by religious groups or by the family. Two groups which are increasing their responsibility are organised religion and business enterprises. The latter is increasing its commitment to the elderly due to the awareness of the effect that responsibilities for an aged person can have on an employee (absenteeism, tardiness, being stressed, burdened and anxious) The ultimate consequence of this is reduced productivity and effectiveness.

The US Ombudsman programs

In the US Ombudsman programs are required in nearly every State to ensure at least some level in the quality of care in long term facilities. These programs provide a mechanism for receiving complaints, for providing community education and awareness. Long-term care facilities should be seen as part of a community care system thereby ensuring that the elderly who are institutionalised are not simply placed out of sight, out of mind and forgotten about.

Unfortunately the ombudsman programs are either public or quasi-public organisations and therefore cannot do everything they should in the way of proactive unannounced visitation to institutions or to publicise the conditions that they find within specific institutions.

Given this lack of power another group of organisations have arisen up in the US. These are private nursing home resident advocacy organisations which are not restricted along the lines above. Indeed, in some States there is enabling legislation for any advocacy group to enter any long term care facility at any time, day or night.

The nursing home industry in the US has complained about the degree of regulation, but it is pointed out to them they are not 'processing cans of soup or mops,' they are caring for those whom Kosberg calls 'the most voiceless and invisible section of the population in the US'. Therefore, there is some justification for having these doors to the 'closed fortresses' of long-term care establishments open, thereby providing a degree of permeability so that elements from the outside can come in to ensure that the rights and quality of care given to the residents of long term care facilities are safeguarded.

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Are You a New Reader?

In Newsletters 19 and 20 we published a survey sheet in this position, which was intended as a once-only survey of readers' research interests in order to refine our mailing list program.

However, a year later we are still receiving completed survey forms as part of orders from people who have just discovered the Newsletter, or readers who have delayed their ordering.

We have since decided to make this a permanent feature, as it has yielded valuable information about priorities and also the occupational interests of the Newsletter readership.

New (and existing) readers are invited to return this sheet, with or without orders on the reverse side.

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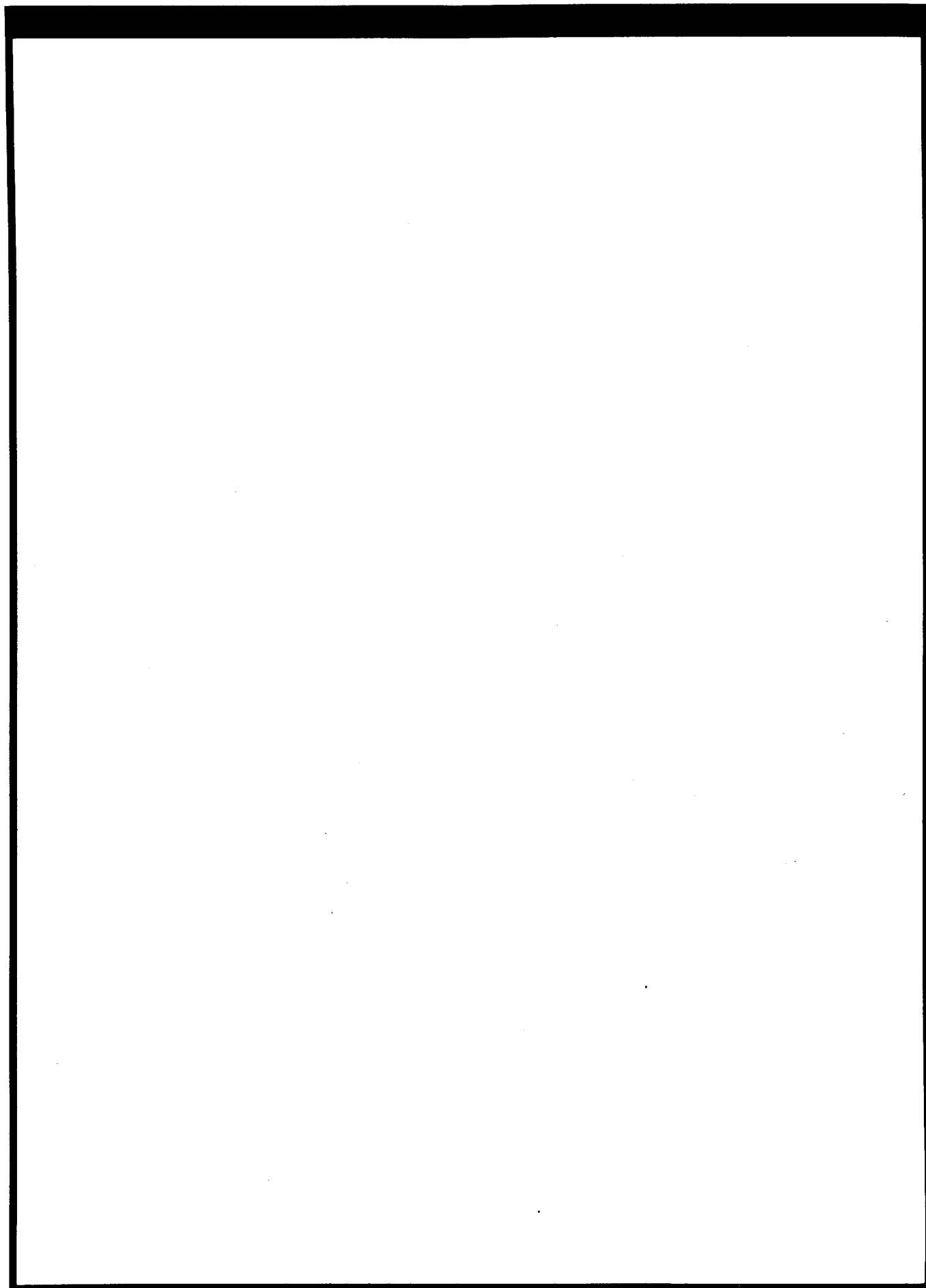
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NEW RESEARCH PROJECT: MICRODATA ESTIMATES OF THE SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF CASH AND NONCASH INCOME IN SEVEN COUNTRIES.

This project, which forms part of the on-going research programme of the new Director, was endorsed as part of the SWRC research agenda at the meeting of the Advisory Committee on 9 April 1987. The project is part of the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), a major international research project currently funded by the US National Science Foundation, the US National Institute for Ageing, and the Centre for the Study of Poverty, Population and Policy in Luxembourg.

The LIS project was designed to improve the quality of comparative information on various aspects of income inequality and redistribution in advanced economies. The project involves gathering together in one location (Luxembourg) unit record file of economic, social and demographic data which can then be coded using a common set of definitions and procedures. The truly comparable microdata which results creates a potentially rich resource for policy research. The LIS data base has already been used to study income poverty, the relative economic status of one-parent families and of the elderly, and the overall distribution of government cash transfers and direct taxes.

The LIS databank currently covers eight countries in addition to Australia, viz. Canada, Germany, Israel, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Several additional countries have expressed an interest in joining the project. The Australian data are those collected in the **1981-82 Income and Housing Survey**, recoded to comply with the standardised LIS concepts and definitions. This recoding has taken place with the assistance of the SWRC

Director, who has been appointed Australia's co-ordinator to the LIS project.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the international comparative framework is a source of many important insights into the nature of poverty and inequality in Australia. For example, this research has the potential to indicate the extent to which Australia's unique social security and welfare systems have produced outcomes different from those in similar countries with other arrangements. The results from the project will also permit the nature of these differences to be analysed. It is thus a potentially crucial input into assessment of Australian social welfare policies, and as a result has an important and direct bearing on the SWRC research agenda.

The purpose of this particular project is to impute noncash income in the form of housing, food, health (including long term care) and education benefits to the existing LIS income microdatabase. Both government transfers and other sources of income in kind (e.g., employment related earnings supplements; implicit rent for owner occupiers) will be statistically imputed to each country's household income microdatabase. Income tax subsidies in the form of tax expenditures may also be imputed to recipients if possible. Initial results will focus on the effect of cash and noncash transfers on the size distribution of income and on relative income positions. In addition to Australia, the project will produce comparative results for Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, West Germany and the United States. Experts from each of these countries are jointly responsible for the project, under the direction of the LIS Research Directors.

The major coordinating researchers for this project are currently deciding precisely which particular noncash items best lend themselves to the proposed analysis. An Initial Country Report for Australia was completed in November 1986 and sent to the LIS project leaders in Luxembourg. It appears likely that the project will include noncash incomes in the form of subsidised health care, education and housing (including public housing and imputed rent for homeowners). Other items initially planned for inclusion such as transportation and food subsidies, employment-related benefits and tax expenditures appear more difficult to estimate and impute on a comparable basis. However, even with this restricted scope, the results will be of great interest, particularly given their comparative nature.

Evidence on the redistributive impact of noncash incomes in Australia is extremely limited. An early study by Ann Harding based on data produced by the 1975-76 Household Expenditure Survey was published in the SWRC **Reports and Proceedings** series. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has just published a similar, but more detailed and comprehensive analysis, based on data collected in the 1984 Household Expenditure Survey. This ABS study, **The Effects of Government Benefits and Taxes on Household Income**, contains many interesting and informative results and will no doubt prove of immense value to social policy researchers. The results of this research and other relevant material will guide the LIS project in its allocation of noncash incomes to income units on the Australian data base unit record file.

However, as indicated earlier, the LIS project aims to produce at the same time estimates for six other countries which will be directly comparable to those derived for Australia. Evidence

of this type has not been previously available and the results will thus be the first of their kind. They will begin to shed some light on such questions as the extent to which welfare state expenditures in Australia, which are well-known to be below those in most other advanced economies, have been more effectively targeted on lower income groups and been more redistributive than in other countries.

COSTS OF COMPENSATION

RESEARCH PROJECT.

The Centre's research project examining the allocation of costs within accident compensation schemes and the interaction of these systems with Social Security pensions and benefits schemes is proceeding. A second report, designed to complement SWRC Report and Proceeding No.63 **Workers' Compensation and Social Security: An Overview**, is expected to be released towards the end of this year.

As has been mentioned in previous Newsletters the main aim of the 'Costs of Compensation' study is to provide additional details on the manner in which social welfare and social security institutions and benefits are integrated with other disability and incapacity insurance systems, particularly with workers' compensation and motor vehicle accident compensation schemes.

The study will include references to indirect social costs and other personal costs associated with injury and examine the degree to which compensation networks have traditionally recognised and met these same costs.

Another study detailing aspects of workers' compensation schemes as

experienced by migrant workers, non English speaking persons particularly, is expected to appear as an SWRC Report in the second half of this year also. Provisionally titled **Workers' Compensation and non-English Speaking Migrants in New South Wales** the study is being undertaken by the Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong. This study should prove to be a welcome addition to these few accounts and studies which presently exist in this area.

NEW SWRC RESEARCH PROJECT POVERTY LINES: AN ATTITUDINAL APPROACH.

The 'poverty line' has proved to be an important descriptive and analytical tool in the discussion of the performance of the Australian welfare state. And yet the concept of a poverty line, or a level of income below which people are defined to be in poverty, still contains many problematic aspects. This new SWRC project seeks to elucidate the understanding of poverty in Australia by a consideration of the available data on what Australians consider to be poverty level incomes, and by an evaluation of the relevance of overseas research methods to Australian conditions.

The project was approved by the SWRC's Research Management Committee at its meeting on 17 February 1987. It will be carried out over the next year by Dr Peter Saunders and Bruce Bradbury. It forms part of a broader research programme into the measurement and incidence of poverty in Australia which is currently being developed. Further information on this research programme will be provided in later issues of the Newsletter.

There are three main issues involved in the setting of a poverty line:

- . The appropriate level at which to set the base poverty line.
- . The method of adjustment for persons in different situations. That is, how to adjust for such factors as different family size, housing tenure etc. This is known as the equivalence scale problem, and is also relevant to analysis of the income distribution as a whole.
- . The method used to change the poverty line over time. An 'absolutist' poverty line might be adjusted by changes in the price index only. This fixes the poverty line to be equal to the cost of a fixed bundle of consumption goods. A 'relativist' approach might be adjusted in line with average community incomes. This assumes that poverty is a relative concept, and that the needs of the poor must be defined in relation to the standards of living of the population at large.

A variety of approaches have been used to resolve these issues. One approach has been to use a survey of the population's **attitudes** of what constitutes an acceptable minimum standard of living. A preliminary evaluation of the relevance of this attitudinal approach is the object of this project.

Evaluation of people's attitudes towards poverty level incomes has usually been undertaken by asking a question such as "How much would your family need to get along?", or "What is the absolute minimum your family needs to live on?" etc. Clearly the answers to the question will vary greatly, depending upon the particular form of words used, and asking people about their needs cannot remove the value judgments involved in setting a poverty line. None-the-less it does provide a method of translating a dollar figure into a verbal expression

of the degree of hardship facing families.

However it is with regard to the second two issues involved in setting a poverty line that the attitudinal approach may be most useful. By asking the same questions of persons in different families it is possible to compare the 'poverty lines' for different family types, thus deriving low income equivalence scales. Such scales have quite wide applicability in distributional analysis, income transfer policy etc. They have been derived in several other countries using this methodology (eg see Goedhart et al, 1977).

Additionally, an examination of the way in which answers to these questions change over time may be useful in deciding the appropriate way of increasing the poverty line (or pension levels) to cope with inflation and income growth. Rainwater (1974) in the United States, for instance, found that answers to this type of question tended to vary in line with changes in the real incomes of individuals (rather than prices).

In Australia, the Roy Morgan Research Centre has since 1947 been asking the 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?". The Social Welfare Policy Secretariat (SWPS) briefly examined this data in their 1981 Report on poverty measurement without drawing any firm conclusion on the pattern of increases.

However, they did consider the attitudinal approach to be of some relevance to the study of poverty in Australia, suggesting that;

We would like to see Australian research along the lines pioneered

by Rainwater and van Praag which would enable us and others to evaluate the usefulness of these techniques (SWPS, 1981, p.53)

The only other Australian study that has considered this issue has been that of Whiteford (1985) which looked at the attitudinal approach's applicability to the setting of equivalence scales. Whiteford is much more cautious than SWPS of the usefulness of this form of analysis. Equivalence scales derived using this method had major divergences from those derived using other methods, though the reasons for this divergence were not clear. He notes that, because of the relatively recent development of this methodology, it

...lacks a critical literature through which it would be possible to assess more comprehensively its weaknesses and strengths.
(Whiteford, 1985, p.85)

This project will be a step towards developing such a literature relevant to the Australian context.

The goals of the project are to:

- (1) Examine the key assumptions of the attitudinal approach.

The central question here is, to quote Whiteford (p86), "whether people's judgments are good guides to their own standard of living - whether evaluations of welfare are the same as welfare itself". As well as this, however, there are practical questions of the assumptions and weaknesses inherent in the methodologies used to collect this information.

More generally, the broader question of whether these evaluated basic needs constitute an evaluation of **poverty** might be asked: What is the link between these evaluations of basic needs and people's perceptions of

poverty and the living standards of those in poverty?

- (2) Analyse the results of the Morgan Gallup polls.

This would involve the examination of the historical series together with further detailed analysis of a recent survey. This empirical section would be used to address the following specific questions:

- . How have the Australian public's attitudes to the basic needs of a family changed over time? Have they tended to change in line with incomes, prices, or other factors such as whether the questions were posed in the context of living costs, or income support for the poor. How does this trend compare with actual incomes of social security recipients and low income earners? What are the implications of the observed trend for the updating of pensions and the poverty line?
- . What are the determinants of people's answers to these attitudinal questions? Overseas research has stressed the relationship between respondents' own incomes and the assessments of poverty levels, but other relationships may also be important. Answers to this question may also be expected to vary with the respondent's sex, age, family composition, housing tenure, region etc.
- . What are the 'non determinants' of answers? In other words, to what extent are people able to sensibly answer these questions? Is the process of estimation of living costs so difficult as to make answers to these questions essentially random? This issue can be addressed in part with this data by looking at the spread of

responses to the question. The MGP also asks people questions on their actual food expenditures. By checking this data against independent sources (ie aggregate food consumption data) some idea of the ability of the respondents to estimate their own expenses may be gained.

It is possible, depending on the results obtained from this initial project, that they could form the basis for a more substantial research project on the attitudinal approach to poverty measurement. This would involve running a larger survey designed specifically to obtain responses which would permit more precise estimates of detailed poverty lines and equivalence scales. The feasibility of this larger project would become clearer as work on the initial project proceeds and results are analysed.

For further information on this research project, contact either Bruce Bradbury or Peter Saunders at the SWRC.

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PLEASE NOTE: The regular SUBJECT GUIDE TO SWRC PUBLICATIONS
will now appear in every second SWRC Newsletter.

The Research Resource Series

No. 1 Diana Encel, **Guide to the Publications of the Social Welfare Research Centre**, April 1987, 177 pp. \$5.

This volume is the first in the new series of Research Resource publications to be produced by the Social Welfare Research Centre. It consists of descriptions of each of the Centre's publications, that is, the 63 **Reports and Proceedings** produced up until late 1986, the series of **Reprints** of articles and papers published elsewhere by Centre staff and a number of other publications including the volume edited by Adam Graycar (1983) **Retreat from the Welfare State**.

This guide is intended to make these publications more accessible. The summaries of each work, mostly complete within one page, are designed to indicate the nature of the contents, and, where appropriate,

major research findings and recommendations. The author's emphasis in each case has been maintained and the flavour of the individual publications have been retained by the use of the author's language in quotation or precis.

A subject index, using a number of keywords, has been included in the publication. While this may not be comprehensive, it will give an initial indication of the broad area of interest; the summaries themselves should then allow readers to discover quickly those Centre publications which will be of greatest use and interest to them. Nothing, of course, will replace a complete reading of the research reports described.

No. 2 Lynn Sitsky, **Community Care of the Elderly: An Annotated Bibliography, 1980-1985**, April 1987, 166 pp. \$5

This bibliography is the second in the Centre's new Research Resource Series. It has been published in response to a growing interest in community care over the past few years.

The bibliography contains 391 entries describing whole books, parts or chapters of books, papers in series and journal articles. No newspaper material or items of one page or less

have been included. All items have been sighted and any references to works not currently available in Australia or not easily obtained have been omitted.

Each item has been annotated to give an indication of the scope and nature of the work. The annotations are descriptive only and no attempt has been made at criticism or evaluation of

the content. Where possible the publisher's abstract or the author's own words have been used.

The arrangement of the bibliography is alphabetically by author, or, where applicable, corporate body or title. There is an author index, including joint authorship, the range of subjects covered in each item, and an alphabetical key-word index at the back indicates which annotations have been placed within that key-word category.

The bibliography covers research published in the period 1980 to 1985, with a few entries for more recent

works when they came to hand. The scope is international with the greater number of entries coming from Australia, Great Britain and the United States. In the case of Australia, coverage has attempted to be as comprehensive as possible and any omissions are regretted.

Included in the bibliography are works from a wide variety of disciplines such as gerontology, health administration, women's studies, psychology, social administration, sociology, nursing studies, welfare economics and social work.

The Reports & Proceedings

No. 64 David Wiles, 'Living On the Age Pension: A Survey Report'

The Social Welfare Research Centre is pleased to announce a forthcoming publication by one of our former research scholars, David Wiles, who completed his doctoral thesis while at the Centre. This Report is based on work carried out by David during his stay with us.

The Report examines how the social policy of Age Pension provision has affected the life-chances of elderly Australians. The study explores the adequacy of income provision and its implications for the quality of life in retirement, so as to yield an experiential account of life on the pension.

The results of the study are based upon a 1982 social survey of fifty pensioners living in the Sydney metropolitan area. Participants were questioned about a range of historical and contemporary influences upon their present living standards.

The study surveyed the effects of the social and economic impact of the Great Depression on the lives of the respondents, and how this impact has affected present day attitudes toward the adequacy of the pension. Pensioners were questioned in relation to other external influences, as well as past decisions and savings patterns in order to determine the effect that

these had had on present living standards.

These were explored in order to illuminate the central themes of the report, namely pension adequacy and deprivation among pensioners, as viewed against the past background and experiences of the pensioners themselves.

The report examines the current living standards of pensioners, including the difference in standards before and after retirement, and then explores a number of influences which may affect these standards. These include patterns of life savings, outside income, living alone, marital status, non-financial family support and forms of housing tenure.

The study finds that one half of the

sample record a lower standard of living while on the Age Pension. They adjust to relative poverty with stoicism, and tend to discount any deprivations they now suffer. This report shows that forward financial planning towards retirement is unlikely amongst those of modest socio-economic status. Economic 'self-reliance' through past savings or present part-time work cannot be expected, nor does the 'family' provide an income security 'safety-net', so the pension must be sufficient rather than supplementary in its amount.

This reports suggests a range of common social policy targets, proposes a common retirement age of 65 years for both sexes and floats a proposal for a 'survival bonus' so as to reach those pensioners most in need.

No.65 Peter Saunders and Adam Jamrozik (eds.) Social Welfare in the Late 1980s: Reform, Progress, or Retreat?

This report contains the full proceedings of a two-day special conference held in Perth, W.A., on 27-28 March 1987. The conference was organised jointly by the Social Welfare Research Centre and the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Western Australia. The aim of the conference was to provide a public forum for the discussion of issues in social policy and social welfare which are currently at the forefront of the political agenda and public debate. Chief among these are the current economic situation in Australia, the level of public expenditure, the review of the social security system, Commonwealth/State division of

responsibility for social welfare, and the future direction in social and economic policy.

The conference attracted a large audience of people involved in social policy and social welfare research, politicians, public administrators, professional people from government and non-government welfare sectors, and students. The conference was opened by the Honourable Kay Hallahan, Minister for Community Services and the Family in the Government of Western Australia who also presented a paper on the background to the creation of the ministerial portfolio for the family, the development of that portfolio and its philosophy and

policy. Current issues in social policy from the Commonwealth Government perspective were presented by the Honourable Brian Howe, Minister for Social Security.

As indicated below, the ten papers presented at the conference cover a wide range of issues in social policy and social welfare and they do this from a number of perspectives - historical, sociological, economic, as well as political. The papers are well documented, based in most cases on the authors' extensive research. It is evident from the arguments and data presented in them that the Australian welfare state is indeed at a critical point of its development. Among the issues raised not the least important is the current policy of expenditure restraint followed by the Commonwealth Government, and the challenge to the welfare state which comes from the conservative circles and the so-called 'New Right'.

The report thus brings together in one

volume comprehensive and wide-ranging analyses of issues in social policy, not only from social science researchers but also from policy-makers and administrators of welfare services. It is an important document and should be of interest to policy-makers, to people involved in administration and service delivery in welfare, as well as to teachers and students in the social sciences, social administration and social work.

Content of the Report: The report has two parts, each part covering one day of the conference. The first part takes a broad perspective under the theme **Defending the Welfare State: Issues and Prospects**; The second part covers more specifically the **Issues of Family Policy**, but those issues are well placed in the broader theoretical framework covered in the first part.

Subject to printing arrangements, the report should be available by the end of May. Price will be \$5, post-free.

Part 1: Defending the Welfare State: Issues and Prospects

Brian Howe: 'The Welfare State': Reform, Progress or Retreat?

Peter Saunders: Past Developments and Future Prospects for Social Security in Australia

Adam Jamrozik: Winners and Losers in the Welfare State: Recent Trends and Pointers to the Future

Jim Ife: Public Opinion and Welfare Policy: Is There a Crisis of Legitimacy?

Francis Castles: Trapped in a Historical Cul-de-sac: The Prospects for Welfare Reform in Australia

Part 2: Issues of Family Policy

Kay Hallahan: Issues of Family Policy: Meeting the Challenge for Western Australian Families

Tania Sweeney: Services for Children and Families: Social Control or a Part of the Social Wage?

Des Semple: Family and Community Services: A State Perspective

Patricia Tulloch: Income Security and Economic Dependency: Some Questions on the Role of the Family and the State

Bettina Cass: Family Policy and the Tax/Transfer System: A Longer-Term Agenda and Priorities for Reform

No. 66 Jill Hardwick, **Accommodation and Employment Policies and Services for People with Disabilities.**

This report examines accommodation and employment policies and services for people with disabilities provided by the Commonwealth and three State governments - New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria. The focus is on the direct and indirect (in the form of grants to non government organisations) provision of services to three groups of people with disabilities: those with developmental disabilities, those with psychiatric disabilities and those with physical disabilities. The report examines the balance between institutional and community services in the context of policies which are increasingly explicit about principles of normalisation, deinstitutionalisation, community care, client participation, human rights and equity.

Despite the professed agreement at the policy level about these principles, there are large variations between the States in terms of implementation. New South Wales places much greater emphasis on deinstitutionalisation per se in relation to services for people with developmental and psychiatric disabilities than either South Australia or Victoria where the focus, more recently, has been the development of community services. Services for people with physical disabilities tend to be provided predominantly by non-government organisations in all three States.

There are also big differences between the States in their per capita expenditure on services for people

with disabilities. New South Wales spends a little over half the expenditure per disabled person that Victoria spends and South Australia is mid-way between the two.

Institutional costs dominate expenditure on services for people with developmental disabilities and services for people with psychiatric disabilities in all three States. However, institutional costs as a proportion of total costs vary between the States: in Victoria institutional costs on services for people with developmental disabilities represent 62 percent of total costs. By comparison they represent 94 percent of total costs in New South Wales, resulting in more extensive provision of community services for people with developmental disabilities in Victoria.

The report is in seven chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction outlining the purpose of scope of the study; the second chapter provides demographic details on the disabled population; the third chapter provides an overview of policies and programs offered by the Commonwealth government and details the proposed changes under the new Disability Services legislation. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 look in detail at the policies and services offered in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria. Chapter 7 attempts to make useful comparisons across the States in terms of a number of key themes and issues and also to address the relationship between the States and the Commonwealth government.

YELLOWCAKE

and Crocodiles

Town planning, government and society
in Northern Australia

John Lea & Robert Zehner

Allen and Unwin Sydney 1986

Reviewed by Clare Stapleton.

The uranium town of Jabiru is the setting for this case study of an isolated mining community. Jabiru, located 230 km from Darwin provides an undoubtedly unique setting with its range of social, economic and environmental tensions. The town is situated within the controversial Alligator Rivers Region, home of some of the worlds richest uranium deposits and part of the Kakadu National Park.

Added to these dimensions the region has been the battleground for other controversies of national and international significance including Aboriginal Land Rights and conservation debates. At a more local level these debates have manifested themselves as concerns regarding ownership of the land, development and use of the land and the pro's and con's of allowing tourist access to the area.

While these issues are of great interest in themselves and while they must be acknowledged as important influences upon the social

organisation of the region, the debates themselves are not the primary concern of this book.

Yellowcake and Crocodiles has two objectives. Firstly it aims to examine the birth of a mining town and to study the development of a community under conditions which typify, in many respects, Australian mining towns. That is, those towns which are dominated by a single industry, geographically isolated and relatively closed to influences beyond those of mining capital.

Secondly the book seeks to examine the institutional mechanisms which lead to self-government in mining communities. Underlying this objective is a broader concern with inter-governmental conflicts and their impact upon a developing community.

The authors' hypothesis, largely substantiated within their text, is that the transition to self-government occurred very quickly at Jabiru due to external pressure from the Northern Territory government

'... [the] Darwin inspired support for the introduction of local government to Jabiru was because of the Territory government's concern from the outset to secure a political presence and popular platform in a development region dominated by Canberra and company boardrooms from the South. Bauxite mining in the Gove Peninsula and uranium in the Alligator Rivers Region were effectively controlled by bodies external to the Territory and what little influence there was seemed to be shifting progressively to Aboriginal Associations. The new and largely white residents of the mining towns in these rich development prospects though small in number ... formed a substantial

community in Northern Territory terms. This was of great interest to the pawn brokers in Darwin' (p.9)

This book is divided into three sections. The first presents an historical overview of Australian mining towns with special attention being paid to the development of local government in these towns. Local government, as it appears in this brief historical account, generally results from one of two factors.

Firstly it can occur as a push 'from below' particularly from property owning local residents.

Secondly it can be imposed from outside the local community in an attempt to normalise closed mining towns. Jabiru, both in its quick transition to self-government and its 'Darwin-inspired' push is in many ways distinct and atypical within the Australian context.

The second section examines the planning and development of the town, Jabiru. Of major interest within the section are the descriptions of the exploration and development of uranium; the background to and development of legislation to establish a national park in the region; the interaction of the various groups who had a stake in the region; and the origin and role of the Development Authority which had responsibility for planning and managing the town until 1982 when the transition to self-government began.

The unlikely foundation for self-government in Jabiru is dramatised within this section lending weight to the authors hypothesis that local government resulted from the political concerns of the Northern Territory government.

'.... the new settlement was ... to be built under the control of the National Park Act on Commonwealth land, constructed by a Northern Territory statutory authority - and largely paid for by three prospective uranium companies. Moreover, most of the surrounding land had been transferred from Crown to Aboriginal ownership under the provisions of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Rights Act of 1976 and leased back to the Commonwealth as a national park'

The third section presents the results of a survey of Jabiru residents conducted in 1984. This section describes the reasons why people choose to live in Jabiru and how they perceive life in the town.

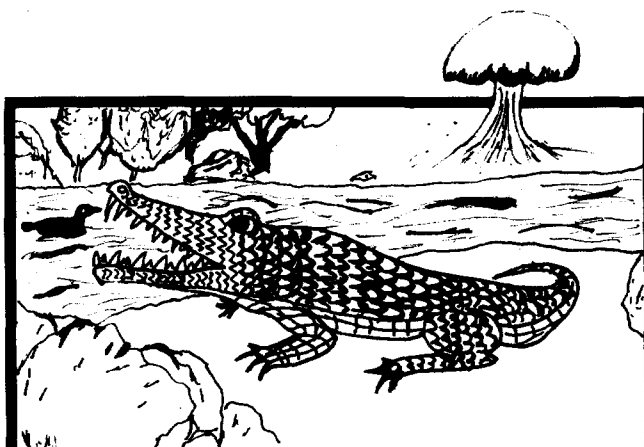
The major 'life' issues identified as important by residents included the quality of services in the town, a lack of activities, particularly for teenagers, access to the National Park and the A.L.P.'s uranium policy.

It is interesting to note that the results of the survey indicated that class and social divisions are not a major concern to Jabiru residents. This is a somewhat surprising result in view of the industrial troubles at Jabiru in the period immediately preceding the survey and also in light of the fact that in other Australian mining towns which have been studied considered class issues to be of prime importance. This result could in part reflect the nature of the survey which deliberately avoided industrial relations issues, a somewhat dubious strategy when one considers that most people move to Jabiru to work and remain there for employment reasons.

Yellowcake and Crocodiles (pp.220) is an interesting and very readable book providing invaluable descriptive and

historical material from this fascinating region of Australia. However readers expecting a community study in the mould of Claire Williams **Open Cut**, may be disappointed. While the book's analysis of intergovernmental relations in the region is excellent, providing both perceptive insights and intriguing details, this same quality of analysis is not found elsewhere in the book. The analysis of issues pertaining to class relations in the township, the effects of uranium mining upon Aboriginal society and the role of mining capital in the region are, unfortunately, not well developed. The detail relating to these issues is mostly descriptive and the analysis unfortunately shallow. This is a disappointing feature of the book given that it is these dimensions which in many ways determine the nature of and organisation of society in the region.

However, despite this shortcoming the contribution of this book to the study of community and local government in Australia cannot be disputed. This book is essential reading for those who are interested in single industry communities or for those who would like to find out more about this unique region of Australia.



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