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SWRC Newsletter

No 28

February 1988

Editor Adam Jamrozik

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FREE



Social Welfare Research Centre

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
P.O. BOX 1 • KENSINGTON • NEW SOUTH WALES • AUSTRALIA • 2033



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.

FROM THE DIRECTOR . . .

It is now just over a year since I arrived at the Centre to begin what has proved to be a hectic but exciting and enjoyable venture. During 1987, the Centre continued its policy of organising and participating in inter-State seminars in Perth and Brisbane, released a number of research and resource publications and was the subject of a major Review of its operations in order to assess whether its funding should continue beyond 1989. With regard to the Review, a Report prepared by the independent Review Committee has been forwarded to the Minister for Social Security and the Vice-Chancellor, along with the comments on the Report by myself as Director, the Advisory Committee and the Research Management Committee. While it would not be appropriate at this stage to go into the details, I can say that the Review Committee's Report is very supportive of the Centre's continued existence, reflecting a view that was very widely shared amongst those consulted for their opinion. As a result I am optimistic as to the final outcome of the Review for the Centre. Much of the credit for this rests with the staff of the Centre who have applied themselves to their work with a sense of both dedication and professionalism. They are also a very enjoyable group of people to work with, and my thanks go to all of them.

SWRC Publications: By the time this **Newsletter** is available, the proceedings from the Brisbane seminar will have been released in the **SWRC Reports and Proceedings** series. Its full title is:

No.70 **Community Services in a Changing Economic and Social Environment**, edited by Peter Saunders and Adam Jamrozik

For those interested, the content of the Report was summarised on pages

37-38 of the December 1987 issue of the **Newsletter**. I envisage being able to release the following two reports in the **Reports and Proceedings** series in the near future:

Ethnicity and Ageing: A Social Perspective, by Don Chandraratna and Michael Cummins, School of Social Work, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, W.A.

Migrant Workers and Workers' Compensation in New South Wales, by Caroline Alcorso, Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong.

In addition, research reports on Community Care for the Elderly, Child and Family Welfare, Poverty and the Workforce, and An Overview of Research on Disability, are close to completion and should be released by the middle of this year. We are also hoping to release three further bibliographical reports this year in the **SWRC Research Resource Series**, focusing on Unemployment, Poverty Research and the Interaction between the Taxation and Income Support Systems.

Hobart Seminar: Following the success of our earlier inter-State seminars, arrangements are underway for the fourth such seminar to take place in Hobart in May. The theme selected for this seminar is **Community Services Policy: Economic and Social Implications**. As with our previous seminars, the proceedings will be published in the **Reports and Proceedings** series.

SWRC Seminars: The March-June programme for our regular seminar series held here at the University is provided on page 9. Once again, it looks to be a good series of seminars, to which all are invited. I must admit to being somewhat concerned about the low attendance at some of these seminars, and am

FROM THE DIRECTOR ...

giving some thought to whether the format and timing should be changed. If any readers have views on this, I would be most grateful to hear them. Further information on the seminar programme itself is available from Peter Whiteford on (02) 697 5152.

New Research Projects: The following new research projects were approved by the Research Management and Advisory Committees at the end of 1987:

Analysis of Social Expenditure Trends (Peter Saunders, Clare Stapleton and Vickie le Plastrier)

Use of Community Services by One-Parent Families (Adam Jamrozik and Cathy Boland)
Family Background and Youth Labour Market Attainment (Bruce Bradbury)

Income Testing and the Self-Employed (Bruce Bradbury)

Descriptions of these projects are provided on pages 11-14 and page 23, and more information can be obtained from the relevant persons responsible for each project.

SWRC Visitors: Professor Joseph Quinn, from the Economics Department at Boston College in the United States will spend some time at the Centre from February to May this year. He will also be undertaking some teaching in the Economics Department at the University. One of his major research interests is on the effects of retirement income provisions on the decision to retire, a topic which is becoming increasingly relevant in Australia and forms the third part of the work being undertaken by the Social Security Review. As always, I am continually trying to encourage overseas researchers to visit the Centre and hope to be able to announce further visitors in due course.

Social Work Students: Two students from the School of Social Work, University of New South Wales, Susan Ducie and David Allen are currently on field education placement at the Centre (see p.4). We wish Susan and David an enjoyable and fruitful experience, and we hope to see other social work students at the Centre in the future.

Completed Ph.D. Study: As you will note from Adam Jamrozik's editorial on pages 3-4, Loucas Nicolau has been awarded his doctorate as a result of the thesis he completed while a research scholar in the Centre. I would like to add my congratulations to Loucas and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

SWRC Staff: As a result of Heidi Freeman's resignation at the end of November, Jenepher Burton has taken on a greater role in the Publications Section. She will be assisted by Lynn Sitsky who will spend one day a week in publications as well as her work in the library. Further details of more general developments in relation to our publications are given by Adam Jamrozik in the following pages.

By the time this Newsletter is released, I will be in New Zealand working for a short period with the Royal Commission on Social Policy. Peter Whiteford will also be there for some of this time and it looks likely that we will work together assessing some of the social policy implications of the recently announced package of tax reform measures. This is, of course, a familiar exercise for both of us in the Australian context, one which I suspect may once again be the subject requiring further analysis here in Australia.

Peter Saunders
Director
SWRC.

EDITOR'S NOTES

As you would have seen on the front page, the SWRC Newsletter has a 'new' editor. Whether the high standard of the publication established by previous editors will be maintained, this remains to be seen, but I will certainly endeavour to do so. I will also need some help from our readers, and I am making here some suggestions and requests to this end.

Comments from Our Readers: For some time we have been inviting our readers to inform us about their occupational and research interests (see p22). Occasionally, we have received a letter with a reader's opinions and comments about a particular research report. This 'feedback' has been very valuable and we would like to have more of it. We have therefore decided to introduce a **Readers' Section** in the Newsletter and we invite you to send us your comments and/or suggestions about our publications, our research program, our seminars, or on anything related to our work. The Newsletter goes out to about 3,000 readers throughout Australia and overseas and is our main medium of communication with the public. We need your views to do our job better, so, please, tell us what you think about our work. Subject to usual editorial constraints (space, etc.) we will publish your letters.

In this issue we have published interesting comments about statistics, sent to us by Dr Robert Horn (pp24-25). We thank Dr Horn for his contribution and we are sure that the readers will find his comments of interest and value.

Subscriptions, Ordering of Publications: the regularly included 'centrefold' (pp16-22) in the Newsletter is to inform you about SWRC publications, and how they can be obtained. Please note that when you send your order you need to include your cheque for the

appropriate amount. We have to comply with the University accounting system, and sending out invoices also becomes rather time-consuming. Of course, the readers who subscribe for a series of publications receive all our publications automatically (and also save money). The Newsletter is free.

Publications Out of Print: Until now, the Centre has published 70 reports in the SWRC Reports and Proceedings series and 2 reports in the Research Resources series. Some of these reports had to be reprinted (some more than once), due to demand. We envisage that with the passage of time and a growing number of publications some reports will not be reprinted. So far, only one report is out of print (R&P No.23) and will not be reprinted. Please note that all our publications are available in the libraries of all Australian universities, in some CAEs and in State libraries. Also, the Research Resources No.1 (published in 1987) contains an extensively annotated bibliography of all Centre's publications up to Reports and Proceedings No.63, as well as of all reprints published up to that date (No.33). It can be a very useful publication to have in your library.

Subject Area List of Publications: From now on, we will be publishing a Subject Area list of all Centre's publications once a year, in the August issue of the Newsletter.

Seminars: The program of our monthly seminars for Session 1, 1988 (March-June), which are held at the University of New South Wales, was published in the December issue of the Newsletter (No.27) and the list is reprinted on p9. Please note that the date for the April seminar has now been altered from 8 to 15 April.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Interstate Seminar: Our next interstate seminar will be held in Hobart on 27 May 1988. The theme for the seminar is **Community Services Policy: Economic and Social Implications**. Details of the program and of registrations will be available shortly. Further information can also be obtained from our Publications and Information Officer, Ms Jenepher Burton (02-6975150), or from Ms Nancy Jiracek, Hobart Technical College (002-307394).

Congratulations: I want to take this opportunity to record our congratulations and best wishes to two persons. The first is Loucas Nicolaou who was one of our Research Scholars and while at the Centre he successfully completed a study of **Australian Unions and Immigrant Workers** for a Ph.D degree (see summary of his thesis on p10). Having worked with Loucas for a number of years, I have enjoyed the experience and benefited from it a great deal. Loucas is now working at the Office of Multicultural Affairs in Canberra and we wish him all the best for the future.

The second person is Emeritus Professor Edna Chamberlain who became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) on Australia Day. Professor Chamberlain has been actively involved in the Centre's work from its inception, as a member of the Advisory Committee and later of the Research Management Committee. Her contribution to the Centre has been very much appreciated by us all.

To our readers I convey best wishes for this Bicentennary 1988, and I look forward to your continuing support and any comments you wish to make to the Newsletter.

Adam Jamrozik
Editor

STUDENT VISITORS

Two final year University of New South Wales Social Work Students, Susan Ducie and David Allan, are currently on placement at SWRC from January 4th till March 11th.

SWRC was seen by these students to be an ideal agency with which to become acquainted, given its obvious - or what should be obvious - links with social work.

Susan, having had prior casework and groupwork placements, at the Department of Social Security and a hospital psychiatric unit, is currently undertaking a research project consisting of a content analysis of recent debate on superannuation.

David's previous experience has been based around casework, family therapy and groupwork. He is using this placement to undertake an integrative research review of literature about income and its relationship to the notion of quality of life. This will also involve acquiring some new skills both in computing and statistical techniques in order to do a meta-analysis of recent studies.

This placement, then, is a chance for both Susan and David to experience social work in an indirect service setting. Both students are being supervised by Adam Jamrozik.



SEMINAR, CONFERENCES

THE HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM: NEEDS-BASED PLANNING - TWO RECENT CONFERENCES

Robert Nittolo.

Two conferences were held last December addressing the question of needs-based planning in relation to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program. According to the HACC guidelines the needs-based planning system was introduced into the Program 'as a means of addressing areas of needs caused by the uneven distribution of resources, a planning system is being developed based on the collection of particular data'. The purpose of this data collection is to assist the State and Commonwealth bodies involved in the program to 'assess the current distribution of services and where the greatest areas of need exist, and use the information in their deliberations in planning strategies and priorities for the HACC Program.'

In 1986 a document, 'Needs Indicators and the HACC Program', was released by the Department of Youth and Community Services which described the method to be used in NSW to determine how the 'need indicators' of individual regions are formulated. Essentially, according to the document, a 'region's incidence of need' is calculated on the basis of the proportion of the total number of persons falling within the HACC target or sub-target group living within an area, (e.g. the proportion of aged or disabled persons of ethnic background).

The first conference, hosted by the Council of Social Service of NSW, consisted of four presentations from various points of view which discussed the issues raised by a report authored by Frances Staden 'A

Needs Based Planning Approach to Resource Allocation'. The first paper was presented by Ms Staden who discussed some of the more theoretical issues associated with the concept of need: differing definitions of need; need by definition; need by comparison; need by demand. She argued that social research of one sort or another can be used to determine group needs (this is the basic assumption of needs-based planning), such a method usually results in listing areas in relation to one another. It is important that any such studies be followed up by local investigation.

The capacity to respond to needs is dependent on the resources available, but there is still a number of basic problems to overcome. It is necessary to determine which are the most appropriate resources to use; this often requires a mix of services which may involve co-ordinating a number of agencies (government and non-government) which may differ in their approaches and aims toward the question of determining how services are to be provided. One of the drawback of needs-based planning is that it can be used to justify cutting-back resources in areas which are judged to be over-served without necessarily transferring those resources to the areas that are under-served.

Rosita Chan from the Department of Youth and Community Services, in her presentation, said that the aim of needs-based planning, as it applied to HACC was to build services within the home on an equitable basis and without any hidden agendas. The basis of State-wide planning was to decide an overall State strategy and assign priorities for resource allocation. Regional plans were determined according to a three-step approach: determining a regional strategy, a regional service plan,

SEMINAR, CONFERENCES

and a local area needs. Input from consumer or service provider was sought in assessing State and Regional needs, but was not considered in determining the final plan; approval for all projects is determined at the ministerial level ('if you rely entirely on statements of demand from local groups you are likely to miss out on the needs of minorities').

Lionel Davies, who has a long association with Local Government, spoke on the role of local government in planning home-based services. Local governments had a number of roles to play ranging from providing funding, supplying office accommodation and clerical assistance for agencies. Local government had a role to play in relation to the facilitation, co-ordination and development of services within their area.

The last speaker was Jane Woodruff from the Disability Council of NSW. She was somewhat more critical than the other speakers and raised a number of basic questions in relation to needs-based planning such as what are we planning for? Why is it that some views are taken into account and others are not? Why is it that some projects are accepted and others are not? She did not attempt to find an answer but many people feel that these are the questions to be asking in relation to the HACC program.

The second conference held in December addressed these questions more directly. The conference was organised by Western Sydney's Regional Information and Research Service (WESTIR) and was held to mark the launch a number of WESTIR publications. These publications fell into two general classes. The first was a number of papers on issues relating to the planning and delivery of HACC services. These included papers on the History and

Organisation of HACC, Needs Based Planning, Consumer Participation, and Issues and Options. The second series consisted of demographic and service availability data pertinent to the needs of service providers and welfare planners in the local government areas covered by WESTIR (from Auburn to the Blue Mountains, and from Hawkesbury to Campbelltown).

The demographic data would be most useful to service planners, HACC co-ordinators and others interested in knowing the composition of the populations they serve, such as branches of the Home Care Service seeking data for their branch plans. The service availability documents would be an extremely useful tool for doctors, community workers, social workers and others needing a quick and easy reference guide to welfare services within their local area. Much credit is due to Judy Finch, the compiler, who put much work into these publications.

Inevitably, the discussion turned to the question of local area planning in determining the allocation of resources for welfare services. The general consensus of the persons attending was that views and experience of local service providers and consumers were being passed over in favour of bureaucratic processes which frequently ignored local advice, resulting in the funding of services which were inappropriate to local needs or simply unworkable (e.g. funding a bus-driver but not funding the bus).

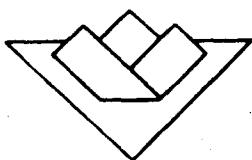
The discussion revolved around the question as how to obtain a commitment from the various government bodies responsible for HACC to the principles of local area planning. This meant a commitment to adopt local priorities as determined at the local level, and

SEMINAR, CONFERENCES

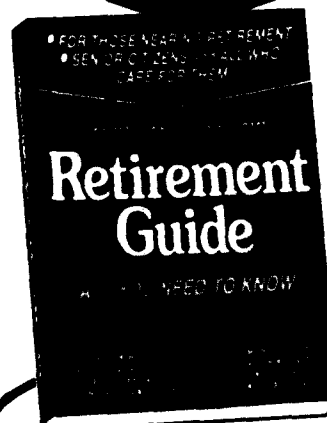
firm guidelines and criteria on resource allocation.

Interestingly enough, the reasons for this were given in the same YACS document which outlined the the needs-based planning formula. The document points out that indices of need were never intended to be the basis of 'subjective policy decisions about distributing money to sub-programs nor to specific projects within sub-programs. Allocations to each sub-program area is a subjective policy decision quite separate from the parameters of needs indicators' and resource allocation to projects 'will always need to be based on knowledge and perceptions of regional HACC staff' (Appendix 1, pp.1-2). The ambiguity of this last statement sums up the whole problem i.e. does it mean knowledge and perception that HACC field-staff have of their local area; or, knowledge and perception about the HACC field-staff by the many HACC bureaucracies. Either way, policy statements have made it clear (and experience has proven) that 'needs-based planning' (based on objective socio-demographic considerations) is not to be confused with 'needs-based resource allocation' which is, and remains, a 'subjective policy decision'.

Ms Staden's paper is available from NCOSS, 66 Albion St Sydney (Phone (02) 211-2599); the WESTIR papers are available from P.O. Box 457 Blacktown 2148 (02)622-3011).



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FOURTYTWO
SENIOR CITIZENS WEEK 20-27 MARCH 1988

SEMINAR, CONFERENCES

1988 National Evaluation Conference

Call for Papers

The Australasian Evaluation Society will hold the fifth National Evaluation Conference in Melbourne 27-29 July 1988.

This Conference is the highlight of the year for all those involved in program development and evaluation. Nearly 300 people shared in the valuable sessions presented in Canberra in 1987 and even more are expected to attend in 1988.

Abstracts of Papers

Abstracts of papers to be submitted for presentation at the Conference are invited from individuals, syndicates and organisations who are experienced in evaluation as a field of endeavour.

Abstracts should be no more than 200 words. Two copies of the abstract should be submitted by Monday, 15 February to:

National Evaluation Conference
Secretariat
Evaluation Training and Services
Australia Pty Ltd
Suite 3, 564 St Kilda Road,
MELBOURNE VIC 3004

Topics

All submitted topics will be given individual consideration on their merits. The focus for the 1988 National Evaluation Conference is on the practical application of evaluation. Case studies in evaluation will be particularly welcomed. Some dimensions might include:

- . Community programs
- . Program budgeting and review
- . Evaluation in the planning process
- . Performance measurement
- . Constructing and conducting evaluations
- . The politics of evaluation
- . Program effectiveness
- . Evaluating for efficiency

Presentation of Papers

Selected papers will be presented in a twenty minute symposium or round table discussion. The presentation will be followed by ten minutes of questions and discussion.

Two copies of all papers to be included in the 1988 National Evaluation Conference will be required by Friday, 27 May for program scheduling. All papers submitted should be made available for subsequent publication. All presenters must register for the Conference.

The Australasian Evaluation Society Program Subcommittee will advise authors of papers selected for presentation at the 1988 Conference by 31 March 1988.



S.W.R.C. PUBLIC SEMINARS

FIRST SESSION 1988

9.15am to 12.30pm

Friday 4 March
Morven Brown
Seminar Room 212

Education and Welfare

'Poverty and education'
Professor Robert Connell
Macquarie University

'The welfare functions of
education and health'
Tania Sweeney
Principal Research Officer
Social Welfare Research Centre

Friday 15 April
Morven Brown
Seminar Room 212

The Welfare of the Workplace

'The position of young people
in relation to the labour market'
Russell Ross
Senior Research Fellow
Social Welfare Research Centre

'The disadvantaged in the
workforce'
Flora Gill
Department of Economics,
Sydney University

Friday 6 May
Morven Brown
Seminar Room 212

Retirement Incomes Policy

'Directions for retirement incomes
policy in Australia'
Dr Ian Manning
National Institute for Economic
and Industry Research

'Retirement income policy and
incentives : implications for
Australia of U.S. evidence'
Professor Joseph Quinn
Boston College

Friday 3 June
Morven Brown
Seminar Room 212

The Standards of Living of Australian Families

'Community views on poverty:
the attitudinal approach to
poverty measurement'
Peter Saunders and Bruce Bradbury
Social Welfare Research Centre

'The living standards of families
with children'
Peter Whiteford
Senior Research Fellow
Social Welfare Research Centre.

Ph.D DEGREE

Loucas Nicolaou: Australian Unions and Immigrant Workers

Loucas Nicolaou was a Research Scholar at the SWRC from 1982 to 1986. Below is an abstract of the thesis he completed for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Sociology, University of New South Wales.

The thesis examines immigrant-union relations in Australia. It explores the levels of participation and representation of immigrant men and women in union structures and provides an analysis of their relative exclusion from these structures.

The research design focuses on current practices, beliefs and perceptions in New South Wales unions (1982-1985). It employs a mixture of methods of inquiry, including self-administered questionnaires, structured and unstructured interviews, and participant observation (1982-84). Additional sources of information include the analysis of union and other records and publications, and the attendance at a wide range of meetings, seminars, conferences and congresses. This approach reveals both individual experiences and attitudes, and the context of wider structures within which they were developed.

The evidence demonstrates that the diverse characteristics of ethnic and linguistic origin and gender differences found among unionists are not reflected in the management structures of unions. It shows that immigrant workers face a wide range of difficulties largely resulting from their occupational and industrial position, language barriers, cultural difference and/or lack of awareness about local institutions and welfare services.

The thesis argues that unions, irrespective of their political, industrial or craft divisions, have not systematically sought to understand and address the problems faced by immigrants in Australia. It explains why this has been so. It also stresses that unions, like most other Australian institutions which formally adopted a policy of assimilation in the 1950s and 1960s, still reflect the consequences of that policy in their current practices.

At the theoretical level, it is argued that class, ethnicity and gender are essential and interrelated concepts for an analysis of immigrants' position in the Australian workforce, in unions and in society in general. The basic component of this argument is that the inclusion of both the **common** (class related) and the **diverse** (ethnicity, gender and other) characteristics would generate a more comprehensive analysis of the situation of immigrant men and women unionists. The thesis also advances a conceptual framework in the fields of social welfare and industrial relations within which the Welfare State and unions can be understood in a wider perspective.



NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

**Analysis of Social Expenditure
Trends: (i) Trends in the
Distribution of Social
Expenditure Benefits by Age.
(ii) Analysis of State Social
Expenditure Outlays**

Persons responsible:
Peter Saunders, Clare Stapleton,
Vicki Le Plastrier

The two projects focus on different but related aspects of trends in the last two decades in social expenditure in Australia. Social expenditure is defined to include outlays on social security and welfare, education and health. Outlays on housing and community amenities may also be included in the State comparisons. The aim of the project is to highlight and analyse the major trends in social expenditure and to identify and major factors underlying these trends.

The first project takes as its main focus the impact of changes in the age structure of the population by identifying three population categories. These are, respectively, dependent children, persons of workforce age and the elderly. The first step in the analysis involves allocating social expenditure to each of the three age categories. Trends over time in total and per capita expenditure within each age group are then analysed. A major factor underlying these trends is the deterioration in economic performance and the associated rise in dependence on unemployment and other cash benefits. An attempt will be made to isolate the effects of such impacts from those associated with demographic and policy developments. After these descriptive and interpretive stages, the project will explore the predictive consequences for future social

expenditures in light of projected changes in the age structure of the population.

The second project focuses on comparisons in the levels of total and per capita social expenditures across the States. The data used in this exercise will primarily be that produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), although comparisons with the standardised State budgets prepared by the Commonwealth Grants Commission will also be undertaken. State comparisons will be made both at a point in time and over the last two decades. Adjustments will be made to reflect differences in the size and age structure of State populations and, where possible, in Commonwealth-State funding arrangements.

The major issue to be investigated in both projects is the extent to which social expenditures have been driven by economic and demographic developments rather than by changes in policy priorities. The research will concentrate on describing past social expenditure trends, interpreting these in the general social policy context, and projecting likely future developments in social expenditure. The analysis will be conducted at a high level of aggregation, although the results will be relevant to a number of research projects currently underway in the Centre.

The data base produced by this work can be regularly updated and can thus be used as background material for several other projects being undertaken in the Centre, as well as in future research projects. The issues raised by the research - specifically those relating to the consequences of economic recession and population ageing - are central to contemporary social policy concerns. These two projects will attempt to highlight in quantitative

NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

terms the magnitude of these concerns and their implications for policy in the medium-term and in the longer-run.

Analysis of social expenditure trends has recently been undertaken in an international perspective by the OECD. This Organisation is currently extending its analysis to consider social expenditure developments from the perspective of the age structure of the population and changes therein. This latter issue has been investigated by the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat and is the subject of a paper soon to be released by the Office of the Economic Planning Advisory Council. In addition, the Luxembourg Income Study with which the Centre is involved is planning to undertake research into the relative well-being of the elderly and non-elderly. The first of these two projects will complement this research and extend it by analysing past trends in more depth. It will also bring a specific Australian social welfare perspective to bear on the analysis and on projected future developments. Question of social expenditure finance will inevitably be raised in this latter discussion.

The second project will extend the analysis previously undertaken at the SWRC and published as No.33 in the **SWRC Reports and Proceedings** series (Scott and Graycar: 1983). It should provide a federal financial perspective on past developments and raise issues in relation to future Commonwealth-State funding arrangements. In this context, the second project will draw on the projections undertaken in the first project. It is hoped that this latter project will fill what is currently something of a gap in knowledge on comparative State social expenditure levels and trends over time.

Unemployment: Family Background and Youth Labour Market Attainment

Person responsible:
Bruce Bradbury

The project will examine the relationships between family characteristics and youth labour market attainment, using data from the Australian Longitudinal Survey. It will be carried out in conjunction with Ian McRae of the Australian Council for Employment and Training (ACET).

The key questions to be addressed by this study are:

- . Are observable family characteristics (social class, family type, region, ethnicity) important in determining the success of youth in making the transition from education to work?
- . If they are, through what mechanisms does this transition of advantage (or disadvantage) work?
- . Do these conclusions change when we take account of family background characteristics which are shared by siblings, but which are not directly observable?
- . Youth from the same family have in common characteristics both of their family itself, and of the environment in which that family is located. Can we distinguish regional from family effects on youth attainment?
- . Can we use the answers to these questions to inform policy that attempts to ensure more equitable access to the labour market?

NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

The transmission of economic and social (dis)advantage from one generation to another is a important area of sociological research, though relatively little work has been done with specific reference to the youth labour market in Australia.

The question of the distribution of the costs of the current economic recession has been a major focus of the centre's research program over the past few years. R&P No. 53 **Bearing the Burden of Unemployment - Unequally: A Study of Australian Households in 1981** examined patterns of family and household unemployment, finding significant patterns of concentration of disadvantage. The paper **Youth Unemployment and Inter-generational Imobility** described these in more detail for youth living at home with their families.

Youth unemployment was found to be significantly associated with indicators of social class, personal characteristics and locational factors. Youth living with their mother only had higher unemployment rates, though this seemed to be a result of their lower family incomes rather than directly a result of their family composition. Youth living with their father only, however, had both higher unemployment rates and relatively high family incomes.

Overseas, particularly in the USA, there have been two areas of research that are of particular relevance to this project. The first research area includes studies which have described the relationships between the family of origin of youth, and their success in the labour market. The second is studies which have modelled the common labour market experience of siblings in terms of unobservable family variables. These latter studies have generally shown a much

stronger family effect than those relying only on measured family variables. Additionally, the inclusion of unmeasured family variables has in some cases altered conclusions of the effectiveness of education in enhancing individual youth's labour market transition.

This project would seek to amplify upon other Centre's research program into the distributional impact of unemployment.

Third Annotated Bibliography on Unemployment

Person responsible: Diana Encel

The Centre has begun work on a third annotated bibliography on unemployment. This bibliography is intended to be similar in format as the previous two and to cover the period from 1983 to the time of completion, thus overlapping with the previous volume which covered the period from 1980 to 1985.

One of the biggest problems in the preparation of such bibliographies is the selection of key words to be used, and the allocation of the most appropriate key word or words to each annotation. The bibliographies already published have now been in circulation since 1984. It is hoped that users will by now have some feeling about the key words that have been used. The Centre would appreciate some comment from readers. Do you use the key word index? Are the key words appropriate to your needs? Can you suggest improvements? Additions?

Please reply with any comments, addressed to Diana Encel at the Centre (02 697-5146).

NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

Income Support: Income Testing and the Self-employed

Person responsible:
Bruce Bradbury

The project will examine the question of whether information on incomes, as collected administratively, is an appropriate basis on which to target assistance to families with incomes from self-employment. The implications of this for income support programs such as the Family Allowance Supplement will be discussed.

Income testing is a fundamental element of the Australian income support system. However, incomes as measured suffer from a number of problems as indicators of relative economic well-being. Firstly, they do not take full account of wealth. This issue may be dealt with by considering the income support system to be just that, an income support system, that doesn't require any but the very wealthy to liquidate assets.

It is a second problem, however, that is dealt with here. For some groups, particularly the self-employed and those with other non-wage incomes, the measurement of income itself is problematic. This is for several reasons. To begin with, there are conceptual problems in separating out income accruing to individuals from that accruing to enterprises. As well, there are practical problems in measuring transfers from the enterprise to the individual when there is no clear separation between the two. Finally, the self-employed in some industries are commonly believed to have additional opportunities for receiving incomes from the 'black' economy.

This project will examine the implications of using other measures of economic well-being, particularly consumption patterns, to describe the situation of the self-employed.

Within Australia, there exists a limited literature on the conceptual and practical issues involved in the measurement of self-employment incomes. Limited analysis has been carried out within the Departments of Social Security and Primary Industry on income support for farmers. Some preliminary work on self-employment incomes has been carried out within the SWRC for the 'Poverty among People in the Workforce' project. This work found that the self-employed appeared to be spending much more on housing than their recorded incomes would imply (on the basis of the consumption patterns of the general population).

This project has developed as a result of issues encountered in recent research on poverty in Australia, and will be relevant to further research in this area looking at conceptual and measurement issues related to poverty. The main income support program where the problem of measuring the income of the self-employed is likely to be encountered is in the new Family Allowance Supplement (FAS). The operation of this program will be one of the key focuses of continuing research within the Centre in the area of family well-being.

The main empirical aspect of the project will be an analysis of the income and consumption patterns of the self-employed and other groups, using data from the ABS 1984 **Household Expenditure Survey**. Following this, an analysis of the implications of the results obtained for programs such as FAS will be undertaken.



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NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Child and Family Welfare: Use of Community Resources by One-Parent Families

Persons responsible:

Cathy Boland, Adam Jamrozik

One of the major concerns in social welfare policy has been the increase in the numbers of one-parent families. This form of family now accounts for 13 per cent of all families with dependent children (ABS, 1984; 4408.0). A large majority of one-parent families rely on government for income support and, by all accounts, the one-parent family has been associated with poverty, especially child poverty. At the same time, the belief is frequently expressed that the provision of Supporting Parent Benefit (SPB) has led to abuse, and arguments are advanced for stricter control in determining the eligibility for the benefit or even for its abolition.

One of the reasons for a high proportion of one-parent families claiming SPB is the difficulty single parents have in fulfilling the dual role of parent and income-earner. However, some single parents manage to do this and thus become independent from government income-support payments. The economic independence and viability of the one-parent family depends on many factors, among them being the social class of the single parent and access to formal and informal resources in the community which can facilitate the family's social functioning as a viable family unit.

The project will aim to examine the characteristics of one-parent families and social conditions which might account for the viability (or non-viability) of those families. The focus of the research will be on the extent and kind of community

resources used by one-parent families in order to consider such questions as: what resources are available for one-parent families, which might assist these families in achieving economic viability; what are the facilitators and/or inhibitors in access to these services; who is responsible for the provision of these services; and what other services might be necessary to enable the one-parent families to function. Resources to be considered will be 'formal' and 'informal' resources.

The data for the project will come primarily from interviews with a sample of one-parent families and with some providers of services. The sample of families (probably 50) will include a range of families across socio-economic strata and in different localities in the Sydney metropolitan area.

It is envisaged that a semi-structured interview schedule will be used in order to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. Among the questions asked will be the following:

- . Age of parent, number and age of children, length of single parenthood
- . Income, e.g. SPB, maintenance, employment, etc.
- . Parent's education
- . Housing
- . Support (material and/or personal) from extended family and friends and/or neighbours
- . Locality and availability of resources, e.g. child care, public transport, schools, recreation grounds
- . Extent of use of services
- . Financial management, time management
- . Intentions/plans for the future
- . Main problems and difficulties.

READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Statistical Approaches

Social scientists are usually versed in the use of statistical information on which their research is based. But a narrow perspective of data and methods can limit the validity of results. A recent seminar held by the SWRC provided examples of such limitations, and this will be expanded here for the purpose of this short note.

The Generality of General

Collections: When the Australian Statistician, or an agency like the DSS, undertake a major collection, they will try to cover major aspects of the set topic, e.g. demographic structure, labour market, disablement, etc. For that purpose they pick out of thousands of possible questions a few dozen that can be handled without exhausting the resources of the survey and the patience of the survey population. That might well leave some users disappointed about the shape of some questions, about sub-classes left out, etc. But instead of complaining, that user's time is better spent with preparing a well-argued submission to include his specific question next time around. And that leads to a more general rule which is often overlooked by 'lobbyists' of all sorts.

The Balance of Gains & Losses: A familiar failing in political debate is not to balance claims for more 'here' with less 'there' (or 'more' from other sources). Statistical collections, as much as social wage claims, operate within limited resources. Arguments for an extra question in the next survey must be backed by arguments for a cut on other topics, just as a dollar more for one benefit needs justification by a dollar less spent on something else (or a dollar more paid someone else).

The Devil We Don't Know: A

researcher might condemn a standard source, such as a regular survey, because the questions do not quite fit his objectives, or he suspects deficiencies in the sampling, etc. So he says, 'let's use another method'. But there are few alternatives without problems of their own. If he tries aggregations from various existing data files that refer to the survey population, he faces questions of ethics, or, if you will, of a bad press, for applying data gathered for a specific purpose to other uses. And there are other problems of deriving aggregate statistics from data files which are compiled by clerks not trained in the checking of details. There are variations in the definitions used by different departments, e.g. about income, place of residence, dependants, etc. Timing is another problem, because collections can be specified for a survey day or week, but could vary between data files.

Gazing down or Looking up:

Government statisticians pride themselves on their 'objectivity', on dealing with well-defined 'facts', such as demographic or economic characteristics of a population. On closer inspection, such definitions have soft edges - the moments of birth or death around midnight, territorial sovereignty of some countries, even the determination of sex; and definitional uncertainties are notorious for economic characteristics such as income or occupation. Not only have we the problem of co-ordinating information from surveys; the surveyor's views might differ from the respondent, in particular about who fits into a stated group and what this group requires.

If the researcher wants to know whether a person outside of the official definition has similar

READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

needs as the group within, or whether statutory provisions cover 'perceived' needs, the data files will not help him (except as far as they register complaints). ABS and similar surveys have at least made a start in extending their net to questions dealing with perceived needs. However inadequate, irresponsible or fanciful the replies to such questions, they do throw some light on how the system meets its set purpose.

Shifting Horizons: Everyone loves time series, and compatibility with previous collection is a guiding start of statisticians. But time and people change, and with that, what they have and want. That is reflected in the attempts to keep up with notions like actual, or minimal, or desirable living standards. The needs of the old or the disabled, or of children, have to be viewed in the context of the situation of others in the community, and even the notion of minimal or survival standards changes. Therefore it is not sufficient to compare historical surveys of needs and means of particular groups, adjusted perhaps for inflation. For comparisons that show whether people are better or worse off than they were or 'should be', the analysis must be broadened into indicators that take account of changes in community standards, technology, etc.

Me Too: Even worse than crude time comparisons is the habit of selective regional comparisons which often intoxicate lobbyists. NSW spends so much less on education of disabled children than, say, Tasmania or Transylvania or ... Nor does it help when that gets dressed up in skimpy standardisation by population size, age distribution, currency equivalent or budget size. What we need to know is the standards for the disabled and the abled, about related

provisions for the person or family for social and medical care, transport and other access, quality of service etc. In short, such comparisons require a wider context of socio-economic investigation.

Keeping Statistics in Perspectives: Statistics are usually presented with the convincing tidiness of mathematical tables in cardinal form. Yet, we know that in the dynamic of social inter-action there are no certainties, that at most we can grade needs and satisfactions ordinally on a scale from nil to enough or overmuch (just as the 'figures' of disaster statistics mean only 'a few' or 'a lot'). Therefore our attention should not be concentrated on linear monetary or person scales, but are better ordered in bands, or zones (non-linear) of adequacy. Such bands are anyway more easily adaptable to change over time or between regions. Any statistical presentation should also attempt to distinguish between major relevant and minor illustrative movements. My reference above to definitional uncertainties in the gender classification might well be criticised for its triviality in referring to some hundred cases that do not really affect the situation of the many thousand or million persons in a survey. I can only plead that this was an 'attention-getter' example - a consideration that incidentally should not be beneath the dignity of a statistical lobbyist who wants to highlight his cause.

Robert V. Horn
Lane Cove, NSW



BOOK REVIEWS

The Changing Face of Welfare

Edited by Adalbert Evers, Helga Nowotny and Helmut Wintersberger.
Gower Publishing Company,
Aldershot, Hants, 1987
246 pp. \$38.50 (Hard cover)

Reviewed by Adam Jamrozik

Books on the 'Crisis of the Welfare State' have been numerous, and so have been the explanations of the 'crisis' and the advocated solutions. Broadly, the writings on this subject have followed two orientations. The place of dominance has been held by analyses which portray the nature of the 'crisis' in economic perspective, documenting the 'crisis' by masses of statistics on rising social expenditure, unemployment figures, and the numbers of individuals and families living in poverty. The 'poverty line' has become part of everyday vocabulary and is measured with great precision. Less prominent (or at least less popular) has been the literature which attempts to explain the 'crisis' in political and sociological terms; examining changing attitudes towards the welfare state, the rise of conservative ideologies, the negative effects of bureaucratisation and professionalisation of services, increasing inequalities - in other words, the 'crisis's of the welfare state' is perceived not so much as an economic problem but as a crisis of social institutions.

The Changing Face of Welfare falls clearly into the second category. It is a 'rich' book, both in the scope and depth of analyses, and to give it justice it would require an extensive review which cannot be given here, if only for the limitation of space. It contains 14

chapters written by contributors from 11 countries: social scientists and administrators of services from Western and Eastern Europe and the United States. The origins of the book come from the conference on the subject 'Can There Be a New Welfare State?' held in Baden near Vienna in 1983, organised by the European Centre for Social Welfare Training and Research. The 14 Chapters are selections from 30 papers presented at that conference. The book has three parts: 'Understanding the Crisis of the Welfare State', 'The Manifest Aspects of Change', and 'Coping with an Uncertain Future'.

The opinions and analyses in the book are by no means uniform, and there is a great diversity of views and interpretations of issues. There are, however, discernible common themes which highlight some of the critical issues in contemporary 'welfare states' and which have contributed to the 'crisis'. First, an observation that there has been a 'surrender' in social policies to economic laws which are perceived as 'natural', leading to the subjugation of social policies to the market forces. Second, the effects of centralisation of decision-making, of bureaucratisation and professionalisation, all of which contribute to the breaking up of informal social structures, growth of dependency and alienation among the poorer sections of society. Third, the exploitation of the welfare state by the affluent, the growth of claims and expectations among them, and little thought given to the fact that claims and rights also entail certain responsibilities.

The contributors, while committed to the concept of the welfare state, do not hesitate in identifying some of the weaknesses that have developed in the welfare state, thus bringing

BOOK REVIEWS

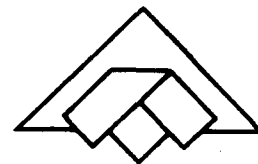
into debate some of the issues which seem to have become 'taboos' in welfare literature, at least in Australia. If the welfare state is to survive, the contributors argue, people's attitudes to the state and the community will have to change. As summed up by one of the book's editors,

The crucial question for the decades to come will be the transformation of this new sense of responsibilities to include not only the self, but the other, based on the realisation that life stages, age gradings, the distribution of work and non-work, of paid and unpaid activities, is in flux and that there simply can be no guarantee for the security of the self if it does not take into account the well-being of the other. (Nowotny, xv)

There is a general agreement among the contributors on the necessity to search for new solutions, new alternatives, and not to seek a return to the past. The search for alternatives must include considerations of work-related programs as well as care services; in other words, new sources of social integration. These sources, it is argued, need to be sought in intermediate and primary solidarities based on the 'principle of participation by simple citizenship'.

In sum, the contributors analyse the achievements as well as failures of the welfare state, and explore a range of options and possibilities for the future. It is evident from their analyses that they believe the era of the 'big' welfare state is over. They are not despondent about the future, but they emphasise that the quality of that future will depend on societies' ability and will to reassess some of the established attitudes towards the

state, the community, and their own position in society. They do not offer any easy solutions but provide the reader with a great deal of food for thought. A book well worth reading by all people concerned about the future of the welfare state.



**Housing Subsidies Study,
Australian Housing Research
Council, Project No.160.
AGPS, Canberra, 1987, \$9.95.**

By Joe Flood and Judith Yates

Reviewed by Bruce Bradbury

One of the main conclusions of recent research into the distribution and incidence of poverty in Australia has been the central importance of housing costs. A decade and a half ago the main concern was poverty among the aged. Now increasing numbers of working age people, often with dependants to support, are becoming reliant upon state income support. Unlike many of the aged, however, most of these new low income groups are facing high housing costs, forcing many below the poverty line.

In the light of these changes increased attention is being directed towards the relationship between housing policy and poverty. This was evident in the 1984 Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) which moved away from defining housing policy goals in terms of the level of home ownership, towards the goals of alleviating housing-related poverty,

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and achieving tenure neutrality. Similarly, the Social Security Review has placed much emphasis on housing costs, with the recent "family package" substantially extending rental assistance to a wider range of low income groups.

However, neither the CSHA, nor the extension of rental assistance are likely to make a major impact upon housing-related poverty in the foreseeable future. One of the central conclusions of the **Housing Subsidies Study** is that such explicit housing policies comprise only a small part of the actions of government influencing the cost of housing in Australia today. The goals of this project were to: identify the range of Commonwealth and State housing subsidies, estimate their magnitude, assess their distribution among households, and review the issue of 'tenure neutrality', making recommendations for its achievement. Whilst these issues have been dealt with before in other reports in Australia and overseas, this report makes a major contribution to our understanding of the extent and distribution of housing subsidies in Australia.

The authors describe two very different ways of calculating housing subsidies; the **net expenditure** and **service flow** methods. The former of these is the simpler, and 'simply' estimates the cash flows between the government and the community relating to housing, summing all recurrent and capital expenditures (whether grants or loans) less receipts or repayments for each population group.

The service flow method, on the other hand, compares the **services** that different groups are receiving rather than the grants received in a given year. In this report the private rental sector is used as the reference group. Thus the net

expenditure method would value subsidies to the public housing sector in terms of the governments expenditure (less receipts) in a given year, whereas the service flow method calculates the subsidy as the difference between the rent paid by housing authority tenants to that paid by private tenants.

The latter approach gives a more stable measure of subsidy, not subject to fluctuations in capital expenditure. However, it has the disadvantage of treating any efficiency gains (or losses) that the public sector may have over the private rental sector (e.g. through economies of scale and lower vacancy rates) as being subsidies by the government to public sector tenants. This point is not made by the authors, though estimation of the magnitude of such an effect would be very difficult.

The most significant difference between the two ways of calculating subsidies is the treatment of tax expenditures. Under the net expenditure method owner-occupied housing is treated as a consumption good and only a limited range of tax expenditures are included (such as mortgage interest deductions where applicable, pensioner rate rebates, stamp duty rebates etc).

The service flow method, on the other hand, treats owner occupied housing on a comparable basis to private rental housing and imputes the rent that could be received for that housing as income (with mortgage interest payments as an allowable deduction against income). The National Accounts, which incorporate such a definition of income, estimate that imputed rental currently comprises around seven percent of GDP.

As one might expect, the two different methods of calculation of housing subsidies lead to quite

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different conclusions. The attached table shows the subsidy per household in the different tenures calculated using the two different methods.

**Housing Subsidies per Household,
1984-85.**

	Net Expenditure	Service Flow
Owners	\$80p.a.	\$1210p.a.
Purchasers	\$230p.a.	\$1330p.a.
Public Renters	\$3510p.a.	\$1800p.a.
Private Renters	\$470p.a.	\$550p.a.

[Calculated from table 4.6 and ABS
Cat.No. 6530.0, 1984.]

These figures, the authors point out, are only very approximate and based upon a range of assumptions. Unfortunately the report is somewhat deficient in spelling out the details of the methods used. This makes evaluations of the calculations difficult. Reference is occasionally made to 'progress reports' but these have not been published. If the important work contained in this report is to be updated and refined, as the authors recommend, such documentation would be very useful.

Within the net expenditure framework, which corresponds closest to what is typically termed 'housing policy' the main beneficiaries are public renters. 1984-85 was a year of high capital expenditure on public housing, and so when this effect is averaged out by use of the 'service flow' approach their

subsidy is significantly reduced, but still high. For owners and purchasers the difference between the two estimates is much greater. This is because the service flow method includes the tax forgone by not taxing the imputed rentals of owner occupiers as a subsidy to this tenure group. This forgone tax is estimated to amount to over \$3 billion in 1984-85. To put this in perspective, total government expenditure on pensions and benefits for that year was \$14 billion. Furthermore, purchasers received subsidies flowing from interest rate regulation.

The authors argue that the service flow method is the appropriate method on which to devise policies to attain tenure neutrality and relieve housing-related poverty.

A tenure-neutral tax policy would ensure... that owners of housing would be treated in the same way by the tax system regardless of the use to which housing is put (p.41).

The non-taxation of the imputed rentals from home ownership (together with the other subsidies) has led to excessive investment in this sector and led to increased hardship for those unable to leave the private rental market.

Of course, the identification of a government subsidy addressed to a particular group does not of itself identify who ultimately receives the benefit of that subsidy. It has been argued, for instance, that the effect of the various first home owners assistance schemes has been primarily to raise the price of housing - leaving prospective first home buyers little better off than before (those who owned homes at the time of the subsidy's introduction were the beneficiaries). Similar arguments could be extended to the non-taxation of imputed rentals -

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with the subsidy being capitalised into the price of housing, removing any benefits home purchasers might gain.

However, as the authors argue, if such a capitalisation has taken place, this will make the situation for **tenants** worse as landlords will have to pay more for their housing stock, and hence charge higher rents. Thus the **relative** values of the subsidies between the different tenures may still be reasonably accurately reflected in these 'first round' results. Given the size of the subsidies involved, this is obviously an area in which further research is required.

What do these conclusions suggest for housing policy? Flood and Yates note that,

despite significant outlays on housing and the greater efficiency in targeting housing assistance, the benefits from the major tax expenditures has increasingly overwhelmed the housing assistance programs that represent formal housing policy (p.viii).

Their preferred policy is a tax on net imputed rentals and a tax on real realised capital gains received by owner-occupiers, to be used to fund increased levels of social security benefits. This, they concede, is unlikely to be politically acceptable. A full understanding of these **political** constraints should be an important item on the housing policy research agenda.

Housing policy is perhaps best considered in the context of government policy towards private wealth. Over half the private wealth in Australia is held in the form of residential land and dwellings (Piggot, 1987). The vast bulk of this is in owner-occupied

properties. Whilst other forms of wealth are subject to tax on the nominal income and real capital gains earned, owner-occupied housing is exempt. This has implications both for the productive efficiency of the Australian economy, and for equity.

Whilst government income support policy is becoming increasingly targeted on low income groups, and 'middle class welfare' is under attack, it seems that the economic resources associated with wealth are being ignored.

Housing-related poverty is in large part due to the uneven subsidies paid by government to the different sectors. If an imputed rental tax on owner occupied housing were introduced, those who would benefit most would be those currently facing the highest housing costs; those renting in the private market, and those just starting to pay off their mortgage (the latter group would receive net benefits because they hold little net equity in the dwelling and would be able to offset their interest payments against income).

Those who would lose out would be those with the lowest housing costs - outright owners. Of course, many of these are asset rich, but income poor (e.g. aged pensioners). Flood and Yates suggest that support for these people could be granted by requiring public equity for aid. In this vein they suggest modifying the first home owners scheme so that the public sector would then have an equity in the property as a result of its contributions.

Such a step would change public perceptions about their right to housing assistance and would give the public sector a stake in the benefits that come from its spending (p.82).

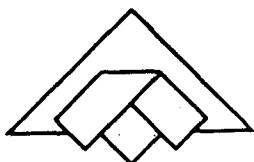
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The political difficulties with any such schemes are enormous, as evidenced by the slow take-up of the pension loans scheme for 'asset tested' pensioners. Yet without such a re-alignment of public policy towards wealth we can expect housing related poverty to be with us a long time yet.

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A Profile of the Italian Community in Gippsland and Elderly Italians in Gippsland: A Study of Needs and Networks.

Reports to CO. AS. IT. by School
of Social Sciences, Gippsland
Institute of Advanced Education,
Churchill, Victoria. (April 1985
and March 1987)

Reviewed by Robert Nittolo

These two reports commissioned by CO.AS.IT (the Italian Assistance Organisation) represent two stages in a comprehensive study of the Italian community in the Gippsland region of southern Victoria. The first is a study of the Italian community in general, based primarily on data obtained from the

1981 census: It presents demographic characteristics of the population such as age, sex, period of residence, income and employment.

The second report presents the results of a survey undertaken to assess the welfare needs of elderly Italians living in the Gippsland area. Special attention was given to those approaching retirement or those already in retirement and the support that these people would need from government and community services. Two hundred elderly Italians were interviewed and information was collected about the support received by families from kin and other social networks in meeting the needs of the aged.

The survey examined a wide range of features including demographic characteristics, family structure, the uses of social networks, aspects of isolation, participation and utilisation of community services, health and use of media.

The study found within the Gippsland region there was a strong network of social and kinship ties amongst the Italian community. This strength was derived from the preservation of a cultural pattern which places a high value on the role of the extended family in each community. These networks are both a source of day to day support and a means of help during various emergencies such as minor illnesses. A small percentage were socially isolated, had little or no contact with families or friends and most were women over sixty years old.

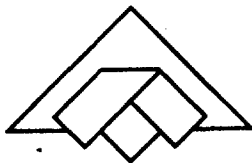
There was a low level of participation in community services, partly due to factors such as lack of confidence in approaching service providers, lack of English speaking ability, anxiety about being perceived as receiving charity. Another important reason was that there was a high level of informal

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non-professional support received by respondents from the kin network which was generally strong and active.

The results of the survey stressed the need for proficiency in English, and English teaching courses, since a lack of English speaking ability was a significant barrier to services. Complementary to this there was a need for services which are ethnic-appropriate to the needs of the Italian community.

Overall, the study is an important investigation into the life-circumstances of an elderly population of a major ethnic group. The study brings to light many of the problems encountered by these aged persons in this community. The results obtained in this study are similar to more widespread studies of problems encountered by aged ethnic persons in general; in fact the questionnaire could be adapted to other specific ethnic groups with very little loss of comparability. Thus, the value of this work lies not only in the specificity of its findings but in the insight it provides into aged ethnic communities in general.



Migrant Women: Their Experience and Language Needs

Jenny Dexter
Women's Learning Centre, Box
Hill College of TAFE
Multicultural Australia Papers,
No.59 Cost \$3.50

Reviewed by Enza Santangelo

The 1980s in Australia has produced an abundance of literature by professionals and non-professionals concerning the problems of migrant settlement in Australia. Whereas the 1950s and early 1960s saw assimilation of migrants as the goal of the Commonwealth Government and society, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that migrants were considered to be 'people with problems' (problems which were unfortunately considered to be self-inflicted). As the migrant minority groups became politically ambitious they developed rights to power and participation in Australian society. Consequently, the wealth of research concerning migrants and their problems has mushroomed in the last few years, with many people making non-informed comments and solutions on how to alleviate 'the migrant's problems'.

A recent paper has been released involving the experiences of migrant women and their need to acquire English language skills. The author, Jenny Dexter, draws her knowledge of migrant women from interviews she conducted with 2 Southern European women (1 Greek, the other Yugoslav) and her role as a teacher for TAFE as well as her involvement with the Home Tutor Scheme. Both women that Dexter interviewed came from rural backgrounds, arrived as teenagers, married in Australia and worked full time in a factory up to a few years ago. In 1985 they began to attend formal English classes at TAFE.

In her paper Dexter makes certain claims:

- Women coming to Australia were expected to fulfil dual roles, to be employed in the workforce and fulfil traditional roles in the home.

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- . Based on the need for economic security most women worked after having children.
- . Most migrant women experienced loss of identity, powerlessness, lack of confidence due to their positions in the family and their inability to speak English fluently.
- . Migrant women do not attend English classes until financial and family constraints are lessened.
- . A lack of English had a greater effect on migrant women than men because men were able to socialise a lot more and women had a subordinate role in the family which limited their access to language acquisition. Further, women are more likely to be intimidated and harassed by strangers which also affects their self-esteem.

Dexter, like many researchers in the field, makes presumptions of knowledge when in fact she is only scratching the surface. Certainly, from an Anglo-Saxon middle-class perspective the problems appear to be black and white; however, there are deep-rooted social and psychological consequences of immigrant settlement for the persons involved.

Looking at the historical situation, back in 1947 the Commonwealth Government saw its answer to 'assimilation' in terms of providing English classes for adults. These classes were held part-time, with the first full-time course as late as 1977. As long as the immigrants could speak enough English to satisfy their basic needs and there was work available, then no matter where they came from (Southern Europe, Britain, Asia) they would assimilate nicely into Australian society. This presumption was based

on two important factors: firstly, that the immigrants would come to embrace the British (Anglo Saxon) way of life and, secondly, that all Australians would accept these people into their community (the main principle behind the Commonwealth Government's 'Good Neighbour' movement).

These presumptions fell when there was very little communication between migrants and Australians (resulting in many cases of violence, abuse and overt discrimination by the majority over the minority ethnic groups); knowledge of migrants was mainly focused on recruitment rather than settlement; the State and non-government organisations saw 'migrant problems' as 'Commonwealth problems' ('they brought them here').

In addition the 'Good Neighbour' movement concentrated on British migrants (it didn't accept the non-British until the 1960s) and only employed English-speaking staff. To make matters worse there were virtually no organised interpreting and translating services available for migrants once they arrived in Australia.

All this leads to a firm rebuttal of Dexter's claims. Given the macro-sociological conditions in which migrants were expected to settle, it is no wonder that even twenty to thirty years later many have low self-esteem and refuse to communicate with the Australian community. An individual's self-esteem, be s/he a migrant or not, develops from the social conditions which they are forced to face, that is self-esteem is a characteristic which develops rather than being innate.

Further, it may be added that many migrant women are not discriminated within the home, where many are the

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main decision makers. They control many familial situations and the male has a minor role as breadwinner. From an Anglo-Saxon middle-class perspective they appear to be the down-trodden female confined to the home; however, from the migrant woman's cultural perspective she fulfills her role as wife and mother and through the almost professionalisation of this role she gains power and status (this is often undertaken tactfully without demystifying the male role). It is not as Dexter proclaims that these 'women have often been brought up to accept the roles placed on them and thus do not demand more rights for themselves' (p7). This is an Anglo-Saxon view of democracy within the home and further cultural analysis needs to be made before these statements are acceptable within most ethnic groups.

Moreover, not all women came to Australia in their teenage years; many were already married with children and were later reunited in Australia with their husbands. This is an important influence for language acquisition, whereas Dexter's sample (of 2) began attending classes in their later 30s and early 40s. Many migrant women are pensioners now. They have no means of transport and although they have the time, many would not begin to consider any form of schooling at this late stage of their lives (that is, for them education is for the young).

Towards the end of the paper Dexter presents certain solutions to combat the lack of English speaking ability of migrants. For example,

- . 'English on the job' giving migrant women access to the English language in the work environment.
- . The availability of the Home Tutor Scheme for women confined

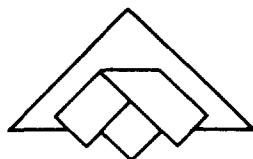
in the home with young children, who lack transport or confidence.

- . Use of television and video systems (utilisation of high interest factor and body language).
- . In order to combat individual needs there should be provision of a variety of teaching modes and activities (teacher talk/group activities/individual quiet work/pair work) (p20), plus uni-sex classes.

In addition to these solutions perhaps further analysis needs to be made in relation to the importance of language per se, that is, its fundamental value in learning and thinking processes plus its correlation to behaviour. There is also its social significance, incorporating the different attitudes to language held by various cultural groups (and their consequent attitudes to language change) and perhaps most importantly, social class differences.

And lastly, what of English classes themselves? Why does a small number of non-English speaking migrants enrol in such courses (this includes courses in industry and the Home Tutor Scheme). Why do they meet only a temporary need?

If the goal of such classes is assimilation, then perhaps solutions lie beyond that of the provision of English classes and bi-lingual education in schools. The presumption has always been that language is the solution to assimilation. It may be better argued that it is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one.



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**The Turkish Elderly in the
Western Suburbs of Melbourne:
Meeting Their Needs**

Mark Deasey, Romans Mapolar
and Jill Wheeler

Multicultural Australia Papers,
Occasional Paper No.60 May,
1987, 28pp. The Clearing House
on Migration Issues, 133 Church
St., Richmond. 3121.
Cost \$5.00

Reviewed by Cathy Boland.

I don't know if you have ever been to Turkey, but one of my memories of it is driving for hours through a barren landscape, past isolated villages, with the Koran blaring out from the local mosque and an Islamic woman in black mask, veil and dress, walking through the dry landscape with the wind catching at her clothes.

The elderly immigrants from this land, which is far away from Australia with vastly different customs, are the focus of this 28 page Occasional Paper. The needs of these people are in part explained by their history of immigration. Turkish immigration to Australia was in three waves. Post-war immigrants were mainly from Cyprus. From 1968 until 1974 there was a large scale immigration arrangement between the Turkish and Australian government to recruit mainly unskilled rural workers to Australian manufacturing industries. After the recession in the Australian economy in the mid-1970's, workers with similar attributes were no longer required. The third phase of migration is under the Australian Migration Program. A number of people interviewed were sponsored by their children, who are entirely responsible for all their parents' living costs for ten years.

It is estimated that 25,000 to 30,000 people of Turkish origin now live in Victoria. The paper discusses issues of relevance to 50 residents of three municipalities in Melbourne's fast growing western region, which is deprived of a social infrastructure. Nine of the thirty-two respondents who were interviewed personally had arrived in Australia recently, between 1980 and 1986. Of those surveyed, occupations in their home country included quilt-maker, shoe-maker, shepherd, farmer and cabinet maker. Almost half the group had received no formal education at all and were illiterate in their native tongue, and 13 of the 32 could not speak any English. The authors' comment 'their difficulties ... in making use of conventional English classes offered to new migrants are easily apparent' (p20) may well be an understatement.

Most of the people interviewed were living in three-generational family structures, relying on family members when they were sick. Their greatest need was social contact with like persons from outside the family. However, most had no experience at all of services available to other sections of the Australian community, such as Senior Citizens Centres, Council Home Maintenance, home care and meal delivery services.

A previous study (AIMA, 1986) on service provision indicated that traditional members of Senior Citizens Clubs have a strong sense of ownership and are threatened by large numbers of ethnic aged.

The paper recommends that bilingual workers assist with establishing services; that recreation activities could become group managed; that information be targeted to the families who care for their elders; and that Turkish

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radio would be an appropriate medium for promoting services.

This paper is a brief and useful contribution to an understanding of issues relevant to the ethnic aged.

Reference:

Australian Institute of
Multicultural Affairs (1986)
Springvale - A Study in Community
Relations and Service Provision.

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