

The Changing Mix of Welfare in Health Care and Community Support Services

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Publication details:

Working Paper No. 61
SPRC Discussion Paper
0733412246 (ISBN)
1447-8978 (ISSN)

Publication Date:

1995

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/190>

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**THE CHANGING MIX OF
WELFARE IN HEALTH CARE
AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT
SERVICES**

by Michael Fine

SPRC Discussion Paper No. 61

August 1995

ISSN 1037 2741
ISBN 7334 1224 6

This is a revised version of a paper presented at the Public Sector Research Centre seminar, Infrastructure: Meeting Australia's Social and Economic Needs, held at the University of New South Wales, 31 March 1995. I would like to thank Peter Saunders and Sheila Shaver for comments on earlier drafts.

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The series is indebted to Diana Encel for her continuing editorial contribution.

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Tony Eardley
Editor

Abstract

This paper presents a brief overview of changes in responsibility of the state for the provision of welfare services in Australia and considers some of the changes currently being introduced to the welfare mix in Australia. It focuses on two illustrative case studies: health care and the shift in long-term care away from a reliance on nursing homes towards a system of community support. In health care, the pressures on State Governments to achieve efficiency in the public sector has to some extent been offset by the expansion of private investment in commercial health services, with the net result being a gradual increase in the importance of privately operated hospitals and other health services. In the field of long-term care the dominant position that private nursing homes long enjoyed has to some extent been restricted as a result of a combination of measures taken by Commonwealth Government.

Despite the limitations of the available evidence it seems clear that there is no single trend which has shaped developments over the past decade. The available data point instead towards increasingly complex patterns of provision with service provision following a number of often contradictory lines of development. As the different levels of Australian government face these contradictory demands, the results are likely to be increasingly diversified, hybrid systems, in which government, market, voluntary and community organisations and families are increasingly interconnected.

1 Introduction

Discussions of changing patterns of welfare are often concerned with the need for assistance and the adequacy of assistance in meeting demand. Developments in the operation and control of welfare provisions are often given only passing attention. In this paper, in contrast, attention is directed solely to the supply side of welfare. The focus is on issues associated with the provision of assistance, in particular the changing mix of state, market, voluntary/community and familial contributions to welfare provisions in the field of health care and social services, a sphere of activity that, following Evers (1988), will be referred to in this paper simply as ‘the welfare mix’. Reference will also be made, but only in passing, to related developments in the field of social security and income support.

In recognition of the difficulties of attempting to make meaningful generalisations about changing patterns of provision across the entire field of social welfare, discussion is confined to just two fields of the broader welfare system that must serve as illustrations of the sorts of developments that are taking place more broadly. The first of these concerns the health care system, which has perhaps the best developed and most readily accessible statistics. As well as representing an aspect of welfare provision that receives almost constant media attention, it is interesting as an area in which the Labor Government has introduced major reforms at the national level and as a sphere of activity in which both Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments are involved. The second example concerns the shift towards community care in the less well publicised field of long term care for older people and people with disabilities. Long-term care is an important area of social policy and welfare, not least because provisions for an ageing population are a major and growing commitment by government.

2 Understanding Existing Patterns of Provision

In nineteenth century Australia, as historians and other commentators have pointed out, government assumed little or no direct responsibility for the provision of health or welfare services. Adam Graycar summarised the situation in nineteenth century Australia as follows:

Before Federation, social welfare problems were dealt with by religiously oriented charitable bodies, many of

which received the strong support and sponsorship of colonial governments. The colonial governments saw their role as providing some limited resources to charitable bodies for them to do their 'good works'. There was, essentially, very little government intervention. (Graycar, 1979: 21)

The picture of state intervention in the welfare sphere that emerges from any study of the history of welfare in the twentieth century is a complex one, complicated by the federal nature of Australian government. Although it remained restrained, government responsibility for the provision of benefits and services increased gradually in the years following Federation until the Second World War. The welfare historian T.H. Kewley has distinguished two distinct phases in the evolution of welfare provisions over these years. The first phase, from 1901 to 1912, saw an expansion of government's responsibility for welfare as means-tested cash benefits for old age and invalid pensions were introduced, first by the States then later by the Commonwealth Government. Maternity allowances were also introduced during this period. The second phase, between 1912 and 1939, was marked by debate about the expansion of social welfare provisions, concerned particularly with the desirability and feasibility of the introduction of contributory benefits schemes. Although the responsibilities of a number of state governments were increased, there were few successful Commonwealth initiatives (Kewley, 1973).

While the Australian Labor Party (ALP) failed in the decades after the First World War to expand government responsibility for welfare provision at the national level, it was successful at the state level. In Queensland, for example, an unemployment insurance scheme was implemented in 1922. More than three decades later, a free State health care scheme was introduced which distinguished Queensland from all other Australian states. In New South Wales, the Lang Labor Government introduced a widow's pension in 1926 and implemented what many people regard as the world's first child endowment program in 1927 (Castles, 1985; Kewley, 1973). State governments throughout Australia also built and operated hospitals which, together with those developed by charitable trusts, functioned as the public hospital system (Sax, 1984). The interplay between State and Commonwealth Governments with which we are familiar today was thus a major force shaping the evolution of Australia's health and welfare provisions.

As in most comparable countries, the expectation that the state would assume full responsibility for welfare became commonly accepted in the post-war era. Indeed the term 'welfare states', used to refer to parliamentary democracies across the world since the Second World War, implies that the state is directly responsible for the provision of welfare. The identification of the welfare system with the state was, in fact, so complete that Australia came to be considered by many as a 'welfare laggard'. This was not because the general welfare of the Australian population in any sense lagged behind that of, say, the United Kingdom, but because successive Australian governments, mainly Liberal/Country Party national governments, did not facilitate the move towards state provision nor even seem to see such a move as desirable or inevitable.

What emerged in post-war Australia was not system of state welfare, but the development of what Frank Castles has referred to as 'the wage earners' welfare state' (Castles, 1985: 102) in which an emphasis was placed on regulation (of wages) rather than provision (of transfers). With government regulated family wages for employed men and an import protection regime which virtually guaranteed near full employment for male breadwinners, welfare was seen as a simply a 'safety net' for those who lacked the family to support them or the money to pay for themselves or to take out private (health) insurance.

The inability of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) to win national office between 1949 and 1972 ensured that the development of the welfare system at the national level was in the hands of successive Liberal/Country Party governments. Their decisions have left an indelible stamp on the system of provision. When new provisions developed they tended to have a rather different character from those emerging in most Western European welfare states. Nor was this basic approach reversed by Labor governments, despite the greater emphasis placed on state welfare by many on the left. The Whitlam ALP Government (1972-1975), for example, is often remembered for its initiatives in welfare, such as the introduction of Medibank, the introduction of single parent's pension, the abolition of the means test on certain types of age pension and the promotion of the experimental Australian Assistance Plan, which fostered 'community development' by stimulating the growth of non-government community groups (Jones, 1983: 62-68).

Importantly, initiatives such as these developed, rather than undermined, the existing pattern of state-funded welfare pluralism. For example, Medibank, like its 1980s successor, Medicare, was a national health insurance scheme which paid a fee-for-service reimbursement for any eligible medical consultation or treatment. Its introduction may be contrasted with that of the British National Health Service which, thirty years before, had effectively nationalised large sections of the British health system and operated them as government owned enterprises. The Medibank/Medicare system worked reasonably well as a reimbursement for private medical practitioners, as it did as a payment system for public hospitals. Its introduction was significant in the Australian context because it socialised medical payments and opened up access to the health care system on a more equitable and universal basis. But despite what its opponents from the Australian Medical Association and elsewhere alleged at the time, it did not represent the socialisation of health care services in Australia. If anything, it represented simply the politically expedient public underwriting of private, and often highly entrepreneurial, medical practice (Health Issues Centre, 1987).

Without labouring the point, it is clear that direct intervention by the state constitutes only one part of the Australian welfare mix. Other assistance it provided includes voluntary and private providers funded by government, provision by private contractors operating under market conditions and welfare provided on a voluntary basis by unpaid community members and informally by unpaid family members. In the remainder of this paper I explore some of the current trends in the mix of public and private elements of provision in Australia and consider, very briefly, some of the lines of analysis advanced to explained them.

3 Changes in Public Expenditure on Welfare

Figures provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) show that despite the general climate of budgetary restraint and cutbacks that have characterised government spending, total government expenditure on welfare services by Commonwealth, State and local Governments increased slightly in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Total public expenditure on health services, welfare services and 'other social security and welfare services' increased slightly in the years 1987-88 to 1992-93, as Figure 1A shows. Significant increases can be identified in social security

expenditures, only some of which could probably be attributed to the effects of the recession and the increased total of unemployment payments that have resulted. When expenditure on welfare is measured as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product a trend towards increases in the proportion of public expenditure going to welfare becomes apparent, as shown in Figure 1B. At the level of aggregate expenditure, therefore, the evidence points more to a process of gradual expansion in government expenditure on health and welfare rather than to cutbacks (ABS, 1994; see also AIHW, 1995).

It is important to emphasise that these statistics refer simply to public expenditure. If we attempt to go beyond government expenditure, which represents the public financing of social welfare, to consider actual patterns of provision, a more complex picture begins to emerge. Generalisations about the current balance between different sources of provision remain difficult, however, because each field of welfare, and within these each sub-field, has its own characteristics. A closer look at changes in the pattern of provision is also made more complex by the lack of good data on welfare provisions in Australia, a matter that has received a good deal of critical attention in recent years from the both the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (AIHW, 1993: 27-46).

4 Trends in Health Care Provision

One of the most significant developments over the last decade in the field of health care has been the gradually increasing importance of privately controlled medical services. This has occurred despite the commitment of the ALP Commonwealth Government since 1983 to providing comprehensive universal access to health care and the well publicised reduction in the proportion of the Australian population with private health insurance. The trend is well illustrated by the growth in the use of private hospitals and the reduction in the use of public hospitals over the decade from 1982-83 to 1991-92, as shown in Table 1. The total occupied bed days per year in public hospitals fell by nearly two million beds, a reduction of over 13 per cent. In contrast, the number of occupied bed days in private hospitals actually increased over that period by over 200,000 bed days, or more than four per cent.

Figure 1: Total Commonwealth, State and Local Government Outlays on Social Security and Welfare Services, Australia: 1987-88 to 1992-93 (\$million, constant value 1989-90)

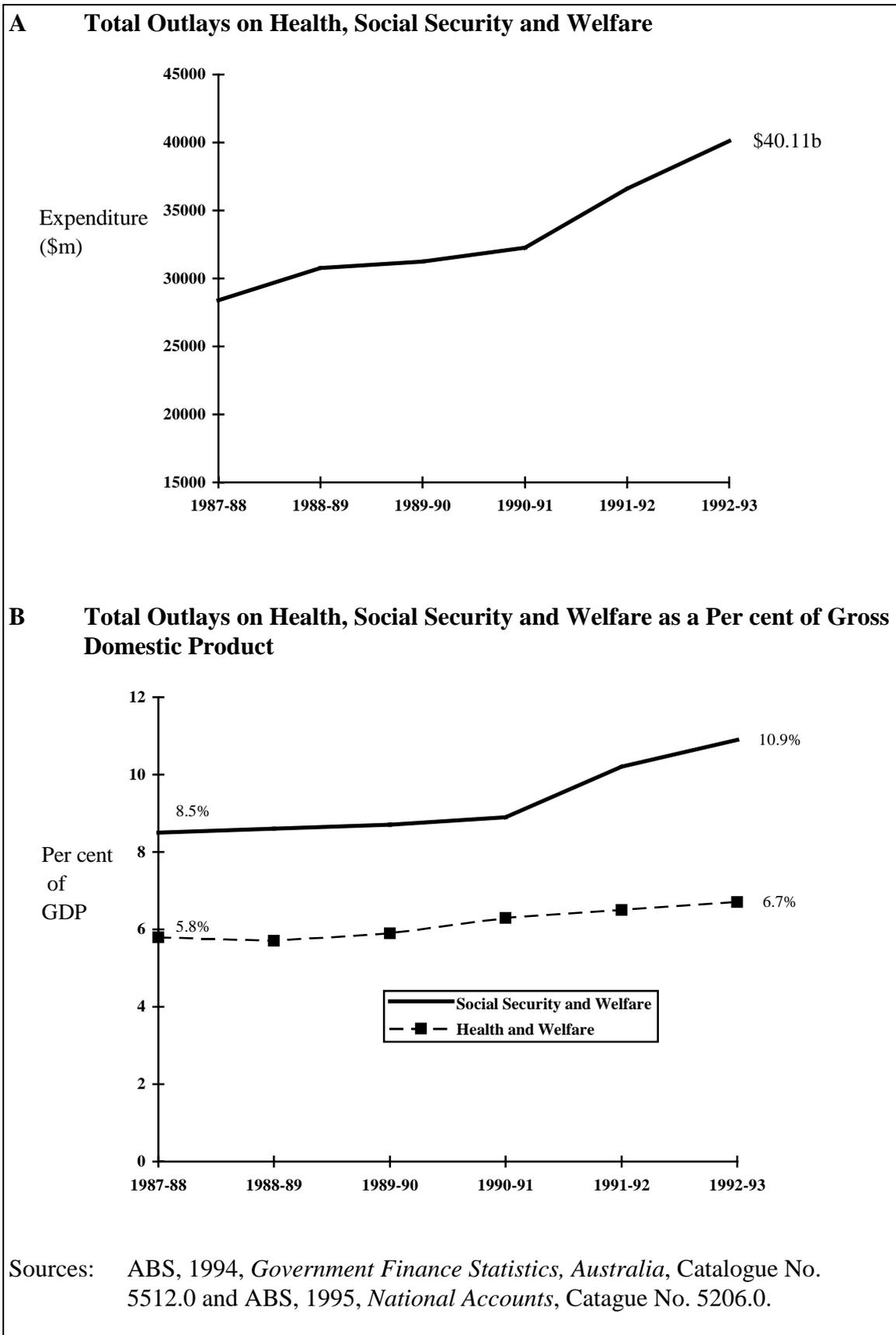


Table 1: Occupied Bed Days in Acute Hospitals: 1982-83 to 1991-92

Year	All Public Hospitals	Private Hospitals
1982-83	17,940,990	4,839,187
1987-88	16,979,074	4,531,000
1991-92	15,637,664	5,042,230
Average Annual Growth Rate, 1982-83 to 1991-92	-1.5%	+0.5%

Source: AIHW, Nov. 1994: 6.

When considering changes in the proportion of public and private spending on health care a slightly different picture emerges. Over the decade from 1982-83 to 1992-93 there was an increase in the proportion of Commonwealth Government expenditure and a corresponding decrease in the contribution of the States, as shown in Table 2. The proportion of private expenditure initially fell, but later rose again to a similar level.

The AIHW, commenting on the different trends operating in the two sectors over the decade, point out that public hospitals faced continuing budget restraints throughout the entire period. Significant reductions in the average length of stay for patients were accompanied by cutbacks in bed numbers and a decrease in total occupied bed days. Private hospitals faced a decline in membership of private health funds that followed the introduction of Medicare in 1984, as well as the removal of the private hospital bed-day subsidy in 1986. But there was also a boom in the construction of private hospitals. While these developments led to a decline in the total bed days and occupancy rates of private hospitals between 1986 and 1989, this trend was reversed by the early 1990s (AIHW, November 1994: 7).

In their analysis of the components of recurrent expenditure in 1990-91, the AIHW have shown that there are considerable differences in the balance of public and private outlays in the different fields of health care (AIHW, December 1994: 6-10). For facilities classified as 'public acute hospitals', Commonwealth and State Governments each provided over 45 per cent of total funds, with private expenditure amounting to less than eight per cent of the total. Commonwealth expenditure on private

Table 2: Changes in the Proportion of Public and Private Spending on Health Care: 1984-85 to 1992-93

Year	Commonwealth Government	State and Local Government	Private	Total Amount
		Percentage		\$m
1982-83	38.4	26.9	34.7	13,239
1987-88	44.1	26.0	29.9	23,328
1992-93	44.3	23.5	32.2	34,338

Source: AIHW, December 1994: 8.

hospitals, in contrast, amounted to no more than five per cent of the total. The remaining 95 per cent of expenditure was from private sources as State Government expenditure in this field was not significant. Costs associated with hospital care are the single largest item of health care expenditure, representing almost 40 per cent of total health expenditure in 1990-91. Around four fifths of these costs are accounted for by public hospitals.

Amongst other health services the balance of public and private sources of expenditure differed considerably. In 1990-91, Commonwealth expenditure represented over 80 per cent of the budget for 'medical services' (this includes consultations with general practitioners and medical specialists), around two thirds of recurrent expenditure on nursing homes and just under half of national expenditure on pharmaceuticals. State and Territory Governments funded around 70 per cent of community and public health services but contributed nothing towards the medical services provided by general practitioners and medical specialists. Private expenditure was greatest for private hospitals and for dental and other professional services (around 90 per cent of the total). It also represented over half the funding for pharmaceuticals and almost 20 per cent of that of medical services (AIHW, Dec 1994: 6-10).

Unfortunately, published national statistics do not readily capture the full complexity of patterns of provision in Australian health care and changes to these in recent years. For example, national figures on the proportion of public hospitals in each state operated by religious orders and non-profit trusts are not readily available. Nor is information on the extent to which

hospital functions such as catering, cleaning and specialised clinical services have been ‘contracted out’. Neither do statistics adequately convey a sense of the fundamental nature of the Australian health care system, where the provision of health care is the direct product of the system of professional medical registration boards, and the control exercised by the medical profession through the promotion of private medical practice and the maintenance of a fee-for-service system of payments for medical care (Palmer and Short, 1994).

Attempting to describe the welfare mix of the Australian health care system in a concise manner using readily available data is, in short, a difficult, if not impossible, task. What emerges from this brief survey of the available data is evidence of at least two contradictory trends, operating side by side and to some extent in opposition to each other. The first, concerned with gradual increase in the significance of finance provided by the Commonwealth Government, appears to be a direct consequence of the introduction of the Medicare program since 1984. Although there has not been any measurable increase in direct provision by Commonwealth Government agencies, increased finance has been associated with an increasingly more sophisticated pattern of regulation and management of the nation’s health care services. Working against this is a second trend of expansion of private provision. This is associated with increasing private investment in health care infrastructure and service provision and a gradual decrease in the significance of direct provision by services controlled by State and Territory Governments. Faced with ever more stringent economic conditions they have sought ways to control their expenditure on health care services, subjecting existing state-based services to an almost constant process of restructuring and rationalisation.

5 From Institutional to Community-based Long-term Care

Much of the complexity of the patterns of provision in health care is also evident in the published statistics pertaining to the field of long-term care, for many years a field dominated by the provision of privately operated nursing homes. This pattern of provision was the result of the entry of the Commonwealth Government into the aged care field in the early 1960s with its role constrained, both by the Australian constitution and by the ideological preferences of the then Liberal/Country Party Government, to

the funding of private entrepreneurs and non-profit, voluntary provisions (Sax, 1984; Saunders and Fine, 1992).

Despite important changes introduced to the field of nursing home funding in the mid-1980s by the Hawke Labor Government, current patterns of provision of institutional care continue to reflect this historical background. As the figures presented in Table 3 show, facilities operated for profit continue to be the most common form of provision. There has, nonetheless, been a slight increase in the private-for-profit ownership of nursing homes and an increase in provision by the voluntary sector in the last decade, which is attributable mainly to reductions in the bed numbers in nursing homes operated by State and Territory Governments (DHHCS, 1991; AIHW, 1993).

It is important to note, however, that unlike the situation in some other countries, such as the UK, the funding regime implemented by the Labor Government did not lead to an expansion of public funding for private-for-profit initiatives. Rather, the changes that have occurred appear to reflect the attempts by the Commonwealth Government to replace the relatively open-ended funding arrangements for nursing homes that existed previously, with a more equitable administrative and funding regime intended to regulate and control the amount, quality and allocation of services. This was achieved through such means as the introduction of a more systematic cost-based funding system - the Care Aggregated Module (CAM) and Service Aggregated Module (SAM) payment systems - which linked funding more closely to the individual's need for care, and through a shift to emphasising outcomes standards (DHHCS, 1991).

The reorientation of long-term care policies away from a reliance on residential care provided in nursing homes towards a more broadly based system emphasising the principle of 'community care' has been of far greater fundamental importance than the changes to the administration of nursing home funding have proven on their own. Policy reforms introduced by the Labor Government in the 1980s led to a reduction in the use of nursing homes, the limited expansion in the provision and use of the less intensive forms of residential care provided in hostels, and a marked growth in the provision of community support through the Home and Community Care Program (HACC) (DHHCS, 1991). Subsequent

Table 3: Background of Nursing Home Providers: 1985 and 1992. (Percentage of total nursing home beds)

Background of service providers	1985	1992
State/Territory Governments	20.0	17.7
Private for profit proprietors	47.0	47.4
Religious and charitable organisations (PNFP) ^(a)	33.0	34.9

Notes: a) Reported as 'Private not for profit' facilities, and includes homes operated by local government and non-religious voluntary associations. The majority of these facilities were, until 1987, funded as religious or charitable organisations.

Source: AIHW, 1993: 229

developments have seen an expansion of other alternative forms of provision, perhaps most notably the expansion of Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) and, in some rural regions, advanced trials with Multi-Purpose Services, increasing the flexibility and variety of service provision (DHHLGCS, 1993).

These trends have seen a marked shift towards the provision of support at home, accompanied by an increasing emphasis on assessment and targeting as a means of ensuring that individuals receive appropriate services. Both of these broad trends, clearly expressed in expenditure figures presented in Table 4 (See also DHHCS, 1991; AIHW, 1993; Morris, 1994). In the early 1980s, 11 dollars were spent on nursing homes and hostels for every one dollar spent on community care (McLeay, 1982). By 1991, this ratio had changed to 4.7:1. According to more recent projections this will have become a ratio of approximately 3:1 by the year 2001 (DHHCS, 1991). These changes have been endorsed by major governmental reviews and seem likely to be continued well into the foreseeable future.

One of the interesting consequences of the move away from reliance on nursing homes towards community care and hostel services has been the changed balance in the pattern of ownership and control of services. Organisations eligible to receive funds under the Home and Community

Table 4: Changes in Commonwealth Expenditure^(a) on the Provision of Aged Care: 1985 to 1991 and Projected Changes: 1991 to 2001

Type of Provision	1985	1991	2001	Increase 1985-91	Increase 1991-2001(b)
				Per cent	Per cent
Nursing homes					
Beds	71,503	73,162	79,052	2.3	8.05
Expenditure (\$'000)	1429.9	1651.52	1896.19	8.8	14.81
Hostels					
Beds	34,885	47,080	81,483	134.9	73.07
Expenditure (\$'000)	83.5	208.44	470.86	127.4	125.89
HACC(c)					
Clients (estimated)	na	164,257	252,990	n.a.	54.02
Expenditure (\$'000)	142.8	397.74	779.61	95.3	96.00
Total Expenditure	1764.2	2257.70	3146.66	27.9	39.37

Notes: a) Expenditure in 1991 dollars
b) Projected increases, assuming known policy settings.
c) Home and Community Care (HACC) estimates exclude younger disabled people, but include both Commonwealth and State expenditure.

Sources: DHHCS, 1991: 40, 278-9; AIHW, 1994: 223.

Care Program must be non-profit. Similar arrangements also operate in the hostel sphere. There is, consequently, a marked diversity in the sources of provision of hostel and HACC services which is the result of the stimulation of a variety of forms of government and non-government provision, especially by community-based associations reflecting a variety of local, ethnic and interest group affiliations.

Further details of the pattern of ownership of service provisions in the HACC program are presented in Table 5. The figures, published by the Industry Commission (1994), give some indication of the variation in the proportion of different patterns of ownership and control of service providers between each State and Territory. These basic figures indicate that in 1992-93, community based non-profit providers constituted 84 per cent and 79 per cent of all services in Queensland and New South Wales

Table 5: Home and Community Care Service Providers by Type and State: 1992-93

State/Territory	Community Non-profit (CSWO)		Local Government Agencies		Government and Semi-government Agencies		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
New South Wales	585	79	102	14	50	7	737
Victoria	168	31	209	38	168	31	545
Queensland	259	84	32	10	17	6	308
Western Australia	139	68	53	26	13	6	205
South Australia	54	39	31	23	52	38	137
Tasmania	30	77	8	21	1	2	39
Northern Territory	13	52	11	44	1	4	25
ACT	16	69	0	0	7	31	23
Total	1,264	63	446	22	309	15	2,019

Source: Industry Commission, 1994, Table 5.5

respectively, but only 31 per cent of all services in Victoria. Government and semi-government agencies (usually statutory authorities) constituted 38 per cent of services in South Australia and 31 per cent in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, but only seven per cent in New South Wales and even less in Queensland, West Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania. Caution is needed in interpreting these crude figures, however, as they indicate simply the number of different agencies and not the proportion of funds received by each type or category of service. The largest HACC service in Australia, for example, is the Home Care Service of New South Wales, a statutory authority which each year receives approximately one fifth of the entire national budget for the program (Industry Commission, 1994; HCS, 1994).

The shift to community care has also been accompanied by a considerable realignment in the patterns of the ownership of service provisions. As the comparison presented in Table 6 shows, there is no equivalent amongst HACC services to the extensive provision of services by private nursing home proprietors. State and Territory Governments are also important

Table 6: Background of Long-term Care Service Providers: 1992-93. (Percentage of total nursing home and hostel beds and percentage of total HACC funds)

Background of service providers	Nursing homes	Hostels	HACC services
		percentage	
State/Territory Governments	17.7	5.1	40.0
Private-for-profit proprietors	47.4	0.3	-
Local Government	-	-	19.9
Community Organisations	-	-	35.9
Religious and Charitable Organisations (PNFP)(a)	34.9	94.5	4.2

Notes: a) Reported as 'Private not for profit' facilities. See notes Table 3.

Source: AIHW, 1993: 228; Morris, 1994: 20

providers of community support services, although they have had little involvement in the hostel field and have played only a limited role in the provision of nursing home care. The same tendency is also apparent for services provided by local government and locally based 'community organisations', both of which provide significant numbers of community support services but not residential care. The importance of religious and charitable organisations, which are important providers of institutional care services, is in turn, much diminished in the field of community support.

The reliance of the Commonwealth and State Governments on non-profit non-government service providers is clearly extensive, extending well beyond the field of community support. Although difficult to document, the figures released by the Industry Commission give some indication of the extent of their provision. As the figures presented in Table 7 show, there were almost 12,000 such organisations identified by the Industry Commission operating in a range of specialised welfare provision fields. Total direct funding by Commonwealth and State Governments in 1992-93 amounted to approximately \$2.77 billion of a total budget for these service agencies of approximately \$4.4 billion (Industry Commission, 1994).

Table 7: Number of Community Social Welfare Organisations (CSWOs) and Distribution of Funding by Program Area: 1992-93.

Program Area	Number of CSWOs	\$ million
Aged Care		
Nursing Homes	562 ^(a)	554.8
Hostels	1,185	384.1
Community Aged Care Packages	54	2.9
Disability		
Commonwealth Disability	1,176 ^(b)	238.5
State Disability	1,012	211.6
Home and Community Care	1,264	217.0
Children at Risk	319	75.1
Community, Individual and Family support		
<i>State Programs</i>	2,783	113.2
<i>Commonwealth Programs</i>		
Community Legal Centres	90	6.3
Family Services	73	18.5
Financial Counselling	31	1.1
Family Resource Centres	13	3.3
Emergency Relief	1,019	30.2
Immigration and Ethnic Affairs programs	307	27.5
Joint Commonwealth-State programs		
Supported Accommodation (SAAP)	737 ^(c)	156.6
Drug Abuse Reduction	-	5.0
Employment		
Skill Share	3,80	135.0
Jobskills	83	54.9
JPET	29	2.0
State programs	573	29.9
Commonwealth Child Care	-	220.6
Overseas Aid	120	80.8
Other	-	200.0
Total	11,876	2,768.9

- Notes:
- a) The number of nursing homes operated by CSWOs. Some organisations run more than one nursing home.
 - b) Number of disability service establishments. Some organisations run more than one service establishment.
 - c) Does not include the ACT or NT.

Source: Industry Commission, 1994: 125.

Increased Diversity and Reliance on Informal Care

Community support, as provided through the HACC program, has also increased the flexibility and diversity of long-term care provisions and has made reliance on informal, usually family-based care, a major component of national policy. Many people formerly admitted to residential care now remain at home with little or no formal assistance. Others may receive small amounts of help from single specialised services or more extensive assistance from a range of different agencies. Despite some standardisation, the system is inherently far more flexible than is the case with more traditional forms of residential care. Formal services for those at home are not provided to replace informal family-based support, but alongside it, with the result that, even with limited resources, it is possible to extend assistance to a far greater range of people. By fostering low cost provision from community based voluntary organisations the state's role is no longer that of funding 'all or nothing' provisions to a select group of recipients. The new ideal of an extended partnership between government and the community was well expressed in the slogan 'Sharing Community Care' adopted by the Commonwealth Department of Community Services in 1986-87 (Fine, 1995).

The move towards community-based patterns of provision has, to date, been legitimated largely by claims of the benefits of community development (Kenny, 1994; Fine and Thomson, 1995). Privatisation and other forms of economic restructuring such as the introduction of various forms of market and quasi-market approaches to financing and providing services, described elsewhere as integral to the move to community services (Baldock and Evers, 1992) have so far been of only minor importance in Australia. There is, however, more than passing interest in the merits of these approaches at the national level. Monitoring movement towards their adoption remains an important task for research in this field.

For example, the inquiry currently being conducted by the Industry Commission into the operation and funding of charitable organisations has canvassed the introduction of mechanisms such as a competitive tendering system linked to contract based funding. Such a scheme could well see competition between non-profit agencies and private for profit companies (Industry Commission, 1994). Movement towards funding based on contracts and payment based on defined service outputs has also been documented in Victoria (HCSV, 1994; Alford and O'Neill, 1994).

6 Monitoring and Understanding Developments in the Welfare Mix

The last decade has seen the emergence of a number of developments in the field of social policy and welfare which suggest significant changes in the relationship between public and private sources of assistance are taking place. This paper has focused on using national data to track some of the results of developments in the field of health care provision and in the shift towards community care. However, the developments in the welfare mix extend well beyond those discussed. Amongst the more significant of other recent changes that should be considered in a more comprehensive review of welfare arrangements are the introduction of service brokerage associated with case management and contracting-out procedures as part of the Home and Community Care HACC Program and the *Working Nation* (Australia, Prime Minister, 1994) initiatives, changes in the 'funder-provider relationship' and the promotion of a system of competitive contracting in the fields of community services and health care, the privatisation and marketisation of a number of services previously provided by State Governments, and the introduction of user charges for caregiving and child care by the Commonwealth Government. These changes are paralleled by developments in other areas of social policy. For example, the extension of the concept of the 'active society' in the field of social security and the introduction of mandatory retirement saving schemes for all employees through the Commonwealth's Superannuation Guarantee Charge (SGC) have also served to break down the divisions between public and private income support arrangements.

Many of the recent developments in the welfare mix have been, and are likely to continue to be, highly controversial. Some critics have urged resistance to these changes, regarding their adoption as a victory for neo-conservative opponents of the welfare state. The charge is that they are simply disguised welfare cutbacks, devolving state responsibilities to the family, the market and charity. Proponents, however, portray many of the same policy initiatives as important innovations which break down the conventional dichotomy between the public and private spheres, challenging many of the conventional wisdoms which identify social policy solely with the public sphere (Fine and Thomson, 1995). The introduction of competitive tendering and other market-like mechanisms

into the provision of welfare services is likely to be more controversial still (Ernst, 1993).

There has been surprisingly little research in Australia which could inform policy makers, government officials, service providers, consumer representatives and other interested parties about the implications of recent changes introduced in the relationship between each of these separate components. Much of the research on social policy in Australia, as elsewhere, appears to reflect the view that welfare provision is an activity essentially confined to the public sphere. Yet as Wilenski and Lebaux (1965) pointed out more than three decades ago, at a time in which direct provision by the state appeared to be increasing inexorably in virtually all industrialised countries, support provided by 'residual' sources, such as families and charities, continues to be important. More recent analyses which reflect attempts to come to terms with changes introduced in British and European welfare systems over the last decade or so, extend the range of conceptual tools that can be brought to bear. Many of these build on Titmuss's discussion on the 'social division of welfare', which distinguished three major categories of welfare: social welfare; fiscal welfare; and occupational welfare (Titmuss, 1963).

Possibly the most prominent of the terms used in the contemporary discourse on welfare are the concepts of 'welfare pluralism', 'the mixed economy of welfare' and the 'welfare mix' (Evers, 1988; Baldock and Evers, 1992). As Norman Johnson (1987) points out, however, while these approaches have been 'fashionable', they often lack precision. Furthermore, the use of the terms by proponents often moves quickly from simple description to prescription. Hatch and Moorcroft's definition of welfare pluralism is a good example of this sort of conceptual slippage:

In one sense welfare pluralism can be used to convey the fact that social and health care may be obtained from four different sectors - the statutory, the voluntary, the commercial and the informal. More prescriptively, welfare pluralism implies a less dominant role for the state, seeing it as not the only possible instrument for the collective provision of welfare services. (Hatch and Moorcroft, 1983, cited in Johnson, 1987: 55).

The term 'mixed economy of welfare' has similarly acquired an undeniably political meaning in the British context. The reform of community care in Britain, for example, was based on the recommendations of the 1988 Griffiths Report (Baldwin, 1992) for the development of a mixed economy of provision, with local authority social service departments becoming service 'enablers' instead of direct service providers, contracting care out to a range of providers from the private, voluntary and statutory sectors. The recently published study of the implementation of community care plans in 25 local government authorities (Wistow et al., 1994) found that the introduction of a more mixed economy of care was accompanied by more management and an increased emphasis on the exercise of control through contracts. Despite the ideological tone the term has acquired in national debate, the authors were still able to use the concept as a powerful and highly relevant research tool with which to analyse emerging changes in the field of British community care.

A number of other important themes to emerge in recent overseas research are also highly pertinent. Amongst the most important of these is the literature on the voluntary or 'third' sector (Wuthnow, 1991; Gidron et al., 1992; 6 and Vidal, 1994); and the debates on the emergence of a 'postmodern' or 'post-Fordist' welfare system (Taylor-Gooby, 1994; Loader and Burrows, 1994). Other accounts emphasise the importance of social movements, especially those based on feminism, race and sexuality, as agents of change in social policy. Recent analyses from a variety of feminist perspectives (Watson, 1990; Shaver, 1993; Brennan, 1994) have drawn attention to the significance of changes in women's participation in public life for understanding many recent developments in Australian social policy. Similarly, researchers concerned with issues such as human and consumer rights, sexuality, 'race' and immigration have also pointed to political, economic and social changes taking place at local, national and international levels, and the struggles over welfare provision that have resulted from these as shaping the development of current policies (Williams, 1993).

In this context, Jennifer Wolch's account of developments in Britain and the United States seems particularly pertinent to the Australian situation (Wolch, 1990). She argues that as a result of a number of factors, most notably economic and ideological pressures on government, and demands from civic groups and social movements for more participatory, flexible and less bureaucratic forms of provision) governments are increasingly

reliant on non-government organisations to provide welfare and other services. Non-government organisations in the welfare field are therefore becoming a 'shadow state', a second tier of government in which services are provided with state funding, but are not standardised or bureaucratised like traditional government bureaucracies.

While the nominally independent services are dependent on, and controlled by, the state, costs to government are lower, in part because employees do not enjoy lifelong employment or many of the other benefits of public sector appointments. Competition for scarce funds and the fear of the cancellation of government contracts also lead to fears of a loss of independence for third sector non-government organisations, argues Wolch (1990). The spectre of the shadow state is the loss of independence and the development of a tame, compliant, less participatory, less democratic voluntary sector than has traditionally been enjoyed in liberal democracies.

7 Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a brief overview of some of the changes currently being introduced to the welfare mix in Australia, focusing on two illustrative case studies: health care and the shift in long-term care towards community support.

In health care, the pressures on State Governments to achieve efficiency in the public sector has to some extent been offset by the expansion of private investment in commercial health services, with the net result being a gradual increase in the importance of privately operated hospitals and other health services. In the field of long-term care the dominant position that private nursing homes long enjoyed has to some extent been restricted as a result of a combination of measures taken by the Commonwealth Government. However a decrease in the direct provision of public nursing home beds by State and Territory Governments has seen the market share of private-for-profit proprietors actually increase slightly over the last decade.

The shift towards community support, which is probably of greater longer-term significance, is also somewhat contradictory. The provision of increased services undoubtedly enables assistance to be provided to many people previously excluded from public assistance. At the same time, however, long term care has become increasingly dependent on the

assistance provided by unpaid informal caregivers. Similarly, the extension of services by community service providers has been accompanied by a direct expansion in services provided by community controlled voluntary agencies and an increased plurality of service providers. The benefits of this development, in terms of increased social participation in the provision of assistance, may prove to be short lived if increased competition for funds is accompanied by more restrictive contractual arrangements as the field of community care is made to conform to the principles of the market.

Despite the limitations of the available evidence it seems clear that there is no single trend which has shaped developments over the past decade. The available data point instead towards increasingly complex patterns of provision. National programs such as Medicare and the Home and Community Care Program have been introduced in an attempt to extend benefits of social provision to previously under-serviced sectors of the population. Other factors - constitutional, political and economic - the effects of which have not been systematically explored in this paper, limit the capacity of the Commonwealth Government to directly provide services (see, however, Saunders and Fine, 1992). Consequently service provision has followed a number of often contradictory lines of development.

As the different levels of Australian government face these contradictory demands, the results are likely to be increasingly diversified, hybrid systems, in which government, market, voluntary and community organisations and families are increasingly interconnected. To date there has been relatively little direct privatisation of service provision in the welfare field in Australia. Rather, the form that provision takes changes as new developments are commenced and new initiatives are undertaken. This gradual shift in patterns of provision appears to be international in scope, although the way that these strategies are implemented is clearly shaped by the historical context of the local situation and complicated by the federal structure of the Australian state.

Theoretical debates, in parallel with the process of innovation in social policy, have advanced considerably in recent years. The applicability of many of these concepts to recent developments and innovations in Australian policies, however, has not been tested. Moreover, relatively little attention has been given to considering many of the practical issues,

including the points of conflict, associated with the implementation of reforms in the social policy field. Considerably more detailed research is required to identify what changes have been taking place and what their implications are for those who depend on them and for the longer term viability of Australia's welfare infrastructure.

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