



SPRC Newsletter - May 2005

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Publication details:

SPRC Newsletter
1324-4639 (ISSN)

Publication Date:

2005

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/127>

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A FORMIDABLE ACHIEVEMENT: THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPRC

BY PETER SAUNDERS, SPRC DIRECTOR 1987-PRESENT

The Social Welfare Research Centre began operating at UNSW in January 1980, at a time when Australia was crying out for a better research platform on which to base its social policy. Its work over the course of the following quarter century has more than met the expectations of those who had the wisdom and foresight to establish it. It has conducted and published important research on a broad range of social issues, organised and sponsored numerous seminars and conferences designed to inform and encourage broad debate on the underlying issues, supervised doctoral students, worked closely with government officials on research and policy themes, played a leading role in exposing Australian social policy expertise internationally and hosted visits from many of the world's leading scholars in the field.

Despite several changes to its funding arrangements, the Centre's commitment to research excellence and independent scholarship has been the hallmark of its success, nationally and internationally. Commonwealth and State governments still look to it to provide them with a balanced, independent expert assessment of current policies and for research and ideas that can inform future developments. Its notable recent successful performance in securing highly competitive Australian Research Council grants has allowed it to balance policy relevance with scholarly inquiry, further promoting its independence and analytical strengths.

As a mark of the many contributions that SPRC has made over the years, a number of individuals who have had a close involvement in its activities were

invited to describe some aspect of that association to commemorate the 25th anniversary of SPRC. The contributions contained in this issue of the SPRC Newsletter serve as testimony to the breadth of its activity and the fondness with which it is held by its constituents. The combination of serious scholarly research with the distinctively independent camaraderie of the SWRC/SPRC environment has always made for a heady mix of knowledge and enjoyment. It is a delight to see so many of the contributors illustrating this in their own ways.

The contributions span the period beginning before the SWRC formally opened in 1980, with David Stanton providing some of the earlier detail. Founding Director Adam Graycar shares some of his early experiences trying to build a new centre and while these make amusing reading,

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Peter Saunders

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♦ REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST ♦ PUBLICATION NO. NBP4766 ♦ ISSN 1324 4639 ♦

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STAFF AND VISITOR UPDATE

DEPARTURES:

JUDE BROWN has left the Centre to take up a position as Research Fellow at the University of New England.

ROGER PATULNY while continuing to complete his studies will take a full time position at the Department of Housing, New South Wales.

JACQUELINE TUDBALL has moved to the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation to complete her PhD.

ARRIVALS:

SHERMAN CHAN has commenced her PhD based at the Centre. Sherman is being supervised by Peter Saunders, and her topic is in the area of financial exclusion.

MELISSA ROUGHLEY has returned from her maternity leave and resumes her position as Business Manager.

VISITORS:

EVA FRANZEN is visiting the Centre from the National Board of Health and Welfare, in Sweden. Eva will study the areas of use of social assistance by immigrants, youth poverty and social exclusion. Her time at the Centre will add a comparative aspect to her research.

JOHN HUDSON is visiting the Centre from the University of York, UK. John Hudson's research interests include comparative social policy, the policy-making process and the implications of the information society for social and public policies.

LUJUN SUN is visiting the Centre from the China Research Centre on Ageing. Lujun has been assisting Professor Peter Saunders, and Xiaoyuan Shang on their ARC Projects.

YANLI XU is visiting the Centre from the Vocational Education College, Tianjin University, China. Yanli Xu has worked extensively in the area of intra household allocation of resources.

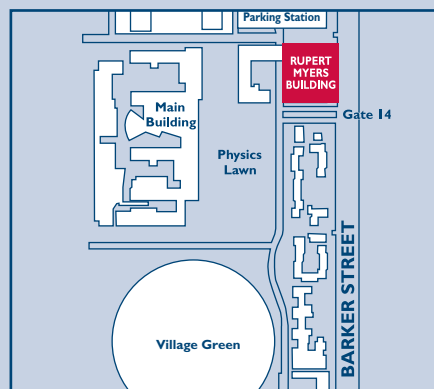
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Lyn Craig has completed her PhD and the degree has been conferred. Congratulations to Dr Lyn Craig!

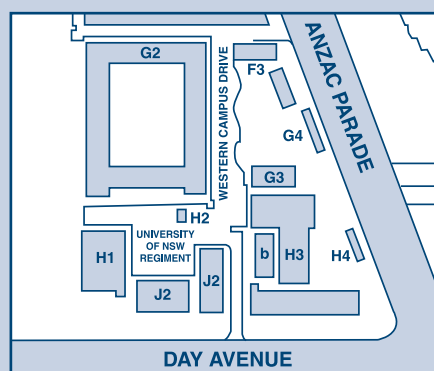
THE SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

The Social Policy Research Centre is located in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales. Under its original name, the Social Welfare Research Centre was established in January 1980, changing its name to the Social Policy Research Centre in 1990. The SPRC conducts research and fosters discussion on all aspects of social policy in Australia, as well as supporting PhD study in these areas. The Centre's research is funded by governments at both Commonwealth and State levels, by academic grant bodies and by non-governmental agencies. Our main topics of inquiry are: economic and social inequality; poverty, social exclusion and income support; employment, unemployment and labour market policies and programs; families, children, people with disabilities and older people; community needs, problems and services; evaluation of health and community service policies and programs; and comparative social policy and welfare state studies.

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



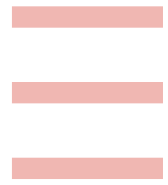
The Social Policy Research Centre is located on Level 3 of the Rupert Myers Building, South Wing, Kensington Campus. Enter by Gate 14, Barker Street.



Late June this year the Social Policy Research Centre will relocate to G2 on the Western Side of Anzac Parade, Kensington Campus, enter via Day Avenue. Map of new location is at left.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY ILAN KATZ



This is my second *From the Director* and I find myself writing at a time of great significance for SPRC – its 25th anniversary. I have not done detailed research in this area but I would guess that it is unusual for a research centre to exist for 25 years, let alone to be in the forefront of current developments in social research for all that time. It is rather daunting to be the acting director of a centre which has produced such an array of illustrious alumni and associates, but also a very exciting prospect to be involved in steering the Centre into the next phase of its development. It is clear from the contributions in this Newsletter that the Centre has thrived because it combines a number of key ingredients necessary for any successful enterprise. These ingredients are good and committed people, a strong organisational culture, a commitment to the objectives of the organisation, a capacity to adapt to different environments, strong collaborative networks and of course financial prudence. It is a testimony to the leadership and staff of the SPRC that these factors have been a continuous feature of the Centre, which have enabled it to maintain its resilience in the face of the many difficulties and threats to its existence over the years.

But what of the future role of the SPRC? Will there still be a place for a self-standing, dedicated policy research centre in another 25 years? It is virtually impossible to know, and certainly I am no Alvin Toffler, but it does seem to me that, if anything, social research will continue to play a significant role in policy development in the future. Although the relationship between policy and research is far from straightforward (a point I alluded to in my previous *From the Director*), there is increasing emphasis on evidence based policy and practice.

This means that politicians and policy makers are very loath to develop new policies or initiatives without being able to provide research evidence that the policy will ‘work’. Similarly both state and commonwealth governments now require that new policies and initiatives are evaluated to demonstrate their effectiveness. Policy evaluation has therefore become a more and more significant aspect of social research generally and of the SPRC’s activity in particular. But although the new emphasis on evidence based policy guarantees work for centres like SPRC (although not for SPRC itself, since all the research in this area is competitively tendered) it still leaves a number of gaps and issues for social research. For example, governments rarely fund research or evaluation which deals with the really big issues. Governments are (just about) willing to accept the risk that research will show that this or that policy or initiative has some defects or is less effective than they had hoped, but they are not often willing to fund research which reports on their own performance or ways of working. So, for example, we are unlikely to be invited to tender for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the State/Commonwealth relationships in the provision of early intervention. Research that does address these issues is generally labelled as ‘consultancy’ – the main difference being that the commissioner is not liable to place the results in the public domain.

Because of the increasing tendencies of policy makers to control the research agenda it is very important for a centre such as the SPRC to continue to maintain a stream of research which is not commissioned by States or the Commonwealth. ARC and other independent funded research will

continue to play a vital role in the portfolio of research programs undertaken by the SPRC, despite the fact that they are more difficult to get and use a lot of resources.

Another reason to believe that social research will continue is the persistence of the sorts of problems which the SPRC has researched over the years. Poverty, inequality, discrimination, worklessness, mental illness and homelessness all persist in our society, and some of these issues are getting worse, not better. Demographic changes are creating an older and more diverse population in Australia and other western societies, and this in turn provides ever greater challenges to policy makers in their attempts to address social problems. Social policy now also has a bearing on policy areas which in the past were seen as outside its remit – for example environmental policy, transport, agriculture etc, as governments realise the need to understand the social implications of these areas of policy.

Yet another reason to believe that social research will continue to burgeon is that policy makers are now more and more concerned to learn lessons from other countries. The positive side of this is the openness to new ideas and approaches, and comparative research can provide important insights not only into other systems but also provide a mirror to look at one’s own system in a new light.

But the downside of this development is increasing homogeneity between countries, and increasing emphasis on managerialism and bean counting rather than political ideology or vision as the basis for policy development.

So there is good reason to believe that social policy research will continue to play an important role in Australian society, and the



Ilan Katz

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AN ACHIEVEMENT WORTH CELEBRATING

BY DAVID STANTON

David Stanton served at a senior level in the Department of Family of Community Services, and is a former Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. He has been involved with the Centre in various capacities, including serving on the Research Management Committee.

Congratulations to the SPRC on their 25th Anniversary. This is quite an achievement and one well worth celebrating. I have been associated with the SPRC and its predecessor, the Social Welfare Research Centre, from the very beginning and indeed right back at the 'contemplative stages'. I consider myself as a 'good friend' of the SPRC and have sought to play a positive role in its development over the years and have worked closely with all Directors and Acting Directors. For some years I served on the Research Management Committee of the Centre.

by Departments. These issues had also been discussed as part of the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration (The Coombs Report). The Coombs Committee reported in 1976 and noted the need for enhanced policy analysis and program evaluation and the need to initiate and support studies in academic and other centres of research in the social policy area.

The Minister for Social Security, Senator Margaret Guilfoyle, announced on 10 May 1976 that the Government had decided to establish a Social Welfare Research Centre at the University of NSW. The Department of Social Security (DSS) had already been working closely with the University of NSW and had funded a Family Research Unit at the University. The Department had established close and effective working relationships with the University and, in particular, a close working relationship existed between Deputy Director General Max Wryell from DSS and Professor John Lawrence at UNSW. They shared a vision for the future of social policy research in Australia. After some extensive negotiation, Senator Guilfoyle and Professor Rupert Myers on behalf of the Commonwealth and the University of NSW eventually signed an Agreement on 22 August 1978. Then followed a search for suitable accommodation near to the University of NSW. The Commonwealth had undertaken to secure suitable accommodation 'at the earliest practicable time and make it available free of charge to the University for use by the Centre'. The Centre was initially established in a lovely converted house (soon to become overcrowded) in High Street, Randwick, next to the Prince of Wales Hospital.

Senator Guilfoyle explained the

underlying rationale for the Centre, in response to a Question Without Notice in the Senate:

'The functions of the Social Welfare Research Centre at the University of New South Wales are to undertake and sponsor research on important aspects of social welfare, to provide opportunities for post-graduate study of social welfare, to arrange seminars and conferences in the welfare field and to arrange for the publication of research results and studies produced at the Centre.

The establishment of the Social Welfare Research Centre at the University reflects a commitment by the Government to make a contribution to basic social welfare research. The Centre is not under the control of the Government and, of course, it has academic freedom. It will set its own research priorities'. (Senate Hansard, 9 November 1978, pp.1830-1)

This was the beginning of a very exciting journey. Although in time 'social welfare' was replaced by 'social policy' the underlying rationale for the Centre remained the same. Commonwealth Departments and their staff came and went, and changed their names and functions; Governments and Ministers changed; the Centre was reviewed many times (the Sax, Gruen, Baume and Castles Review Committees) and received a strong bill of health on each occasion; staff of the Centre changed and often moved on to bigger and better things; the management and advisory structures of the Centre also changed over time; and the physical location moved to the University proper.

Throughout this time the Centre has remained true to its original purpose. It has established an outstanding reputation for social

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
P.O. BOX 1 • KENSINGTON • NEW SOUTH WALES • AUSTRALIA • 2033
Social Welfare Research Centre
SWRC Newsletter
Editor: Jane Hyde
No. 1 September, 1980 ISSN 0159 9615.

SWRC NEWSLETTER will be published from time to time both to disseminate information about SWRC activities and to present information and ideas on present, proposed or completed research from other relation organizations. Readers are invited to contact Jane Hyde (02 662.3529) with contributions, and with the names of people who may like to receive future issues of SWRC Newsletter.

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I was involved in various discussions throughout the 1970s about how the area of research on social policy might be enhanced. Governments had gained experience of social policy research funding via the various National Commissions of Inquiry (such as the Poverty Inquiry) and the Social Welfare Commission, as well as the direct funding of research activity

IN THE BEGINNING...

BY ADAM GRAYCAR

Adam Graycar was the Director of the SWRC from 1980 to 1987. He is currently Director of the Cabinet Office of South Australia.

In the late 1970s there was a Chinese restaurant in the shopfront of a pair of terrace houses on the corner of High St and Eurimbla Avenue Randwick, just two blocks from the edge of the campus of the University of NSW. The terrace houses were bought by the Commonwealth Government and the University was to accommodate the new Social Welfare Research Centre (SWRC) in these houses. The rent-free houses together with what at the time was a substantial annual grant was the Commonwealth's contribution to a new venture in Social Policy research. The University was wisely opportunistic in taking on this new venture.

It was a couple of years into the term of the Fraser Government when the SWRC (as it was) was announced by the then Minister for Social Security Senator Margaret Guilfoyle, and another three years (January 1980) before the young, bright eyed and highly inexperienced Foundation Director turned up to get the ball rolling. My appointment had been announced in mid-1979 for a January 1980 start, and I spent six months commuting from Adelaide to get it started - advertise for, interview and appoint staff, sort out the building, order the desks and chairs and the paper and pencils (there were no computers). In my spare time (I had a day job at Flinders University) I thought a bit about the research agenda. The SWRC was one of several social research initiatives to commence at the same time. The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and the Australian Institute of Multicultural Studies were also formed at about the same time, though the SWRC was the only one located in a university.

We had an Advisory Committee comprising the leading academic and government people of the day, and one tension which lasted throughout my term was the

relationship with the Department that funded us. I asserted the independence of a university in choosing our research topics, and I was reminded constantly by Departmental officers that "you've got our research money". My retort was that the money had come to the University because the government thought it would get better results from us than from the Department. I have learned a bit of diplomacy since then!

The early days were quite feisty and exhilarating. We soon had about 25 staff - lots of enthusiasm, but very little experience. There was a very small academic pool from which to draw staff, as social policy was not then on the academic radar, yet large amounts of public and NGO money were spent on community and welfare programs. We had an intensely animated time trying to scope a research agenda, carry out the research and communicate it to stakeholders and the community as a whole. We were fortunate always to have Visiting Fellows, and felt chuffed that some of the world's leading social policy researchers chose to spend a few weeks or a few months with us. We learned so much from them, and this tradition has continued.

Four weeks into the job I went with Don Edgar, who then was only one week into his job as Director of AIFS, to address a meeting of Ministers of Social Welfare. We promised them the world in terms of research findings to help them shape social policy, and they didn't believe a word of what we said. They had no experience of research centres devoted entirely to the issues that mattered to them. They were sceptical and treated us politely, but somewhat dismissively, as they wanted to get on with their real work, and not clutter their reality with research findings. Twenty five years later SPRC and AIFS are still going strong, and keenly



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are invited from graduates or those who are about to graduate with a Bachelors Degree with at least Honours Class II Division I in any of the Social Sciences and who wish to undertake research for a higher degree at the University of New South Wales in a field related to Australian social welfare. The scholar will be located in the University's Social Welfare Research Centre.

The Award provides a living allowance of \$7,000 per annum: \$2,220.40 per annum for a dependent spouse and \$832 for each dependent child. Special allowances may be paid to assist with travel, setting up residence and the preparation of a thesis. These allowances are not subject to income tax.

Further information may be obtained from the Acting Director, Social Welfare Research Centre, - Tel: (02) 697-5151.

Application forms are available from the Secretary, Social Welfare Research Centre.

Applications must be lodged with the undersigned by:

1st December 1986

PO Box 1,
Kensington NSW 2033.

J.M. GANNON
Registrar.

contributing their rigorous work to policy debates.

Having a research centre in a pair of terrace houses was a lot of fun. Everybody knew it as the Chinese restaurant, and some decried the loss of good food which was replaced by analysis, argument, hot air and paper! The shopfront became the seminar room, the upstairs main bedroom was the Director's office, while the opposite large front room housed several research assistants. Other bedrooms, sitting rooms, store rooms all became offices, as did the main bathroom. The only toilets were upstairs, and the staircases were very narrow and turned several times. This was a challenge for the men who tried to move desks and bookcases up the stairs to the researchers' offices. Overall the building was an occupational health and safety nightmare.

We set a research agenda very quickly - it focused on the life cycle as well as some cross-cutting areas. Seven research teams covered these topics: the welfare of children; the welfare of families and households; the welfare of the workforce; the welfare of older

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A DISTINCTIVE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

BY JOHN LAWRENCE

John Lawrence, Emeritus Professor, School of Social Work, UNSW, was the presiding member of the SWRC Management Committee from 1980 to 1986.

My last academic hurrah is writing about social policy as an academic discipline, and a monograph on the Centre is part of it. Since my initial academic appointment in 1961 to Australia's first lectureship in social administration, this has been my own academic commitment and responsibility, but as with others in the social sciences and the helping professions, it has run parallel with a professional commitment to another discipline - in my case, social work. The Centre has been a major Australian development towards recognition of social policy as a subject in its own right, which Britain achieved under the leadership of Titmuss at the London School of Economics and Political Science in the immediate post-second world war period.

My own direct involvement with the Centre dates from the initial planning stages in the 1970s, through to my resignation as Presiding Member of the Management Board at the end of 1996. By then, the Centre had published more than 120 research monographs, its biennial national conference had become a focal point for social policy scholars (550 people attended the 1995 conference which Prime Minister Keating addressed), it had stimulated social policy debate in regular seminars and jointly-sponsored regional seminars, it had built up a network of postgraduate social policy research scholars, it had firm links with social policy centres and scholars in North America and Europe, it had begun

to establish a network of social policy thinkers and analysts in the South East Asian region, and since 1991 it was well-housed on the third floor of the new Samuels building. The Centre was into its fourth 5-year Agreement entered into by the University and Commonwealth Governments of different political complexions. Each Agreement renewal had been informed by a report from an independent committee of review.

The Centre was becoming a significant part of the research infrastructure of Australian society, although its resources were still modest when compared with its mission, and the availability of research funds in other areas. It was distinctive in its breadth of mission and its societal framework, and nothing less would have been appropriate for serious scholarship in the subject area. The model adopted for the Centre had allowed all relevant disciplines to contribute to the work of the Centre, and had allowed all agencies at the various levels of government and non-government agencies to come within its scope.

In 2000, in a press article which I sent to all of the key political figures, I described the withdrawal of core funding by the Howard Government as an act of 'social vandalism'.

The change destabilised the Centre for a considerable period. Valued staff were lost as the staffing became completely dependent on funded projects, which raised inevitable questions



Seminars 1986
SESSION 2, AUGUST to NOVEMBER
Morven Brown Seminar Room 212
9.15am to 12.30pm

Friday, 15 August: **FAMILIES WITH DISABLED CHILDREN - PROBLEMS POSED BY 'COMMUNITY CARE'**
Ms Rosemary Carr,
Lecturer in Sociology, Queensland College of Health Sciences, Litchfield, NSW
Social Aspects of Care
Dr Sara Graham,
Principal Research Officer, Department of Health and Social Security, London, UK
Economic and Related Issues

Friday, 19 September: **SOCIAL POLICY AND THE WELFARE STATE**
Dr Staffan Marklund,
Reader in Sociology, University of Umeå, Sweden
In the Welfare State 'Inventorship' - Some Comments on Scandinavia 1973-1986
Mr Francis Castles,
Senior Research Fellow,
The Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University
Thirty Maelard Years: Australian Social Security Development, 1950-80
in Comparative Perspective

Friday, 10 October: **SOCIAL WELFARE AND ETHNIC MINORITIES**
Dr Andrew Ashworth,
Reader in Sociology, The University of Wollongong, NSW
Managing Ethnic Minorities: Central Issues on the State, Welfare and Social Control
Ms Ursula Schepel,
Ethnic Health Worker, Specialty Services, South Metropolitan Health Region, NSW
Mental Health and Ageing in Ethnic Groups

Friday, 7 November: **TAXATION, SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE LIFE CYCLE**
Dr David Collins,
Senior Lecturer in Economics, Macquarie University
Direct and Indirect Taxation and Consumption
Mr Peter Whiteford,
Senior Research Fellow, Social Welfare Research Centre, University of New South Wales
Dependency, Income Support and the Life Cycle

about how the new SPARC's research agenda related to the development of social policy as a subject.

The Centre is now part of a faculty. If it greatly extends its teaching role, services social policy education in the teaching programs in the social sciences and the helping professions, develops its own degrees for people who want to study social policy in depth, and takes a leading role perhaps through its national social policy conference in trying to re-establish a national association of social policy scholars to further the subject, these first twenty-five years will have been especially notable for laying the groundwork for a really significant academic development. The recent forced changes could ironically lead to great progress for the study of social policy in Australia, given appropriate leadership and understanding how to work with the vested interests in the way of such progress.

BUILDING THE RESEARCH BASE

BY BETTINA CASS

Bettina Cass, Professor of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Sydney, was a Research Fellow at SWRC from 1980 to 1984.

The four and a half years which I spent at the Social Welfare Research Centre (as it was then named) from its establishment in 1980 until May 1984, were concerned with mapping out a corpus of research and policy analysis for the Centre. Under its Director Dr Adam Graycar, the small team of researchers, located then in a cramped but charmingly non-institutional Randwick terrace house adjacent to the campus of the University of NSW, planned projects which traversed the key policy challenges of the political, economic and social changes of the first half of the 1980s. This period was characterised by a recession which exacerbated already existing labour market transformations, leading to increased rates of unemployment and long-term unemployment and bringing an increased proportions of the population into reliance on income support as a result of their labour market marginality (Saunders, 1987). There were significant changes in family formation; increases in the rate of poverty particularly in families with children; scrutiny of family income support policies; recognition of population ageing and debates about aged care and income support (Cass, 1986). These social and economic challenges to the certainties of the post-war welfare state were met by policy measures which attempted to retrench welfare expenditures and to restrict the scope and coverage of some welfare payments and services. These developments were identified by various commentators, including those within the Social Welfare Research Centre, as a Retreat from the Welfare State (Graycar, 1983).

The Centre's work engaged with these significant policy concerns and their implications for the well-being of the Australian population, in particular the well-being of those

sectors of the population disadvantaged by economic, political and demographic changes, asking: what is the role of government in addressing these transformations in equitable ways so as to provide 'social protection'? Research projects covered the life-course: childhood and children's policy, the working-age population embedded in a transforming labour market generating high levels of unemployment; the experience of unemployment in families and regions; sole parent formation and sole parent family policies; family tax/transfer policies; the ageing of the population and aged care policies.

Taking its inspiration from the work of Titmuss, the Centre expanded the concept of welfare to include not only social transfers (the commonly held conception of welfare) but also occupational and fiscal welfare, examining tax policies and occupationally-based benefits not accessible by those sectors of the population not in employment, including people (predominantly women) providing informal care in families; people who are unemployed, severely ill or disabled; and the aged. The Centre's publications demonstrated the inequitable distribution of benefits and resources which flow when this tripartite division of welfare is explored in its interactive complexity. In addition, contributing to the research developments of the time, some Centre publications took a gendered perspective, noting that men and women are differently affected by labour market and family transformations and are differentially located in the

FORUPCOMING BOOK FROM SWRC

Retreat from the Welfare State: Australian Social Policy in the 1980s edited by Adam Graycar. Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, April 1985 (hardback \$22.95, paperback \$10.95 approx)

This book by SWRC researchers deals with the social welfare, occupational welfare and fiscal welfare components of Australian social policy in times of economic restraint and with the retreat from Welfare State principles and practices.

Contents:-

1. *Retreat from the Welfare State*, Adam Graycar
2. *Child Rearing: Direct and Indirect Costs*, Bettina Cass, Carol Keens and Diana Wyndham
3. *Child Welfare and Child Care Policies*, Tania Sweeney
4. *Occupational Welfare: Supporting the Affluent*, Adam Jamrozik, Marilyn Hoey and Marilyn Leeds
5. *Non-Institutional Care of Elderly People*, David Kinnear and Adam Graycar
6. *Unemployment and Family Support*, Bettina Cass and Pauline Garde
7. *The State and Housing: Questions of Social Policy and Social Change*, Vivienne Milligan
8. *Fiscal Welfare: Some Aspects of Australian Tax Policy*, Carol Keens and Bettina Cass
9. *Non-Government Welfare: Issues and Perspectives*, Ian Yates and Adam Graycar
10. *Universality and Selectivity: Social Welfare in a Market Economy*, Adam Jamrozik

tripartite divisions of welfare. This is far from an exhaustive list of the work published by the Centre over this period, but it indicates the salience of its fields of inquiry 25 years ago, and the continuing salience of these fields in contemporary welfare debates (Saunders, 2002; Shaver, 2000a; Borland, Gregory and Sheehan, 2001; Whiteford, 2001).

Under its new name reflecting the expansion of its research and policy analytical gaze, the Social Policy Research Centre has widened its focus to engage with contemporary economic, social and political changes and policy debates, covering: poverty and inequality; employment and unemployment; the gendered distribution of time and labour in families; family policies; policies which promote inclusion and reduce exclusion; the intersections of income support and employment; policies to reduce disincentives to labour force entry; the routes of welfare recipients into employment; the health impacts of unemployment; and inequality (to name but a sample).

If I were to nominate the most evident changes in the work of the Centre in more recent times, it would be first, the much greater

Continued on page 13

EARLY REFLECTIONS

BY LINDA ROSENMANN

Linda Roseman is Professor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Queensland. She was a Visiting Research Fellow at SWRC in 1981 and 1983.

My involvement with the SPRC or SWRC (as it was known) began in 1981 when the then director Adam Graycar offered me a place to roost in return for writing a paper for publication. It must have been fun because in 1983 I came back and spent a year there.

My experiences encapsulate some of the changes that have occurred in the conceptual underpinnings of and the tools for social policy research in the past 25 years and in the overall social environment.

In the early 1980s it was hard to find people with both interest and

skills in social policy research.

There were a few sociologists who had developed an interest in social policy during the brief flowering of social change during the Whitlam years (years that I had inexcusably sat out in the US honing my economics and research credentials), no economists and precious few people with methodological expertise. Word processing was in its infancy, so a mistake in a report meant it all had to be retyped.

A FEW MEMORIES STAND OUT

- Being attacked by several young(er) members of the Centre when I start a project on retirement incomes and superannuation (which was at a cross roads in the mid 1980's). Why? Because in doing so I had sold out to the capitalists who invested the superannuation funds from (largely) male public servants. They were however blind to the outrageous gender

bias in superannuation at the time.

- A staff meeting held to 'clear the air' over concerns by the female staff about the policy papers of one of the senior males that were seen to be anti feminist. While the air was thick as we all got the agro off our chests, he kept on writing exactly the same thing- that long day child care was anti social and children needed to be home with their mothers, and that married women were taking jobs away from youth.

- Visits from the funders - the Department of Social Security - who wanted less theory and more timely policy advice to respond to the latest ministerial inquiry.

- The visit from a Chinese delegation (yes they let them out then) who came bearing gifts. Visiting overseas delegations were so 'rare' that their gifts (after a hurried run to the supply closet) were UNSW stamped pencils. They explained to us that there was no unemployment in China- only people awaiting work assignment!

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE : SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR AUSTRALIA AND ITS REGION

The Social Welfare Research Centre and the Australian National Commission for UNESCO held a one-day Conference at the University of New South Wales on Monday 31 May 1982. The Conference formed part of a week-long UNESCO regional seminar which brought to Australia participants from ten Asian and Pacific countries. In addition to these participants, about 80 people from Australia attended the one-day Conference.

Papers were presented by Peter Karmel (Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission), Duncan Ironmonger (IAESR, University of Melbourne), Tony Vinson (University of N.S.W.) and Garth Cant (University of Canterbury, N.Z.). The papers, at this stage, have only been made available for Conference registrants and the question of whether or not additional copies will be printed or collected as a publication has not been decided. Their availability or otherwise will be advised in the next Newsletter.

IN THE BEGINNING...

CONTINUED
FROM PAGE 5

people; income maintenance and taxation; quantitative servicing and evaluation; and public policy analysis. Descriptions of the items in this agenda took up 19 pages of the first newsletter!

It was all go - we covered everything - we had more enthusiasm than experience - we were accused of having a scattergun approach, but that was fine by me because I saw the role of this new research centre as aiming at the numerous and diverse targets that needed work, and getting the issues on the public agenda. There was very little data available at the time, and very little in the way of analytical and policy frameworks, and we felt we had a contribution to make. We all believed that we

were breaking new ground. More rigor and more focus I expected would come later, once some general seeds had been sown and some ideas germinated.

Early newsletters describe the dozens and dozens of speeches and papers staff presented all over the country, the numerous seminars held in what was the dining area and kitchen of the Chinese restaurant, and the long list of publications. Our first research report was published in October 1980, and by the time I left in January 1985 we had published 51 research reports - an average of one per month, as well 27 reprints of articles in scholarly journals. We had no word processors - we wrote

in longhand and banged it out on typewriters. We also had one commercially published book written entirely by staff, *Retreat From the Welfare State* (Allen & Unwin). We had held 83 public seminars at which 113 papers were presented and contributed to many hundreds of other seminars, conferences, continuing education programs and symposia. The foundations were laid for a productive, and more focused future. The SPRC has, under Peter Saunders' subsequent leadership clearly and overwhelmingly demonstrated its commitment to focus and rigor, and firmly established itself nationally and internationally in the years following the first flush of exuberant enthusiasm.

THE STUDY OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

BY JOHN NEVILLE

John Neville, Emeritus Professor, School of Economics, UNSW. He was a member of the SPRC Management Committee from 1980-2002.

In his 2005 Manning Clark lecture Hugh Mackay spoke of the cultural revolution that Australia had experienced over the last thirty years. This revolution had four main aspects, one of which was economic. He gave two examples of the economic revolution; a rise in employment inequalities in remuneration, hours of work and conditions and increases in household income inequality, which of course was caused in part by the first-mentioned rise in inequality. Hugh Mackay listed these as among the outstanding changes in Australian society in the last thirty years. The first of these, income inequality became a major interest of the Social Policy Research Centre in the second half of the 1980s. In the middle of that decade the Australian Research Council had rated the study of income distribution at the School of Economics UNSW, as one of the outstanding areas of social science research in Australia. Thus, when in 1988 the then Minister for Social Security, Brian Howe, proposed a study of the dimensions of social and economic inequality in Australia, it was natural for the Social Policy Research Centre and the Centre for Applied Economic Research at UNSW jointly to undertake the research.

The Study of Social and Economic Inequalities, as it became known, was carried out from 1990 to 1994 and covered the decade of the 1980s. The Federal Government not only provided the core funding for this study, but also matched dollar for dollar funding from other sources, notably from the AMP Society and the Myer Foundation. The Study published five monographs. The most

substantial two were concerned with inequality, living standards and the social wage and with the relative contribution of economic and demographic factors to changes in income inequality. In addition data resulting from the study was used by senior academics associated with the study to write articles published in academic journals.

The Study became an important pioneering study in the use of data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics household income and expenditure surveys to reveal the extent of income inequality in Australia and to analyze changes on the degree of inequality. If one had to sum up in one sentence the overall picture that emerged, it would be that in the 1980s income rose rapidly in the top 20 percent of households (most importantly, because of changes in investment and self employment income), but also grew relatively rapidly in the bottom 20 percent, especially in the first half of the 1980s because of the increase in social security benefits in 1983-84 and 1984-85. However, such a brief summary is a caricature of the findings of a study noted for the complexity of the issues examined and the subtleties of its conclusions.

ANNOUNCEMENT
SOCIAL WELFARE RESEARCH CENTRE
National Conference
Social Policy in Australia:
What Future for the Welfare State?

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

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

The Major Themes of the Conference will be:

1. **Ideology, Philosophy and Political Environment of Social Policy**
Issues of equality, equity, social justice, social theory/theories of welfare, class, gender, multiculturalism, Aboriginal society.
2. **Economic Environment of Social Policy**
Issues of employment/unemployment, private/public mix, demographic trends, welfare finance, the public sector, the private market.
3. **Income Maintenance/Income Security**
Issues of income support, taxation, income and wealth, the social wage, fiscal and occupational welfare.
4. **Community Resources and Services**
Issues of health, education, child care, housing, aged care, care of disabled, formal and informal care, professions, community development, self-help groups.
5. **From Policy to Practice**
Issues of Commonwealth/State relations, the non-government sector, administration and legislation, service delivery, rights and interests of clients-consumers.

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

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

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

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

The study had its weaknesses of course, mainly due to what was not studied. Partly because of the data sources used it concentrated on economic inequalities and even so there was little on gender issues and inequalities in access to employment. Nevertheless, it was a milestone in the study of economic inequalities in Australia and many have built on its work, both within the SPRC and elsewhere.

SPRC'S INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

BY SHEILA SHAVER

Sheila Shaver is Pro-vice Chancellor for Research and Professor, University of Western Sydney. She was Deputy Director of the SPRC from 1990 to 2002.

From its inception as the Social Welfare Research Centre, SPRC has been internationally outward looking. It has been host to visitors from many countries and a range of social policy traditions. The Centre has run outstanding programs of seminars, and its researchers have been able to take in-house conversations with stellar academics and policy-makers almost for granted. This tradition has expanded over the years to include researchers, government officials, students and activists from most parts of the world.

It was my good fortune to be there during the 1990s when this international outlook began to inform the Centre's research program, and my particular good fortune to enjoy the mind-expanding opportunities that came with it. It took its most influential form in the advent of comparative international study of social policy, a research genre that was already established at SPRC when I came.

The growth in comparative international study was led by an international and interdisciplinary dialogue between economics and political sociology. Comparative data projects such as the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) enabled new questions to be asked about the winners and losers from different types of policies, and especially the distributional outcomes of social policies in different countries. Political sociologists drew on international comparison of policy histories and policy instruments to ask new theoretical questions about political mobilisation and welfare state development.

Australian social policy was interestingly situated in such comparison. Because Australia's policy institutions were internationally unusual, they had largely been studied in provincial

isolation. Viewed through a comparative lens, the antipodean 'wage earners' welfare states' (as Frank Castles termed them) became interesting cases for everyone, potentially illuminating exceptions to the principles underlying welfare state development in Europe and North America.

These debates found their most lively forum in the annual meetings of International Sociological Association's Research Committee 19, on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy. For my chance to participate in RC 19 I owe a lot to Peter Saunders, who sacrificed his own membership to give me the single attendance at these meetings

ONE DAY SEMINAR : NON-GOVERNMENT WELFARE ORGANISATIONS IN AUSTRALIA

The Centre is planning to hold a full day seminar at the University of New South Wales on Thursday 17th June 1982. Papers will be presented on topics covering non-government welfare and the state; profiles and classifications of agencies in Australia; agencies' relations with government (with speakers from government and from agencies); and the place of volunteers. The program will also allow ample time for discussion.

Further details of the program and the speakers will be available from the Centre in due course. If you are interested in attending the seminar please telephone (02) 662 3529 or write to the Information Officer and request that your name and address be put on a mailing list for receipt of the program and venue details as soon as they are finalised.

that he thought SPRC could afford. RC 19 has discussed theory, method and measurement, policy and politics across an increasingly wide range of countries and welfare institutions. Gender was a contentious thread of debate in RC19 for much of the 1990s, and it gave the forum in which Julia O'Connor, Ann Shola Orloff and I tested the arguments that became *States, Markets, Families* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). This year's meeting will be in Chicago, with how to theorise racial and ethnic inequality a central issue on the program.

SPRC researchers have been important contributors to the international social policy scholarship of its quarter century. The Centre has provided, in association with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, primary support for Australia's participation

in LIS. Using LIS and other data, SPRC researchers have contributed scholarly work of lasting value on poverty and inequality, the relative capacities of cash and in kind provision in reducing social inequality, child poverty, and the methodological limits of comparative international measurement of well-being.

By the second half of the 1990s, SPRC researchers were also conducting comparative international research on attitudes to inequality and on how people use their time. Other studies have been qualitative, and owed more to sociology and political science than to economics. These have included

community development organisations in Canada and Australia, and the comparative development of social policy regimes in Sweden, Japan and Australia.

Perhaps most importantly for us, comparative international social policy research has helped Australia

understand its own policy choices and policy possibilities. Australian income security policies rely more extensively on means testing than those of most other countries. We have learned that this makes our safety net very efficient in its use of public funds, but highly vulnerable to shifts in political support for welfare. We have also learned that means testing creates disincentives to employment through high effective marginal tax rates, and that such disincentives are especially problematic here. Australia is not alone in experiencing a sea change in welfare politics attaching a new moral urgency to employment. Comparative perspectives will be particularly important in understanding how Australia can resolve the tensions that economic disincentives create in adapting its welfare system to this sea change.

REMINISCENCES OF A SOCIAL SCIENCE GEEK

BY BRUCE BRADBURY

Bruce Bradbury is currently a Senior Research Fellow at the SPRC, joining SWRC in 1983.

In 1983 I started work at the Social Welfare Research Centre as a 'programmer-in-training'. In some respects, that still describes my job now (at least the fun parts of it!). Consequently, I thought I would take this opportunity to reflect a little on the way in which the role of computers in quantitative social research has changed since then.

In many respects, not much has changed at all, with many aspects of quantitative methods fundamentally unchanged. The most common statistical models used by social scientists have been around for a long time. Even statistical computing has not changed as much as you might think, with the basic structure of commonly used software such as SPSS and SAS well established by the end of the 1970s. The change to a PC rather than a mainframe-based computer architecture has led to an increase in the use of graphical presentations of data. However, these changes have been less than many might have expected 20 years ago, with the expectations of widespread use of advanced visualisation approaches yet to be realised.

Nonetheless, there have been a few technological changes to the way that both quantitative and qualitative social scientists do their work ...

Computers are faster, have more capacity and are easier to use – even though they still crash. When I started, the SWRC had an Apple II computer, plus a computer terminal that connected to the University's Cyber mainframe computer via an acoustic coupler modem – the type that requires you to put the telephone handpiece into a box. This communicated at the princely speed of 300 bits per second (my home broadband connection is now 10,000 times faster). The Centre had just completed a large survey of non-

government organisations and my first job was to run SPSS programs reporting on the results.

I was soon working for Joan Vipond analysing some of the first Household Unit Record Files released by the ABS. The release of these, and subsequent national unit record databases, had a major impact on social policy research. In this case, the analysis by others and us on poverty and housing costs contributed to the realisation that poverty in Australia had shifted from being mainly a problem for the elderly to now being of serious concern for working age families. (This still remains the case).

These data files, like just about all data files of any significance in those days, came on large 12-inch tape reels. You may have seen them in old movies showing banks of computers with tape drives spinning. These tape drives (almost) don't exist anymore – which I discovered recently when trying to recover some of our old ABS datasets. Fortunately, one person at UNSW had the good sense to keep an old drive (thanks Patrick).

When I first started, SWRC reports generally went through three stages of editing. First, the author hand-wrote their text. This was then typed up (on electric typewriters). This was then corrected and a final version typed, which was then sent off to the printer. Nowadays, of course, modern word-processing software allows us to put our documents through many more rounds of editing – I'm sure you'll all agree that the quality is much better.

The SWRC's Apple II computer was not initially used for word-processing. Instead, its main purpose was to manage the Centre's mailing list and print out labels. One of my early tasks was to organise the purchase and installation of our first hard disk: a

THE WELFARE STAKES : STRATEGIES FOR AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL POLICY

Professor Ronald Henderson has edited this recently published book from the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research. Two of the eight chapters have been written by SWRC staff : Chapter 3 "Wages, Women and Children" by Bettina Cass, and Chapter 5 "Social and Political Constraints" by Adam Graycar. Other authors are Ronald Henderson, Martin Rein, Concetta Benn, Andrew Burbridge, Ian Manning, and Ronald Mendeisohn.

In his introduction to the book, Professor Henderson writes that Australia in the 1980s is going to be a hard country for the disadvantaged; there are going to be many more people needing help and it is going to be more difficult to provide adequate welfare and community services. In many respects Australian welfare policy is out of tune with the times. The authors of *The Welfare Stakes* take issue with a widely held view of welfare as a redistribution downwards from the upper and middle classes to the working and non-working poor. They have tried together to re-think what is needed to achieve a genuine welfare state.

The book is available from the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne or from bookshops, price \$6.95.

box costing several thousand dollars, almost the size of small PC, and with the amazing capacity of 2mb! (By comparison, my \$100 memory stick has a capacity 100 times this). Our mailing list software was written (by me) in DBaseII.

This worked reasonably well, though there were some complications. When the Apple II crashed there was no 'friendly' system error message nor even the less encouraging 'blue screen of death'. Instead, a serious 'crash' would cause the monitor to be covered in random blinking characters of various colours. Quite pretty, and effective in communicating the message that something serious was wrong.

Unfortunately, soon after I put our mailing list software up, the machine would crash whenever one of the SWRC secretaries, Jenny Young, started to add entries. It always worked when I tried it. Now, this is a problem that I still encounter (things only failing to work for other people). However, in this case the solution soon became clear. The machine was sensitive to static electricity, and only one of us was wearing stockings. You can imagine Jenny's response to my suggested solution to this technical problem!

A FORMIDABLE ACHIEVEMENT: THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPRC

CONTINUED
FROM PAGE 1

his efforts were critical in setting the foundation on which others were able to build. John Lawrence – one of the Centre’s longest serving and most enthusiastic supporters – describes how SPRC has contributed to the (on-going) evolution of social policy in Australia, and Bettina Cass points to some of its important research contributions. Linda Rosenman and Bruce Bradbury both illustrate how much the institutional environment for research has changed over the last 25 years – their memories from ‘the old ways’ suggesting that this has not always been for the better. John Nevile and Sheila Shaver highlight two areas where the SPRC has been a world leader – in

its studies of inequality, and in bringing a comparative perspective to Australian analysis and debate.

For my own part, I count myself enormously fortunate to have been associated with the Centre since its very early days, and to have been its Director for the last 18 years. There have been some difficult times (who has not seen some over this turbulent period for Australian society and research), but these have been greatly overshadowed by the sheer enjoyment of working in an environment that has practised the many virtues that contribute to successful social policy – mutual support, a sense of common purpose, a good balance between individual effort and collective

responsibility, and a desire to speak frankly about how and where research can contribute.

It would not be appropriate to single out any of the many individuals whose dedication and commitment have contributed to the ideals that are embodied in all aspects of SPRC. Those who know us will be all too aware of where credit is due. For my part, being part of the journey has been its own reward; I cannot think of a more stimulating or supportive environment in which to have worked and I am grateful to the many colleagues and companions who have made it such a fascinating and important journey. May there be many more such anniversaries to come!

AN ACHIEVEMENT WORTH CELEBRATING

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FROM PAGE 4

policy research both in Australia and overseas; it has made a major contribution to original theoretical research (particularly in the areas of poverty measurement and inequality) as well as the more practical and applied policy analysis research and evaluation; it has maintained a multi-disciplinary approach and has engaged in successful collaborative activity; it has trained many in the field who now work in Government, academia or the community sector; it has produced an excellent publications series and a very

useful regular Newsletter; a stimulating public Seminar Series was established; and the Australian Social Policy Conference has become a must once every two years for all in the field. The Centre also hosted many distinguished international visitors and sought to benchmark its research activities at the international level.

These achievements are very much to the credit of the staff of the Centre and the leadership provided by various Directors and Acting Directors. In particular

Professor Peter Saunders, as Director since 1987, has given the Centre strong leadership as well as a personal example of outstanding scholarship. The SPRC is now a University Centre with a more diverse funding base but has continued to be true to its core purpose of seeking to make a difference in the contested area of social policy through the excellence of its research and dissemination activities. I wish the Institute all the very best on its 25th Anniversary and continuing success in the future.

NEW SPRC REPORT

Michael Fine, Kuru Pancharatnam and Cathy Thomson, Coordinated and Integrated Human Service Delivery Models, SPRC Report 1/05, report prepared for the New South Wales Cabinet Office, and Premier’s Department. Available at www.sprc.unsw.edu.au



SPRC is well placed to remain at the cutting edge of these developments. The recent integration of the Centre into the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences potentially provides an opportunity for the SPRC to engage more proactively in post graduate teaching and collaboration with schools in the faculty, and if this is managed well then it can only strengthen the Centre.

However the picture is not all rosy for the SPRC and there continue to be considerable challenges ahead. The withdrawal of the SPRC core grant was a harbinger of the direction of change in our sector. Research tenders are becoming more and more competitive, and every project now has to be fought for. The

university sector is facing major financial difficulty, and there is a real prospect of fundamental changes to the way universities and research organisations are funded – and most of the scenarios for the future shape of tertiary education will entail increased competition and fewer resources. Humanities and social sciences are currently under particular threat as the Government considers focusing funding on fewer universities and on the ‘hard’ physical sciences. We cannot assume that just because the SPRC has had such an auspicious past it will necessarily continue into the future as it is. The SPRC will have to adapt and develop in response to the changing environment and to perhaps even to set the agenda. By continuing to

attract the best people, and by anticipating new developments in social policy and the research implications of these, the SPRC can remain one of the pre-eminent research centres in the country. I am confident that we have the capacity to vigorously take up the challenges which lie ahead in the next 25 years. But the SPRC should not simply exist for its own sake. Although we are now constituted more or less like a business, our *raison d’être* will continue to be to provide robust research which will give policy makers the information they require to address the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society.

BUILDING THE RESEARCH BASE

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inclusion of social policies under States’ jurisdiction, in addition to Commonwealth policy in the Australian federal structure. This has broadened the consideration of family and children’s policies, and policies for people with disabilities and their carers. Second, much of the recent work of the Centre has taken a comparative international perspective, looking at the UK, other European countries, USA, New Zealand, Canada, many Asian countries, bringing Australia into the forefront of welfare regime analysis and considering a range of alternative policy means for meeting the welfare state challenges of the 21st century.

In the current period dominated by the ‘new welfare’ concerned with reducing welfare receipt and increasing labour force participation for virtually all people of workforce age; and concerned with redefining the obligations between individuals, communities and government (Shaver, 2001b; Sainsbury, 2002; McClelland, 2002), the Centre sits in a well-defined place to explore the individual and community capacity-building policies and programs

necessary to facilitate social and economic participation. May the next 25 years continue to enable the Social Policy Research Centre to flourish, to bring detailed research evidence to bear on urgent policy debates which impact so substantially on the distribution of income and well-being in Australia.

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NEW DISCUSSION PAPERS

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND WELFARE: DEPENDENCY OR DIVISION? EXAMINING BRIDGING TRENDS BY WELFARE REGIME, 1981 TO 2000

Roger Patulny

SPRC Discussion Paper No. 138
February 2005

Social capital is a contentious and multifaceted topic. A broad consensus has been reached, however, that norms such as trust, networks of association membership, and practices of volunteering and socializing are essential to its makeup. It is also increasingly recognized that such elements fall into two distinct types of social capital – bonding and bridging. Social structural influences, such as welfare, have an effect upon social capital. A common conservative conception is that welfare induces dependency and thereby erodes social capital; this can be called the ‘dependency hypothesis’. I suggest this is largely limited to bonding capital only, however. I suggest an alternative, that welfare cutbacks or contingencies upon mutual obligation or status preservation is socially divisive. I call this the ‘division hypothesis’, and it is relevant to the more definitively positive bridging capital. This paper shows trends in bridging social capital in nine OECD countries of differing welfare regime type from 1981 to 2000. It uses data from the most recent versions of the World Values Survey and Multinational Time Use Study. It suggests that welfare regime type, and importantly, welfare regime re-structuring, bears strong relations to national levels of bridging social capital.

FOSTER CARERS IN NEW SOUTH WALES: PROFILE AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON ABS CENSUS DATA

Peter Siminski, Jenny Chalmers and Marilyn McHugh

SPRC Discussion Paper No. 139
March 2005

Empirical data on the characteristics of foster carers in New South Wales (NSW) are sadly lacking. Using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing and other data, for a study commissioned by the NSW Department of Community Services, this paper provides up to date information to address the gap. Analysis of Census data indicate that foster carers are most likely to be women aged 35-54 years, not in the labour force. Of the various family types, once age differences are taken into account, couples with birth children are least likely to foster. Couples with birth children account for two-fifths of all carers. Higher rates of fostering were found in relatively disadvantaged areas. Projected increases in female labour force participation are expected to contribute to a decline (or to slower growth) in the number of foster carers over the next decade.

VALUES AND VOTES IN GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Kate Norris and Roger Patulny

SPRC Discussion Paper No. 140
March 2005

Sustainability is fashionable and becoming more important to the general policy discourse on protecting the environment. However, despite government adopting a National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development some twelve years ago, Australia’s performance on crucial items such as emissions of carbon dioxide equivalents remains poor. Arguably then, for the environmental cause to be advanced substantially, not only must people’s attitudes toward protecting the environment change, but also their voting intentions so as to send a signal to the major political parties. This paper presents internationally comparative research using data from the most recent waves of the World Values Survey. Changes in preferences associated with support for the environment are contrasted against changes in intentions to vote for Green political parties. Results indicate the strength and direction of the Green movement, and highlight gaps in the conversion of environmental values into votes.

NEW PROJECTS

HOW ARE THEY SURVIVING? THE LIVES OF COMMONWEALTH DEPENDENT OLDER AUSTRALIANS (65 AND OVER) IN PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION IN SYDNEY

The research aims to establish how older Australians who are primarily dependent on a Commonwealth benefit for income are surviving. It is premised on the notion that this grouping is certainly one of the most vulnerable groupings in our society and is likely to grow considerably over the next 20 years as more and more people find it impossible to purchase their own home and the freeze on public housing continues. An important part of the study will be to assess whether the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) policy is allowing older renters to access and retain adequate accommodation. Another focus is to examine the impact of social networks. It is likely that those older residents who are coping have more highly developed social networks that they can draw on in times of economic hardship.

PUBLICATIONS AND MAILING LIST

SPRC DISCUSSION PAPERS (FREE)

The Discussion Paper below has been posted to the SPRC Website:

Roger Patulny, *Social capital and welfare: dependency or division? Examining bridging trends by welfare regime, 1981-2000*, SPRC Discussion Paper No. 138, February 2005 <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/dp/DPI38.pdf>

Peter Siminski, Jenny Chalmers and Marilyn McHugh, *Foster carers in New South Wales: profile and projections based on ABS census data*, SPRC Discussion Paper No. 139, March 2005 <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/dp/DPI39.pdf>

Kate Norris and Roger Patulny, *Values and votes in global sustainability*, SPRC Discussion Paper No. 140, <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/dp/DPI40.pdf>

MAILING LISTS (FREE)

- SPRC Email Notices *You will receive email updates about events at SPRC*
- SPRC Newsletter Mailing List *You will receive Newsletters regularly*
- SPRC Annual Report Mailing List *You will receive Annual Reports*

MAILING ADDRESS

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AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL POLICY CONFERENCE 2005

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: A QUARTER CENTURY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

20-22 JULY 2005, UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Professor Nancy Folbre
Department of
Economics, University of
Massachusetts
*Our children, ourselves:
rethinking the economics of
family policy*



**Professor Holly
Sutherland**
Institute for Social and
Economic Research,
University of Essex
*Can child poverty be
abolished? Promises and
policies in the UK*



**Professor Peter
Saunders**
Social Policy Research
Centre, UNSW
*Researching social policy:
trends, tragedies and
triumphs*



Linda Burney MP
Member of the Legislative
Assembly and Member for
Canterbury, NSW
*Reconciliation – the journey:
is there a destination and can
we get there?*

FORUMS

Provisional titles for forum sessions include the following. Further information about these will be available from the conference website as they are finalised.

- The roots of riots: understanding the causes of youth crime and community disturbances

- Distributing the costs of raising children
- God and the state: the role of faith-based organisations in social welfare
- A place in the sun? Social policy and the environment in Australian cities
- Disability and work: inclusion or coercion?

CONTRIBUTED PAPER STREAMS

- Employment, unemployment and welfare reform
- Income distribution and social inequalities
- The work/family balance
- Retirement and ageing
- Childhood and child well-being
- Indigenous Australians

- Citizenship and disability
- Spatial dimensions of social policy
- Social policy and environmental sustainability
- Organisation and delivery of community services
- Open

CONFERENCE DINNER:

21 July, Dockside Restaurant, Cockle Bay Wharf, Darling Harbour, with after-dinner entertainment from the enigmatic *Spooky Men's Choral*

For further information and see: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/ASPC2005>

Email: ASPC2005@unsw.edu.au or ph 02 9385 7802