President's Report

Funding

Since I last wrote the news we had been hoping for finally arrived. The Commonwealth Government has announced a substantial funding increase for all four of the Learned Academies and the National Academies Forum.

The Review of the Learned Academies conducted in 2005 recommended that the Commonwealth's annual grant-in-aid to our Academy be increased to $660,000. We hoped to secure that increase as part of the announcement of the Commonwealth budget in 2006, but that did not happen. It is therefore particularly encouraging that the grant for 2008 is to be increased to an estimated $724,000.

The grant for the National Academies Forum, for which the Academy of Social Sciences assumed responsibility at the beginning of this year, will also be increased above the $150,000 recommended by the Review to an estimated $165,000.

We have already written to the Minister to express our appreciation of this substantial augmentation of our capacity. We owe our thanks also to all those who argued the case for the funding increase. Among them Sue Richardson played a particularly important role.

The Executive and Secretariat are currently discussing the ways in which this injection of additional money can be used to serve our objectives. As you know, we had to restrict some important programs this year because of a shortage of income, and we shall now be able to ensure that they operate to their full potential. We think there are new ways in which Fellows can be provided with additional opportunities to promote their disciplines and the social sciences generally. Recommendations will be brought forward to the Academy at the Annual General Meeting, and we would welcome suggestions from Fellows.

Saving Lives

Earlier this year I was a guest at the annual dinner of the Australian Academy of Science. The senior Academy does these things in style, so John Beaton and I donned dinner suits and travelled by bus to Parliament House. The Governor-General was the after-dinner speaker, so it was necessary to wait outside while a security sweep was completed before we could be allowed into the Great Hall.

Mingling with other guests in the rapidly cooling Canberra evening, I soon struck up a conversation with a group of younger scientists — the Academy of Science arranges for a good number of Early Career Researchers to attend its annual meeting, a practice we might well imitate. I was struck by the enthusiasm of these younger researchers, and asked them about the program. They had spent the morning listening to presentations from newly elected fellows, and in the afternoon there were some special sessions, including one on media.

That seemed to me to be an area that properly belonged to our Academy or the Humanities, so I asked them what it involved. It turned out to consist of workshops

where those experienced in media presentations advised them on how to present their work to journalists.

'How did you get on?' I asked. Not well, they told me. Each of the participants was asked to give a sixty-second summary of their research, and each one of them made the mistake of taking the cue literally. So this one tried to explain her search for a crucial gene, and that one talked about the next generation of fibre optics.

This was not what their instructors wanted. No-one will be interested in such technicalities, these young researchers were told; your audience will only be interested in how many lives your work will save.

Most of us are all too familiar with the television news item on some new breakthrough in medical knowledge: the researcher appears before a background sporting the logo of the university and its affiliated research institute ('What we have found…', the chief investigator announces). A patient expresses delight that her affliction can now be treated. The claims are presented with an unquestioning acceptance ('Doctors say…', the 7 pm ABC news informs viewers) that anyone working on some contentious area of social sciences or humanities finds miraculous.

The young researchers with whom I spoke shared my disappointment that the science itself, the excitement of working on the frontier of knowledge, the testing of hypotheses, the debating of alternative approaches to the problem, the piecing together of partial and incomplete understandings, were dismissed as un-newsworthy.

Making money opens a lot of doors but saving lives has an irresistible appeal; and medical research has undoubtedly saved many lives. The eradication of virulent diseases, the control of infection, the repair and replacement of body parts; these and other advances in preventive medicine and medical intervention have greatly reduced premature mortality.

But has medical research saved more lives than the improvements in production of food and other essentials? How might we calculate the contribution of welfare measures? What about the improvement of lives through various branches of the social sciences and the enrichment of lives brought by the humanities? If we were to attempt some comparative analysis, we would be dependent on economists and demographers, sociologists and historians, and I suspect that the philosophers would have the final call.

The obvious and compelling utility of medical research has long been entrenched. The National Health and Medical Research Council preceded by a full quarter-century the establishment of the Australian Research Grants Committee as a source of Commonwealth funding. Neither the ARGC, nor the ARC that succeeded it, have ever directed more than a quarter of their funds to the social sciences and humanities — and the annual announcement of Federation Fellows emphasises this disparity of esteem. The NHMRC, moreover, has continued to take the lead in areas of research policy, notably the code of ethical requirements that are imposed on all other forms of research.

Of course we need to maintain support for medical research, just as we need to enhance public support for the Australian research effort - a point made with particular force recently by Simon Marginson, who is just one of our Fellows who speaks with authority on this subject. But we are poorly served by the contrived appeal to saving lives that so often serves as the public rationale of such support.

These were the thoughts stimulated by my conversation with the young scientists outside Parliament House, and we agreed that whenever the opportunity arose, we would prefer to talk about the substance of our research.

Research Quality Framework (RQF)

The same thoughts revived on subsequent occasions when the Academy has been involved in discussion of the research assessment exercise planned for Australian universities.

Early in June I participated in a forum organised by the Group of Eight universities to discuss the design and operation of the Research Quality Framework that Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) is still developing for implementation early next year. Glyn Davis and Doug McEachern were the contributors to the discussion, along with Stuart Cunningham, as president of CHASS.

As many of you will know, the Australian variant of this increasingly common exercise is to make separate assessment of research quality and research impact (and it is particularly unfortunate that DEST has chosen the term impact to mean something quite different from the way it is understood in the international research community).

More recently the Academy has responded to the release on 29 June of DEST's Draft RQF Submission Specifications. Throughout the development of the RQF, membership of one or more of the Learned Academies has been accepted as an important form of recognition of outstanding achievement in research. But the Draft Submission Specifications fail to include it as a measure of esteem in the assessment exercise. As President of the National Academies Forum, I consulted with the other academies and drafted a submission to DEST, drawing attention to this omission.

Academy officers

At the end of last year Michael Keating's term in the chair of the Policy and Advocacy Committee came to an end. This has been a particularly important Committee, both in advancing the purposes of the Academy and securing much greater recognition of its work. Michael's career has embraced research and the highest level of public administration, and through his leadership we have built much closer links between researchers in the social sciences and policy makers. He generously agreed to remain in the chair until we could replace him.

I was therefore delighted that Glenn Withers has agreed to take over chairing the Policy and Advocacy Committee. He too has moved between academic activity and senior posts in the public service, and we are fortunate that someone so well suited to leading our policy and advocacy activities is willing to do so. We shall need to find a new Honorary Treasurer, but until the end of the year he will continue in that office.

By the time this issue of *Dialogue* reaches you, I shall be settling in to Harvard as the professor of Australian Studies. During my absence Sue Richardson will be acting as President, and I am most grateful to her for doing so. Email shrinks distance, and will enable me to keep in close contact with the Academy as well as my doctoral students. I shall be back in Australia for the AGM in November, and hope to see you at our Symposium.

Stuart Macintyre
President

(Some of) Our National Institutions

The Australian Institute of Sport
Shane Collins and Mick Green

Introduction

Historically, sport has played an important part in Australian society, both as a leisure pursuit and more recently as a way to display the nation's sporting prowess. To play cricket and win against England not only reaffirmed Australia's sporting prowess but also reconfirmed Australia's emergence from colonial status.[1] Moreover, Australia's sporting history has promoted a 'can-do' culture, where the little 'Aussie battler' was able to overcome the odds and grasp success. Failure to support Australian athletes in their quest for sporting glory was not something to be easily tolerated, as Labor Prime Minister Hawke affirmed when commenting after the Australian syndicate successfully lifted the America's Cup for the first time in 132 years: 'I don't think there's been a greater moment of pride for Australia in what you've done, not only winning but the way you won … I reckon all of Australia was blowing … any boss who sacks anyone for not turning up to work would be a bum'.[2] Along with a deep pride in its international success, Australia has promoted itself as a clean sporting nation, one that supports the level playing field and 'fair play' while being a crusader against illegal performance-enhancing drugs.[3] However, a culture has developed, some might say even an obsession, with winning which has emerged since the 1970s, where 'participating' at the elite level is no longer considered sufficient.

Australian sport has long been considered an exemplar for elite sporting success; an impressive 58 medals at the 'home' Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, and 49 medals at the 2004 Athens Olympics being recent high points. Olympic success has been supported with a raft of world champions across a range of sports including cricket, rugby, netball, squash, triathlon and water skiing to name but a few.[4] Yet, there has been little sustained interrogation of the implications of such a dedicated focus on elite sporting success.[5] One way of filling this lacuna is to explore the role of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), the core agency in Australian sport designed and established with the sole intention of producing world-class athletes. The AIS, in collaboration with national sporting organisations (NSOs), is key in delivering the elite sport policy of the Australian federal government. Sustained funding for elite sport over the past 25 years or so has met with, at times, sporadic yet largely ignored calls for increased investment in grassroots sport, recreation and physical activity.[6] The increasingly large amounts of federal government funding has met with some criticism however, resulting in questions regarding whether federal funding for sport should be more evenly distributed. The AIS and its role in developing the country's elite athletes is integral to debates regarding policy priorities for sport in Australia.

In considering the establishment of the AIS and the associated elite sport focus in Australia this article considers the following areas. A short overview of the establishment of the AIS is followed by an outline of sustained funding for the AIS and elite sport despite federal government rhetoric which suggests that supporting mass sport is also an important sport policy priority. Whether the investment in the AIS and elite sport is/has been money well spent is explored along with the inevitable downside of an over-reliance on federal government funding by NSOs. Here, the extent to which Olympic sports are prioritised by

the federal government to the exclusion of many other NSOs and sporting bodies is interrogated, revealing that the 'few' are receiving the majority of funding, effectively excluding other, equally valid sporting endeavours from being equitably funded. Finally, the 'elite sport treadmill' upon which Australia now finds itself is discussed through an examination of the dominant discourses that have enabled the AIS and elite sport funding to continue largely unchallenged.

Establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport

Arguably, the key defining moment for sport in Australia during the 1980s was the establishment in 1981 of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). Prior to this, government intervention in Australian sport was characterised by a commitment to fostering mass participation with the development of elite performance a secondary concern.[7] Calls for the establishment of a National Institute of Sport occurred as early as 1973 with the publication of the Bloomfield Report. This was supported in 1975 when the Coles Report, which focused on elite athlete development, recommended a centre of excellence for Australian elite athletes. However, it was the disappointing results at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games, where no gold medals were won by Australian athletes, accompanied by the divisiveness of the Moscow Olympic Games that led the Liberal coalition government to reconsider its policies for sport. Alongside poor international sporting results was a growing Commonwealth government awareness of the public concern regarding the demise of Australian sport on the international stage. It was perhaps unsurprising then that, after a public opinion poll which showed that 70 per cent of Australians believed there should be more government investment in sport, there was cross-party support for the establishment of an elite sport institute: indication of a converging of elite sport policy that had not previously existed between the country's major political parties. Moreover, politicians also began to realise the potential vote-winning power of being associated with elite sport success, in particular, at the Olympic Games. Not only did success in top international competition help build and promote national identity it was also advantageous in building a successful political career.[8]

The AIS opened in Canberra on Australia Day in 1981 with the aim of restoring pride in Australia through elite sporting success. It was 'seen by the government as a crucial policy innovation designed to enhance Australian prospects in international competition'.[9] Modelled on the successful East German and Chinese sporting systems the AIS was initially established in Canberra, born out of a $2.7 million grant, to provide a range of services for elite athletes, all aimed at improving performance and increasing the likelihood of success in international competition.[10] From the beginning, the AIS was dubbed the 'gold medal factory', indicating its primary function in the Australian sporting environment.[11] Criticism surrounding the narrow range of sports located at the Canberra site and the overly-centralised nature of its operation resulted in gradual decentralisation: beginning with just eight sports in 1981, the AIS now operates 35 programs across 26 sports in eight states, with several sports such as cycling, triathlon and a number of winter sports based overseas for certain periods of the year.[12]

Elite sport and the Australian Institute of Sport

In 1983 the Labor government doubled the amount of funding for sport and, together with the establishment of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in 1985, signalled a growing commitment to support and fund (elite) sport. Operating under the Australian Sports Commission Act (1989), the ASC, funded by the federal government and managed by a board appointed by the Minister, was established with the intention that political interference in sport should be eliminated.[13] Initially the AIS remained separate from the ASC but in

1987 the two organisations amalgamated, with the ASC becoming the coordinator of all AIS programs. It is therefore not surprising that underlying the ASC's stated mission to 'enrich the lives of all Australians through sport' were the dual objectives of addressing the development of elite and grassroots sport.[14] However, from the establishment of the AIS in 1981 and the ASC in 1985, the ability or indeed desire of the federal government to achieve these twin objectives was called into question when Labor's 1983 'election promise of seventy-five community leisure centres … was quietly dropped'.[15] It was argued that the amalgamation of the ASC and the AIS was in part aimed at neutralising the, albeit, 'passive', arguments surrounding the balancing of the twin objectives relating to mass sport and elite sport.[16] Over the ensuing 25 years the level of funding allocated to elite sport, through the AIS and associated high performance programs of NSOs, indicated that the objective of increasing participation was to be given a much lower priority.

Although it is difficult to disaggregate the various levels of funding with any certainty, it is possible to ascertain that funding over the past 25 years or so has focused increasingly on support for elite sport.[17] While it is difficult to establish the exact level of funding allocated to the AIS it is not unreasonable to expect that the increased funding to elite sport is replicated in funding to the AIS. In 1980 NSOs were allocated just over $3 million for sport development, increasing to $32 million by 1990 (including AIS scholarships) and by 2006-2007 this had increased further to almost $80 million. Of this, $68,996,670 (or 86 per cent) was allocated specifically for high performance sport.[18] Political and funding support for elite success bore fruit in just over a decade from the creation of the AIS. In the early 1990s the then Minister for Sport, Ros Kelly, announced that 'Australia has resurfaced as a sporting power [and] … the new ingredient in our elite success is professionalism'.[19] Throughout the 1990s Australia reinforced its commitment to elite sport: for example, the Australian sport policy, *Maintain the Momentum 1992-1996*, focused on elite athlete development, sport science research and coaching support. However, it was the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) award of the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney in 1993 that cemented federal government involvement in elite sport. For example, funding already allocated to elite sport was complemented further with the introduction of the Olympic Athlete Program (OAP). The OAP provided an additional $135 million of federal government funding for Olympic and Paralympic sport for the preparation of athletes for the Atlanta and Sydney Olympic Games. It is estimated that, between 1980 and 1996, Australia's 25 (Olympic) gold medals cost approximately $37 million each and $8 million per medal in general.[20] The awarding of the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney highlighted the increased emphasis on, and support for, Olympic sport as well as the 'squeezing-out' of funding for community activities despite claims from the Minister of Sport that this would not occur.[21]

One way of signalling the disparity of commitment to each end of the sporting spectrum in Australia is to examine funding allocations for non-elite sport; in the 1999-2000 budget, for example, 78 per cent of funding was allocated to excellence in sport performance while 10 per cent was directed towards improved participation.[22] By 2006-2007 the AIS allocation of funding across 26 sports was $20,386,283 with a further $48,303,000 allocated to high performance programs in 49 NSOs. In stark contrast, funding allocated for the grassroots Targeted Sports Participation Program (TSPG) amounted to $355,000 and is currently operating in just two sports: golf and football.[23] Moreover, a recent media release announced that the federal government would provide in excess of $125 million for excellence in sport, and an additional $12.1 million is to be allocated for the redevelopment of the AIS and the establishment of a training base in Italy. In the corresponding period, a total of $67 million is to be allocated for improving participation levels in sport.[24] In short, the

federal government commitment to the AIS and elite sport does not show any signs of weakening.

While the increase in funding during the build-up to the 2000 Olympics Games was expected and indeed demanded from the Australian government, it is perhaps surprising that this trend has continued given the increasing awareness surrounding the health costs associated with growing levels of obesity and decreasing levels of physical activity. World-wide concern regarding rising obesity levels and the subsequent costs to society has placed increasing pressure on governments to address low levels of physical activity. Recent policy documents consistently identify the importance of sport in addressing the health and wellbeing of Australians.[25] In 'Beyond 2000', for example, the ASC identified a growing concern with declining fitness levels and increasing obesity, particularly in relation to school children. Again calls were made for increased government resources as 'there is a clear need for further government funding particularly in its contribution to sport at the community level … it is not reasonable for the community to meet these costs alone'.[26]

Money well spent?

Two significant themes emerge from this discussion of the establishment of the AIS and the enduring emphasis on elite sport success. The first theme is the disparity in funding allocations for elite and grassroots sport. The justification for this discrepancy continues to be based on the assumption that success at the elite level will improve participation rates at grassroots level and would therefore not only improve participation, but also provide health benefits and improve the quality of life amongst the general population.[27] The notion of a 'trickle-down' effect is one that has dominated much of the rhetoric from both politicians and sporting officials in connection with continued and/or increased funding for elite sport despite little evidence to support this premise.[28] The trickle-down effect of elite sport was succinctly highlighted by the inaugural head of the sport science division at the AIS when he claimed that talented performers would generate 'positive reinforcement and interest' back in the 'lower echelons of sporting achievement'.[29] Given the success of Australian athletes on the international stage and the continual argument that success at elite level will lead to increased participation at grassroots level, it is therefore of particular importance to consider the effect of this success on overall participation and health levels.

There have been many surveys aimed at measuring levels of participation; however, inconsistent survey design has resulted in a lack of robust data on trends in participation levels.[30] Data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for example, indicate that the number of adults participating in organised sport had increased by over 1 million people between 1996 and 2000. However, this statistic is misleading as a person need only to have participated once during the year to be counted as having participated in a sport or physical activity.[31] Data collected to date indicate that people are moving away from organised sport, there are declining levels of interest in physical activity and sport participation, and only a limited number of Australians are participating in enough physical activity to deliver significant mental or physical health benefits.

There has also been an increase in the level of obesity amongst the Australian adult population. In 2001, 58 per cent of the male adult population and 42 per cent of the female adult population were overweight or obese, an increase from 1995. In 2000, over half (54 per cent) of Australians were insufficiently active to achieve any health benefits[32] and, perhaps more worryingly, amongst young people the prevalence of obesity and those overweight doubled between 1985 and 1997.[33] These statistics in part support the argument that successful elite performers do not necessarily lead to increased participation at grassroots levels and the hoped-for associated health benefits. While the relative lack of

sustained federal funding for grassroots sport not only privileges a small number of elite athletes while disadvantaging the majority of Australian athletes, it also highlights the cost of failing to seriously address the goal of increasing participation levels. In an independent study commissioned by the Confederation of Australian Sport, an estimate of the economic impact of increased participation rates suggests that a 5 per cent increase in participation would yield a productivity gain equivalent to $881 million.[34] Perhaps more startling is the claim that a doubling of the current participation rate (30 per cent to 60 per cent) would translate into a $17.5 billion gain to the current community.[35]

Prioritisation of (Olympic) sports

The second theme to emerge from our discussion of the AIS is that a significant amount of federal funding is directed towards a small number of primarily Olympic sports. In reviewing the allocation of federal government funding for sport it is interesting to note the way in which funding has been distributed. The ASC recognises a total of 125 NSOs,[36] with 80 eligible to receive grants, however, in 2002 only 67 NSOs received ASC funding. When reviewing the way in which this funding is allocated it is evident that a small number of (Olympic) sports receive the bulk of the funding with the majority receiving a much smaller share of the pool. In the 2002-2003 financial year, 10 NSOs, or 15 per cent of all recipients, attracted $33 million (51 per cent) of the total funding: the remaining 49 per cent of available funds was allocated to the remaining 57 NSOs.[37] By the 2006-2007 financial year the top 10 funded sports, which are all Olympic sports, received 57 per cent of the total funding allocated to NSOs with the remaining 57 sports sharing 43 per cent of the outstanding funding.[38] The disparity in resource allocation appears set to continue as indicated by a media release in 2006 where the federal government indicated that it was not prepared to abandon its position as a sporting superpower and 'remained committed to sustaining the AIS's position as a world-leader in elite athlete development'.[39]

The emphasis on achieving Olympic success has therefore benefited the few to the general detriment of the many: just a small number of sports receive large amounts of federal funding, many of which have relatively small participation bases, such as athletics, hockey and swimming, but which are considered high profile or highly successful Olympic sports. What appears evident is that sports with a high participation base, but which are not Olympic sports, stand little chance of sustained federal government funding. The definition of sport therefore has a direct impact upon which organisations or activities are supported by the federal government and therefore what activities are encouraged with respect to participation. Many of the highest participation sports are non-Olympic sports such as Australian Rules, cricket, netball, lawn bowls, rugby league and rugby union.[40] Also excluded to a large extent under this regime are new sports which are often taken up by the younger generation and which are equally important in increasing participation levels amongst Australians.

The increased funding for high performance sport has also come at a price for some NSOs. It has been noted that the large and rapid capital investment by the federal government, through the ASC, resulted in growing dependence by some NSOs on federal funding. This places certain sports in the unenviable position of over an over-reliance on state funding. Given the inevitability of changing governments this makes long-term planning for sporting organisations potentially uncertain and vulnerable to rapid change. This was evident following the Sydney Olympics when NSOs were advised not to enter into contractual arrangements that relied on the Olympic Athlete Program, leading to uncertainty regarding the future for athletes and coaches. However, not only has increased investment by the federal government led, at times to uncertainty surrounding funding, but it has also led to

increased government intervention. In 2004, the federal government, concerned with Athletics Australia's ability to govern effectively, announced a wide-ranging review aimed at identifying the best way to take the sport forward. It was noted that the government was willing to intervene into the management of NSOs where it is believed they will not be able to deliver the outcomes expected of them or, in other words, achieve the goals of elite sporting success.[41] In exchange for resources, NSOs are increasingly 'encouraged' to comply with the federal government's focus on (elite) sport; such a scenario raises questions regarding who runs sport and whose priorities are most important in Australia.

An 'elite sport treadmill'?

A new theme has emerged in the discourse which supports the continued investment in elite sport despite claims for greater priority to be given to grassroots activities and for an increase in mass participation levels. While the rhetoric around investment in elite sport remains associated with the premise regarding its apparent 'symbiotic relationship' with mass sport, Australia's success in elite sport has introduced a new rationale for its continued investment. Additional funding of $2.9 million was allocated to 16 Olympic sports in preparation for the Beijing Olympics; Mark Peters, the CEO of the ASC, views this funding as another important facet of helping Australian sport keep pace with other countries that are also investing heavily in elite sport. As Peters also noted, 'Keeping pace with other nations is an increasing challenge for the Australian sporting system'.[42]

The priority then is continued investment in elite sport, together with a recognition that further investment is now required if Australia is to *maintain* its position as an elite sporting 'super-power'.[43] What appears to be emerging here is a 'sporting arms' race'[44] between countries to stay ahead of the competition. Increasingly, this is leading to investment in elite sport being dictated by what rival nations are doing. Moreover, investment in elite sport is now becoming a global issue with countries reacting to the ways in which other countries invest their resources in the search for continued success.[45] This has led to a 'ratcheting-up' of spending where countries react to their rivals rather than dictating their own (elite) sport spending priorities. Once a country has stepped on to this 'elite sport treadmill' it is difficult to step off without inducing serious political fallout. This treadmill of spending was demonstrated in a media release by the Minister for the Arts and Sport when an increased funding boost was announced to 'help deliver the sporting excellence now expected by the Australia public'.[46]

The recent establishment of the AIS Hub demonstrates the federal government's continued commitment to the AIS and elite sport. An important rationale for investment in the AIS Hub, which integrates a range of sports sciences under one roof, was that it provides a much needed boost to Australian elite sport and the need to continue this investment 'in an increasingly competitive environment'.[47] Thus, the dominant discourse around elite sport provides a legitimating climate within which the federal government continues to fund elite sport with little evidence of a significant voice for the mass participant to lobby for a change in sport policy priorities. This has, to a certain extent, also eliminated discussion surrounding how such funding may otherwise be allocated to benefit not only more diverse groups in the community but also the general population as a whole.

Elite sport: a dominant discourse

What is perhaps surprising is the continued emphasis on elite sport, despite calls for (more) funding to be directed not only at supporting and increasing grassroots sport but also increasing levels of physical activity and participation in recreation. In 2000, a federal government commissioned Taskforce report, *Shaping up: A Review of Commonwealth Involvement in Sport and Recreation in Australia,* argued that the government's over-

emphasis on elite sport for over 25 years raised serious questions regarding mass participation levels in sport and recreation.[48] The report was considered timely given that it considered Australian sport post- the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. Among its observations the Taskforce concluded that 'the emphasis on elite sport has overshadowed the importance of delivering increased participation on sport and recreation and that the current funding level is inadequate'.[49] Major change was called for regarding government's priorities in order to achieve further economic, health and social benefits from sport and recreation.

However, the somewhat critical recommendations were diluted by the success of Australian athletes at the Sydney Olympic Games. Of particular note was the growing contribution of AIS athletes to the Australian goal of reclaiming its status as a leading sporting nation. At the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games a total 32 current and former athletes competed, winning a total of 7 medals out of an overall medal tally of 24 medals, almost 30 per cent of all Australian medals won; at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games 289 current and former AIS athletes won an impressive 32 medals out of an overall total of 49 medals, accounting for 65 per cent of all medals won by Australia.[50]

The Taskforce report clearly indicated concern regarding the dominant position held by elite sport and the potential deleterious consequences that would ensue if the government failed to redress this situation. The objective of increasing participation was found wanting, not only were Australians participating less in organised sport but memberships in organised sport were also falling. Alongside this lack of commitment to increasing mass sport participation was the decision in 2002 to put an end to the 'Active Australia' program. Active Australia, established in 1996, aimed for the first time to integrate the sport, recreation, fitness and health strategies of the Commonwealth government. The vision of Active Australia provided a wider, more holistic approach to increasing levels of participation, not only in sport but across a range of physical activities.[51] However, this tentative move by the ASC into the area of health was short-lived and the decision to restructure the ASC in 2002 resulted in the Active Australia program being replaced by Aussport.

This refocusing on (elite) sport did not go unnoticed as the shadow Minister for Sport argued that 'the government is replacing Active Australia with a new broader, division called Aussport reflecting their all-consuming interest in elite sport – at the expense of encouraging all Australians to be physically active'.[52] The disparity in support for both elite and mass sport is clearly demonstrated in the federal government's 10 year strategy for sport, *Backing Australia's Sporting Ability: A More Active Australia*. This strategy reiterates the government's dual focus on continuing its support for elite sport and achieving greater grassroots participation in sport, as well as committing the highest amount ever to the funding of sport in Australia. In claiming that the 'centre piece of our policy is a new strategy to increase community participation in sport', the federal government indicated a new commitment to supporting grassroots sport and increasing the levels of participation. However, once again the devil is in the detail: the allocation of funding indicates a continuing emphasis on supporting elite sport. Federal government funding from 2001-2002 for four years for the 'More Active Australia' program was set at approximately $82 million; for the same period, federal government funding for elite sport amounted to some $408 million.[53]

Conclusions

There is little doubting the success of the AIS in achieving its aim of restoring pride in Australia's international sporting performances; perhaps the high point of the history of the AIS was the 58 medals won at the 'home' Sydney Olympic Games in 2000. However, the cost of such success needs to be placed alongside the other key federal government

sporting objective of achieving an increase in activity at mass participation levels. What is apparent, from the establishment of the AIS in 1981, is that despite the federal government's dual sporting objectives, there has been a steady focus on supporting elite sport to the detriment of mass participation programs. Although there was some uncertainty following the 2000 Sydney Olympics regarding the future level of elite sport funding, little appears to have changed with funding for elite sport continuing to increase and grassroots funding continuing to be marginalised. However, it is not only grassroots sport that has suffered from the federal government's funding strategy. Over the past 25 years or so the number of NSOs that receive funding has fluctuated and today a relatively small number of (Olympic) sports receive the majority of federal government funding for sport. On the one hand, this funding regime may increase the chance of success at major international sporting events such as the Olympic Games. On the other hand, many of the (non-Olympic) high participation sports, and participants, receive little or no support despite the obvious role they might play in increasing levels of sport participation along with the associated health benefits that the government's rhetoric suggests is so important.

Over the past 25 years a number of discourses have emerged which reinforce and support the dominance of elite sport. Claims that success in elite sport promotes and encourages activity at the grassroots level and therefore leads to increased levels of participation has been an enduring narrative underpinning the argument for sustaining the high levels of elite sport funding. However, there is little evidence to support this premise and, alongside evidence of increasing levels of physical inactivity and declining levels of sports participation, it is difficult to understand how this argument has persisted over the years. What is perhaps more surprising, and indeed more worrying, is the way in which the cost of inactivity appears to have been largely overlooked in (any) claims for programs to increase levels of participation in mass sport and physical activity.

The dominance of support for elite sport is now firmly embedded in the political and policy discourse in the Australian sporting environment and has enabled elite sport to be viewed as a credible and worthwhile use of taxpayers' money, despite sporadic calls for change. Moreover, it has become increasingly difficult for politicians *not* to support their elite athletes.[54] As a result, periodic calls for the government to review spending on elite sport and to increase spending in the area of mass participation, remain largely unanswered. The AIS is the institutional cornerstone of the dominant elite sport discourse as it perpetuates the concept that increased funding will produce increased elite sporting success. To date, however, questions regarding whether this policy of investing in a handful of athletes for a moment's glory remain at the periphery of sporting discourse in Australia. Perhaps more importantly, there appears to be few advocates who are brave enough to ask the question: is it time to stop investing in elite sport and the AIS?

In sum, although there appears to be little sign of the production line of successful elite performers grinding to a halt, the expectation of international sporting glory from the AIS and Australian athletes may have created a 'golden cage of success'. The expectation is that the success of Australia's elite athletes will not only be maintained but also improved despite the emergence of an increasing number of well-funded rival nations. While success on the international sporting stage has been lauded for the best part of a quarter of a century, is it now possible for Australia to retrench from its considerable investment and commitment to elite sport, or must it continue to try and stay in the game? Given the sustained agreement between the main political parties in Australia on the importance of elite sport success, it appears highly unlikely that any political party, in the near future at

least, would wish to announce a retraction of support for the cornerstone of elite sport in Australia: the Australian Institute of Sport.

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Representing the Nation:
The National Museum of Australia
Mathew Trinca

When I first arrived in Canberra a few years ago to take up a job at the National Museum of Australia, I had a simple, instructive lesson in the cultural politics of the Australian Federation. It was a less than embracing welcome. Qantas had contrived to lose my luggage and I went dutifully to report it at the office. I explained what had happened, and the fellow behind the counter asked me where I had come from. 'Perth', I replied. 'Oh well', he said disdainfully, 'what did you expect, coming all the way from Perth? It's barely Australia.'

From the vantage point of the nation's capital, Perth did seem a foreign country, to misquote David Lowenthal.[1] A place, at least in my baggage handler's mind, where they did things differently. In some sense, this is hardly surprising. The nation, after all, is comprised of States and Territories marked by deep-seated antipathies for each other. Scratch the surface of a Sandgroper, Crow-eater or Banana-bender and you will likely find someone ready to rail against the iniquities visited upon them by Canberra. The historian John Hirst is right in thinking it a triumph of the spirit that we ever agreed to come together at Federation.[2]

In common with other national institutions, the National Museum faces the complex task of representing and serving a nation from its capital, a place that many Australians regard with some ambivalence. Yet, Canberra is a place that Australians – perhaps even despite themselves – continue to visit with a sense of expectancy. To some degree they come looking for signs of themselves in the national community, interested in learning more about the country and its history, while seeking assurance of their own place within it. Hence, national collecting institutions, such as the Museum, necessarily must be democratic and inclusive in temper, while insisting on integrity and rigour in meeting their intellectual and material obligations. This is both the challenge and delight of working at the National Museum.

Calls for a national museum of Australia[3]

Calls for a truly national museum in Australia began in earnest about the time the colonies federated in 1901. This lobby was at first motivated by intellectual interests in natural history and the biological sciences.[4] In the early decades of the 20th century, arguments were made repeatedly for the establishment of national museums of zoology, ethnology, entomology, botany and history. All these efforts – particularly the energy that surrounded Sir Colin MacKenzie's foundation of the National Museum of Australian Zoology in 1924 (later the Australian Institute of Anatomy) – were based on a high regard for the nation-building value of scientific knowledge. There was also a strong feeling at the time that, while the natural history of Australia was exceptional and worthy of collection, the political, economic and social history of the country was banal and undistinguished.

Australia's best-known 'national' museum over the course of the 20th century has been the Australian War Memorial. The Memorial's foundation was inspired by what is often regarded as a defining moment of Australian nationhood, the Great War of 1914-18. Its first director, John Treloar, was appointed in 1920 just after the war in which Australia had supported Britain by enlisting more than 300,000 troops. The Memorial still bears the marks of Treloar and its spiritual father, the war historian CEW Bean,

who was keenly aware of the ways in which Australia's involvement in the Great War could vivify national sentiment and feeling.[5] Ever since that time, the Memorial has been arguably one of the most influential institutions in producing an Australian sense of self even if, as Tony Bennett suggested, this national identity was for many years marked by colonial deference to 'metropolitan powers'.[6]

A National Museum at last

Despite continuing interest in proposals for a more broadly representative National Museum, several decades passed until the issue was directly addressed in 1975. In that year, a Committee of Inquiry appointed by the Commonwealth Government found that provision for the nation's important heritage collections was inadequate. A central recommendation of the Committee's final report – known as the Pigott Report after the committee's chairman, Peter Pigott – was for the establishment of a federally-funded 'Museum of Australia'. The report further advocated that this Museum should address three key themes:

- The history and experience of the first Australians, the nation's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- The history of settler Australia from the time of the continent's colonisation in the late 18th century; and
- The history of the Australian people's relationship to the environment.[7]

Methodologically, the report broke with prevailing traditions by arguing that the new museum should be *interdisciplinary* in character. Rather than separate galleries representing each distinct theme, the committee envisaged displays of the three themes entwined seamlessly through the museum's permanent exhibitions. The report was also alert to the dangers of any narrow interpretation of the new museum's role and expressed concerns about that troubling word, 'national'. Its authors encouraged the museum to range widely in examining and representing Australian society, rather than focusing on any particular group or constituency. In this sense, the museum's founding document was informed by the changes that had occurred in Australian society since the end of the Second World War, particularly the great rise in immigration and the Indigenous rights campaigns of the 1960s.

In 1980, the *National Museum of Australia Act* established the Museum as an institutional entity, if not as a physical presence. It set out what would constitute the prime functions of the new museum and established its legislative framework. Specifically the National Museum was charged with developing and maintaining a national collection of historical material (known formally as the National Historical Collection), exhibiting the collection or making it available for exhibit, and undertaking research and other programs expected of a museum. There was an expectation that the new museum would *serve* the nation, and that it had responsibilities to engage domestic and international audiences.

A small staff was recruited immediately to begin assembling the Collection, but it would be another 21 years before the Museum was a fully-functioning entity. After successive federal governments debated the merits of proposed sites, scale and scope of activities for the Museum's main building, the construction project was finally approved by the newly-elected Howard Government in 1996. Five years later, as the nation celebrated the centenary of Federation, the Museum opened its doors to the public.

Reviewing the early years

The public response to the Museum's opening was broadly positive. Within its first year of operation, the institution surpassed visitor targets and won praise from museum professionals and ordinary people alike. Approval ratings were very high, around 90 per cent, and the tenor of early press reports was generally supportive, extolling the Museum's 'refreshing' and 'different' approach.[8]

We know, for instance, that the Museum's audience is comprised of about 10 per cent international tourists, 30 per cent Canberra-based visitors, and 60 per cent visitors from elsewhere in Australia. Visitors of all ages appear equally pleased by its architecture, exhibitions and programs. Further, older visitors – those above 35 years of age – are more likely to be 'very satisfied' by their visit than those of a younger age. Women tend to be more generally glowing about their visit than men, and are more likely to rate the quality of exhibitions higher than men. At the same time, visitors from overseas applaud the Museum's Indigenous exhibits – specifically, the Gallery of First Australians which utilises a third of the exhibition space – more than Australian audiences, with the notable exception of Indigenous Australians. In terms of Australia's diverse migrant and ethnic communities, there appears to be no significant variation from the statistical average in their approval of the Museum. Their responses are congruent with those of the wider Australian community.

Soon after opening, however, the Museum found itself involved in vigorous public discussions that focused both on its *form* and *content*. There was little surprise in this. Robust arguments are now commonplace for cultural institutions that have national mandates and responsibilities. The public expectation of these institutions is often heightened by the simple fact that they claim a specifically national role. Their collections and representational choices are therefore easily read as authoritative judgements on the nation and its meaning. The historian Graeme Davison warned before the Museum's opening that national museums

> carry an expectation, especially on the part of politicians, that their collections and exhibitions will embody a definitive version of the national past – one that is simultaneously inspirational and rigorously factual, true to national ideals and admirable in the eyes of visitors.[9]

Public controversy – such as that which emerged in connection with the *Enola Gay* and *The West as America* exhibitions at the Smithsonian in the 1990s – is bound to arise, and it is naïve to think that consensus can always be reached on these issues. Notwithstanding the practical difficulties of negotiating such controversies, they at least bear witness to the significance of museums in the national imagination. These are places that *matter*.

Serving the nation

The National Museum moved into a new phase of consolidation and development as it digested these debates. At a fundamental level, the Museum recommitted itself to a visitor-oriented approach, while continuing to build an organisation that is reflective of the community it serves. In its staffing and administration, it has procedures to ensure that it recruits from across the broad spectrum of the Australian population. This includes specific programs to ensure that Indigenous Australians are represented in its various operational arms. It has also focused on deepening its intellectual culture, and developing broadly representative collections, supported by specific government funding for new acquisitions. A Centre for Historical Research is working to bring established historians into the Museum, to engage with its collections, curatorial and programming staff. There is also a strong temporary and travelling exhibition program

that is clear-headed and flexible – developing its capacity to bring great collections to Australian audiences, and take great Australian collections to the world.

Within the permanent galleries, the Museum has moved to redevelop exhibitions it opened in 2001. With additional government assistance, the Museum will completely renew two of its main galleries over the course of 2008 and 2009. It has also commissioned a new multi-screen program for its *Circa* multimedia theatre, to be installed early in 2008. In all, the Museum will spend more than $15 million on these three projects, evidence of its belief that great museums cannot afford to rest on existing programs, but must be in a state of constant renewal. A changing program refreshes the galleries and stimulates repeat visitation; more importantly, it also commits the institution to an ongoing process of refinement, reforming and re-invigoration. This is its best defence against staleness and irrelevancy.

As a natural consequence of these developments, the Museum is re-examining its national responsibilities. There are practical dimensions to this question in a country the size of Australia, which has large population centres distant from each other. For instance, Perth and Darwin, are in fact closer to the National Museum of Indonesia, in Jakarta, than they are to the National Museum of Australia, in Canberra. The political character of the Australian nation – a Federation of six states and two mainland territories – poses real challenges to the Museum as it seeks to serve and connect with all Australians, no matter where they are.

In particular, the instrumental arguments made for museums in the past decade or so, specifically that they can serve as agents of social change, have been reconsidered. In the United Kingdom, *The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* published in 2001, identified social inclusion as a priority for museums and other cultural institutions.[10] Similarly, in the aftermath of the Review at the National Museum of Australia in 2003, the profession's peak body, Museums Australia, contended that

> …policies of *social inclusion* have become the mandate for museums as we enter the 21st century …Fundamental to the realisation of social inclusion in museums is the presentation of stories highlighting the diversity of a nation's population, a nation's history from the multiple viewpoints of its citizens and the celebration of people from all walks of life, all stations, all creeds.[11]

The Museum remains committed to an inclusive politics that values the varied experiences and histories of all Australians. But it is cautious about some of the claims made on behalf of museums, that they can act as agents of social change and improve, for example, the practice of civics or community health in any given community. After all, there is no objective view nor political agreement on what constitutes an harmonious, inclusive society – one person's harmony might resemble discord to another. It is therefore difficult to establish and even more problematic to measure the extent to which museums can *secure* such specific government or community interests. This is not to deny that museums have social meaning and real value, but rather that they should be mindful of overstating their capacity to secure neatly-defined social outcomes. Museums are more than machines of civic virtue.[12]

The pre-eminent challenge still lies in determining how best to represent and serve a culturally diverse Australia. As should now be clear, this question has preoccupied the institution since its foundation. Hardly surprising, given that generations of Australians have wrestled with the question of who comprises the nation and what constitutes its character. In the Federation era, the argument was one largely construed between

English and Irish traditions in the country, Aboriginal Australia having been consigned to the margins. For the first half of the 20th century, the White Australia Policy – which restricted non-European immigration to the country – ensured this remained the case. After World War II, however, dramatic changes to Australia's immigration program, in conjunction with rapid global changes in migration and travel, transformed the national community. By the 1990s, Australia was an ethnically diverse, *multicultural* society, with about one third of its population claiming an ancestry other than Australian or British.[13] Today, more than 160 languages are spoken in homes across the nation.[14]

Coincident with these changes was a rising tide of political assertion by Australia's Indigenous people. Since the 1950s, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have increasingly contested their historic economic and political disenfranchisement. In 1962, Aboriginal people finally secured the right to vote in Federal elections, and in 1967 constitutional changes in their favour were approved by an overwhelming majority at a referendum. The 1970s and 1980s saw the establishment of representative bodies that articulated common interests on behalf of Indigenous Australians. Joint political organisation of Indigenous people was later a feature of the negotiations that followed the High Court's restoration of Native Title rights to traditional, unalienated lands in the 1990s.

These two social transformations over the course of the past century – that have seen the re-assertion of Indigenous Australia in a culturally diverse community made up of people from many lands, differentiated by a range of factors including gender, class, age, sexual orientation etc – pose considerable challenges for the National Museum. Unlike our colleagues at *Te Papa Tongarewa:* The Museum of New Zealand, who operate in a very different cultural context, the National Museum of Australia cannot, and should not, resolve the nation's social mix in a 'bicultural' approach. Nor should the Museum treat Indigenous people – constituted by highly diverse and differentiated communities – as just another ethnicity within multicultural Australia. In this sense, neither 'Biculturalism' nor 'Multiculturalism' can explain the particular social composition and historical conditions of the nation without doing an injustice to the experiences of one or another group.

Locating the national

In a 2003 paper in the *Griffith Review,* historian Mark McKenna wrote of the growing popular interest in including a reference to land or territory in a proposed new preamble to the Australian Constitution. McKenna wrote that

> By emphasising the centrality of the land to any new constitutional preamble, perhaps non-Aboriginal Australians are also wishing to end the sense of alienation and exile that is embedded within their colonial experience. Home is no longer elsewhere. The mother country is here.[15]

McKenna was pointing to the way that a 'sense of place' directly informs our national imagination. Recent scholarship that examines the histories of Australian landscapes also emphasises the 'located' character of Australian experiences. The recent work of Tom Griffiths, Peter Read, Tim Bonyhady, Libby Robin and Jay Arthur, among others, suggests that the Museum's national reach may be usefully addressed through cultural histories of Australian places, rather than by attempting to define and represent a national 'type' or 'identity'.

Griffiths has also written expressly about the possibility of strengthening the theme of 'Land' in the Museum's exhibitions, a point taken up and reiterated by the *Review of the National Museum of Australia,* published in 2003.[16] Instead of defining ourselves by

arguing shared traits or a common national character, why not interrogate the Australian past through stories firmly located in place and locale? This suggests that the Museum develops a national collection alive to geographic difference and particularity, which is aware of how experience has been materially constituted and produced across the continent. At the same time, it acknowledges the diversity of experience within the physical and conceptual boundaries of the nation. There is enough space here for the arguments of the late Frank Broeze, who argued for the 'Island Nation' of Australia to be understood as an 'archipelago' of communities.[17] Broeze was intent on recovering the maritime history of Australia within a broader understanding of the national past, but a creative reading of his argument suggests a way of understanding local and regional sodalities within the nation. It is a useful metaphor, not just for how it inserts people wherever they are in the national record, but also for the encouragement it gives to connect Australian experience to the world.

Let me give an example of how a focus on place might bring to life the cultural diversity of Australia. In the historic goldfields of Victoria, about 140 kms north-west of Melbourne, lies Maldon, a town of about 1,200 people. This was the country of the Wemba-Wemba Aboriginal people, who were gradually displaced by European squatters in the 1840s. In 1854, gold was discovered in the area provoking a rush of prospectors to the 'fields'. The rush was short-lived, however, and the fledgling town soon settled down to life as a mining and agricultural centre. The Australian novelist, Henry Handel Richardson, spent part of her childhood here, but that aside it has few conventional claims to notability. In 1950, a Romanian migrant Romulus Gaita came to the area, one of the many migrants who left a war-torn Europe for the promise of Australia's wide skies. Gaita settled with his wife and young son and worked on the nearby Cairn Curran reservoir. The strangeness of this landscape, and the chasm between small-town Australia and a central European sensibility, marked Gaita and his family for life. This *encounter* provoked material and psychological difficulties, many of which remained unresolved and in tension. Years later, Gaita's young boy – now well-known as the philosopher Rai Gaita – would remember the light and landscape of his childhood rural home as he worked at the University of London. Maldon, Romania, London – places linked by the passage of people round the world, extending Australia's history beyond its accepted national borders.[18]

A focus on place helps reveal the layered historical meanings of landscapes and acknowledges obligations to include Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories in representing the Australian past. Consider the colonisation of the Australian continent in the late 18th century. The encounter of Europeans with Aboriginal people at Sydney Cove in 1788 bore similarities to that which occurred on the continent's west coast, at Swan River some forty years later. Yet while similar forces were at work, the histories of each were particular to themselves, with their own discrete consequences. Neither can easily stand as the exemplar of the colonising enterprise in Australia and nor of the frontier conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. But each is important in understanding the history of colonisation, its impact on Indigenous people, and the foundations of European settlement in the country.

This takes the National Museum full circle, close to the early hopes for the institution expressed in the Pigott report. The report suggested that a continental purview offered a frame within which the nation's stories might be expressed. Of course, an emphasis on cultural histories of place must take care to avoid reinvigorating nationalist impulses that would contrive a stoic bush type, or a surf lifesaver, as typically Australian. Nor should it produce a view that tends to environmental determinism. Yet exploring the

nation through material interrogation of experience in places across the continent allows for diversity to be refracted through a narrative prism that is precise, yet respects difference. Importantly, it may allow all people in this country to find their 'place' in the nation, while valuing the particularity of their own experience.

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Do We Need a National Library?
Veronica Brady

To begin, I should declare an interest. Ever since I learned to read - which was before I went to school - I have been in love with libraries, and it is hard, if not impossible to say how much they have contributed to my education and to my professional life as a teacher and in my writing and research. As far as the National Library is concerned, I have had the privilege of a Harold White Fellowship without which I would not have been able to write my biography of Judith Wright or have time to explore the holdings of her letters and papers. So I am particularly aware of and grateful for the contribution it makes to scholarship. In these days, however, it is difficult not to be aware that cultural ikons like libraries, and in particular the idea of a National Library, are no longer unquestionably accepted - at least by those in power - as vital to our national wellbeing.

Questions of value

Undoubtedly there is a great deal money can do, and for which it is necessary, and many claims are made on Federal and State budgets and many debates about priorities in its use. But there are other values to be considered in discussions about what is necessary.

By definition, of course, these debates involve questions of value, of what is more or less for the life of our nation. It is easy, perhaps too easy, for example, to demonstrate the importance of defence and security, of providing adequate health care and ensuring the wellbeing of those who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to do so for themselves. But most people would grant the importance of education, and this, it is clear, is where libraries belong.

Yet this may be part of the problem which faces those of us who would insist on the importance of a National Library. It is easier to show the significance of local libraries for the life of the communities they serve. But Canberra is a long way away, even if people are aware of the importance of their libraries' electronic links with the resources to be found there in the National Library. A more important problem lies, I think, in the way in which education itself is defined in our present society. Its goal is seen not so much as the 'good life', however that may be defined - which to my mind is nevertheless, or should be, one of the central questions facing any society, especially one like ours faced with the challenges of a rapidly changing world - as with ways and means of supporting and expanding economic growth. So long as libraries are seen to be useful in helping this expansion by providing access to information, technical skills, or linking up with global markets and opportunities, it seems that they are regarded as worthwhile. If not, their other cultural activities are seen as of secondary importance; optional extras, if you like.

That, however, is to accept a limited notion of value, at the national as well as personal level. As Conrad has his wise man Stein tell the young man Lord Jim in the novel of that name, in the long run the ultimate question to be faced by every human being (and also, I think, every society) is 'How to be?' In one of his last poems, 'What Then?' WB Yeats made a similar point:

> His chosen comrades thought at school
> He must grow a famous man;
> He thought the same and lived by rule,

All his twenties crammed with toil;
'*What then?'* sang Plato's ghost. *'What then?'*[1]

Similarly Hamlet famously reminded Horatio that there are more things in heaven and earth than are to be found in a narrowly pragmatic and utilitarian view of the world. It seems to me that the evidence of history suggests that ultimately, to quote William Blake, in a society without this kind of vision 'a people perishes'. I would argue that the National Library has a central role in promoting this vision and setting the life of our nation in a wider context, interrogating present commonsense and pointing to different, possibly more humanly rewarding possibilities.

Let me take as my text in this respect a passage from one of the most eloquent descriptions of the place a library may have in the life of a nation, John Milton's great defence of freedom of thought and expression - taken for granted today as the foundation of democratic society, though not always honoured, much less defended by those in power. *Areopagitica*,[2] was published in 1644 and addressed to a Parliament fresh from its victory over what was seen as the tyranny of Charles I, in the Civil War which was promising a different kind of society.

The passage comes towards the end of his pamphlet as Milton is exhorting the Parliament to be true to the promises they have made and describing what he thought this new society should look like. It will, he argued, be built by a people 'prone to seek after knowledge'. Equally significant for our argument is that he sees the library as their central resource:

> Behold now this vast city…the mansion house of liberty; the shop of war there hath not more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas; others as fast reading, trying all things, asserting the force of reason and convincement.

It is true that, idealised and rhetorically charged as it is, this did not shake determination of the politicians of his day to change their determination to censor and control views which they regarded as dangerous or subversive, and present evidence suggests it is unlikely that it would do so today. True, it might have more influence in a nation like France where there may be more political mileage in appearing to respect intellectual freedom, though even there, 'spin', a government's ability to influence and control national debate, is not unknown.

But Milton's point remains an important one. The resources of any library, but especially a National Library, provide insights and information which offer alternative and sometimes unfashionable views which are able to interrogate and expand current notions of possibility and value in creative ways. Our ideas of society and its purposes may be different, of course, from those of Milton, which were essentially theocratic. But most people who believe in a free and open society would see the value of the space the Library can provide in which to step back a little from everyday concerns and assumptions and reflect on them in a wider context.

Access to the rest of the world – a function of libraries

With its resources, the National Library is also a source of world-wide information which enables us to become global citizens, putting us in touch with other peoples and cultures, past and present. The library also can offer the latest information about current events, and help us to evaluate them by providing information about their

underlying causes. This, I think, is no small thing in a time in which governments sometimes seem to promote suspicion and fear of the 'unknown' for their own ends. Knowing only what is happening here in our own place is important, but knowing what is happening elsewhere, and being able to locate those events in their cultural and historical context is to be less alarmed by them. This allows us to respond more judiciously.

In this respect we should also draw attention to the professional skills of librarians in their knowledge of the range of information technology and its possibilities and the ways in which they not only make it available to the community at large, but educate us in its uses and possibilities.

This kind of service is especially the work of local libraries. In many places, particularly in areas where people are less privileged financially or educationally, or remote from the resources of the capital cities, libraries often become the focal point of the community's information. In the library, those in the community can find out about, and reach towards an understanding of, the larger world, and the place of their community in it. But as their central point of reference, and sometimes of in-service training for librarians, the National Library provides essential support in this work. This underlines the unique nature of the role it has to play in the life of the nation as whole; in its self-understanding and sense of a future direction. It needs to be emphasised that this leadership role is a crucial one, and that it is urgently necessary that the National Library receive the funding it needs - which is considerable - to fulfil this leadership role.

The 'rough ground'

Once again we need to return to the question of values, since the importance we give to this role will depend on the frame through which we view it. Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*, I think, is relevant here. In our perception of what is, or should be the case, he suggests that often we are 'merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it'.[3] It is necessary to scrutinise our world view and, if necessary, choose another. It is possible, for instance, that our present frame may have made us complacent, Unwilling to contemplate the 'friction' of everyday existence which Wittgenstein sees as essential to the life of the mind, and thus of creativity, we escape into comforting fantasies. What is necessary, he says, is to get 'back to the rough ground' of what is actually the case.[4]

The kind of information, ideas and experiences the National Library offers frequently involves more strenuous effort than that provided by the media today. This is especially true for work in its archives or manuscript holdings, areas, of course, of crucial significance for the understanding of our national heritage. They provide information about the lives of 'ordinary' people who never became famous or rich but contributed, each in his or her unique way, to the story of our nation. This is also true of much of the material from other cultures and times, most of which is not sensational but which takes us behind the headlines to understand more deeply the common lot of humanity, people otherwise forgotten, reminding us of the ways in which libraries have contributed over time to the human story and how they may continue to do so in the future. This contribution, I suggest, is perhaps more necessary today in a culture in which, as Lyotard famously said, there is no longer one Grand Narrative to which most people subscribe so that we have an opportunity to hear and be enriched by a range of stories, making us, one hopes, more open and tolerant people.

Opposition to censorship

In a sense Milton, was moving in a similar direction in his opposition to censorship. True, he did have a Grand Narrative in mind. But it was one which stressed the central significance of creative individuals for whom 'the light which we have gained was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge'. His ideal was a 'knowing people' with 'much desire to learn' who would create a society in which there is 'much arguing, much writing, many opinions' since in his view 'opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making' - the kind of society and the kind of citizens we need, if we are to meet the challenges facing us in the twenty-first century. As Milton argued, a great library will help to form them and therefore remains an important national resource today.

But we should also note both the note of urgency in the tone of Milton's argument, and the fact that the government of his day rejected it and censorship remained in place. He was writing a polemic at what he saw as a moment of crisis in which the nation which he believed had been chosen to 'proclaim and sound forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all Europe' had reached a point in which this ideal would either be defeated or prevail. While I would not want to be so dramatic, it does seem to me to me that a tradition has existed in this country that as a relatively new society it may offer the hope of some kind of new beginning committed, as Joseph Furphy put it, 'to no usages of petrified injustice [and] clogged by no fealty to shadowy idols'.[5] But it appears at the moment to be in danger of disappearing, even if, and possibly because, it is often invoked rhetorically for political purposes.

That this is so, like the fact that Milton's argument went unheeded, only serves to support the argument for the importance of a National Library, which will preserve the memory of these ideas and enable an understanding of their origins and significance. In that sense it is part of the Library's task to be counter-cultural, to make us aware of ideas and experiences which exist outside the narrow frame of a future-oriented culture which takes little or no account of anything but a romanticised and therefore unreal past, and is in danger of forgetting many of the discoveries made then about ways in which a better society might be achieved. To keep this kind of awareness alive may be essential if we are to remain a civilised society (as the Macquarie Dictionary defines civilisation): one in which, 'a high level of art, science and government has been reached' and in which people live together in mutual respect and everyone has an opportunity to achieve his or her full potential in life and contribute to the life of the community.

Appreciation of other cultures

I suggest that this involves knowledge of cultures and thus notions of reality different from our own. But this is something which the culture to which we belong makes difficult. As Luiz Carlos Susin argues,[6] settler societies like ours are the product of an imperial history which is based on the story of Ulysses who left home and journeyed through strange places but always with the intention of returning home or of making the strange places like home. Though it would like to think it is, it is not an adventurous culture, least of all intellectually, since it exists within what Susin calls a 'closed circle around sameness' with the self and its desires at the centre. This is not the kind of culture best able to deal with the uncertain future which probably lies ahead. But it is another reason why the work of the National Library matters - indeed in the long run it may be as important as the Department of Defence - since it provides resources to enable us to move out of this closed circle and see ourselves from the perspective of

other times and cultures different from which we may have much to learn and with peoples with whom we must learn to live, not least, for instance, this land's Aboriginal peoples.

Evidently this involves more than the mere passing on of information. Ideally a great library is a centre of scholarship, a place in which people may come together to explore and expand our understanding of our actual situation and experiences as a people but also to reflect on possible alternatives, often in the light of the wisdom of the past. This, of course, is what has happened throughout history from the time of the great library of Alexandria to the Biblioteque Nationale in Paris and Britain's National Library in London. It would be good to think that Australian governments would in the future endow more Fellowships and Scholarships for younger scholars to supplement the relatively few which our National Library is able to provide from endowments or from its own resources. Most cultures, after all, recognise and honour the importance of scholars for their national life.

But it is important to stress that this contribution is not merely economic in the narrow sense of that word. To return to Milton, the 'onward things' which the scholars he describes are looking for are not completely new. He sees them as drawing also on what can be learned from the past, in his case by Judaeo-Christian Scripture but also by the classics of Greece and Rome, all of which were largely concerned with ways of finding, helping to define and to living out 'the good life'. In our culture today, intent as it is on economic matters, these concerns can seem irrelevant. But as we argue earlier, this kind of knowledge may be necessary if we are to remain a civilised society.

Creative knowledge

This kind of knowledge can also be creative. The humanities have a contribution to make here. In his *Apology For Poetry,* for instance, the Elizabethan scholar and courtier Sir Philip Sidney defended the imagination against the literal-minded of his day, the Puritans, who wanted to impose their world view on society as a whole and therefore regarded different ways of seeing the world with suspicion, indicating that other forms of knowledge have as their object what already exists. That, in his view, made them 'actors and players, as it were' in preserving the status quo. 'Only the poet [by which he means someone able to create and explore yet unrealised possibilities], disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own imagination, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or quite new.'[7]

While it has to be said that much of the best contemporary science is imaginative in this sense, what matters for us in Sidney's argument is his emphasis on the refusal to be limited by habit or fashion, to remain within the 'closed circle around 'sameness' which is imposed on us by those who would create our images and notions of reality and value for us. In this respect I cannot resist the temptation to quote the poet Wallace Stevens' poem 'The Man with the Blue Guitar' since its insouciance points to the liberating effects of the kind of imagination Sidney had in mind:

> The man bent over his blue guitar,
> A shearsman of sorts. The day was green.
> They said. 'You have a blue guitar,
> You do not play things as they are.'
>
> The man replied, 'Things as they are
> Are changed upon the blue guitar.'
> And they said then, 'But play, you must,

A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,

A tune upon the blue guitar
Of things exactly as they are.[8]

Conclusion

Let me conclude with the suggestion that one of the most important tasks of a National Library may be to provide time and space for reflection on the 'way things are'. Playing on 'the blue guitar', the information provided in and by that environment and by contact with others there, we are able to interrogate them in the name of more truthful, creative and more generously humane ways of thinking and feeling. This would be significant in a world increasingly gripped by the superstition, fear and suspicion which fuels the social violence, wars and rumours of wars of our time. Indeed it may be a crucial contribution: as Kofi Annan warned during his time at the United Nations, closed minds and lack of sensitivity to others and tolerance of beliefs different from ours, may lead to new wars of religion and ideology on a global scale. The freedom and space to think independently, but also to learn from past experience in doing so, may enable the divergent and even unpopular thinking which would question the direction in which we seem to be moving at the moment, free us from the manipulation of images imposed on us from the outside to serve the interests of those with power, and remind us of ideas and values arrived at by thinking people over the centuries.

We end then with a reflection on the relations between scholarship, imagination and political life we have been concerned with, by the American philosopher and ethicist Martha Nussbaum:

> A life which is properly human involves a going beyond the facts, an acceptance of generous fancies, a projection of our sentiments and inner activities on the forms we perceive about us (and a recognition from this interaction of images of ourselves of our own inner world)…We are all of us, as far as we interact morally and politically, fanciful projectors, makers and believers in fictions and metaphors.[9]

She is drawing here on the long tradition of discussions of the idea of what may be said to be a 'good society' which associates the ethical with the political. True, the way in which she privileges fictions and metaphors over facts is perhaps unusual in our pragmatic and utilitarian culture, preoccupied as it is with economic expansion and material productivity. But Nussbaum points to the fact that the neglect of the inner life of the mind, intuition and feeling may well have disastrous effects, and warns against this neglect:

> We should regard with suspicion any claim to rule a nation of human beings by a ruler who does not acknowledge the inner moral life of each human being, its strivings and complexities, its complicated emotions, its efforts at understanding and its terrors, and? does not distinguish in its descriptions between a human being and a machine.[10]

Whether or not one agrees with this, it is surely worth reflection by anyone concerned with our life as a people both in the present and as we move into the future. But I suggest that it also provides a criterion by which to measure the value of intellectual endeavours which are the work of a National Library.

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1   Yeats, WB (1971). *The Collected Poems of WB Yeats.* London, Macmillan: 347.
2   Milton, John (1962). 'Areopagitica', in Abrams, MH *et al* (eds) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. New York, WW Norton: 901-11.
3   Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1974). *Philosophical Investigations.* Oxford, Blackwell: 113-4, 48e.
4   *Ibid*: 107, 46e.
5   Furphy, Joseph *Such Is Life,* in Barnes, John (ed) (1981). *Portable Australian Authors: Joseph Furphy.* St Lucia, University of Queensland Press: 66
6   Susin, Luiz Carlos (2000). 'A critique of the identity paradigm', *Concilium,* 2: 78-90.
7   Sidney, Sir Philip *Apology for Poetry,* in Abrams *et al* (1962) *op cit*: 426.
8   Stevens, Wallace (1957). *Selected Poems.* London, Faber & Faber: 52.
9   Nussbaum, Martha (1995). *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Political Life.* Boston, Beacon Books: 38.
10 *Ibid.*

In the 'Street of the Historians': Practising History
at the Australian War Memorial
Peter Stanley

Fifty years ago the old War Memorial Library was a very different place to the bright and busy place we know today. It was a place of midday gloom and mid-summer chill, its cold linoleum tiles echoing squeakily to the few feet that trod them. Some time in the early 1960s this dim and slightly unnerving hush was momentarily disturbed by the arrival a teenaged boy and his mother. Visitors from Wagga, they were shown around the Library by a librarian, a friend of the family, who retrieved some of the letters and diaries dating from the Great War that the Library held.

The boy was Bill Gammage. Within a decade he had written a PhD thesis published in 1974 as *The Broken Years*.[1] It transformed Australia's understanding of its soldiers' experience of the Great War, and arguably changed the way its historians interpreted Australian military history. Most of all – more than any single work of history since 1918 – *The Broken Years* alerted Australians to the existence of a new storehouse of historical sources.

What that friendly librarian had done was to plant in the young Gammage the idea that the Memorial held sources about Australia's part in the war, records that almost no one – including the official historian, Charles Bean – had used before. (As Memorial historian and former Summer Scholar Anne-Marie Condé has recently shown, these personal records were neither collected nor used by Charles Bean, and though the creation of John Treloar, the collection had barely been used after his death.[2]) Gammage re-discovered them. Today those records are arguably more precious than the vast holdings of official records in the Memorial. They collectively comprise one of the largest coherent and accessible lodes of the writings of 'ordinary' Australian people, and over the past thirty years have been increasingly consulted and used to enlarge our knowledge and understanding of the place of war in Australia's experience of the twentieth century.

This extraordinary change has occurred within Bill Gammage's working life. He has gone on to write other insightful books – *Narrandera Shire* and *The Sky Travellers* – and many others have followed him in using the personal records to which he alerted us.[3] In the succeeding decades the Memorial's collection has not only grown (many more letters, diaries and memoirs have been gathered) but been made immensely more accessible by the creation of usable digital finding aids and by the cultivation of a policy of encouraging and helping users, regardless of their background. The Memorial has become the key archive and repository for the interpretation of the Australian experience of war.

But the Memorial is more than a repository of sources; a passive receptacle of files and collections. As we now recognise, the process of collecting (or not collecting), of deciding what should be kept or displayed or emphasised, is an act of historical interpretation. Indeed, in the past three decades this process has become a self-conscious vehicle for the interpretation of Australian history. In this reflection I want to examine the Memorial's historians and the contribution they have made to the Memorial's achievements, especially over the past decade.

The 'Street of the Historians'

From the earliest days of its precursor, the Australian War Records Section, established in France in 1917 to collect records and what were then called trophies, an awareness of the way the future would want to understand what would become the past informed its members' decisions. Ninety years on, as well as being the venue for official and private commemoration, a museum and a Research Centre, the Memorial remains a vehicle for the interpretation of Australia's past.

In 1993 I characterised the Memorial as an insular medieval village, complete with its squire, its own rustic patois and several contenders for village idiot.[4] The Memorial is now much bigger than a village. Now I think of it as more of an early modern town, with its various occupationally-based quarters and alleys. One street of that town is the Street of the Historians. There, a dozen or so members of our guild practise their trade. They are privy to special knowledge denied their fellows in the Streets of the Curators or the Conservators. They speak a sub-dialect of the Memorial, crossed with the language of the journeyman scholar. Unlike the members of some other guilds, the historians' gaze is directed both inward and outward. They work on the arcana of exhibitions, ministerial correspondence and the Memorial's own publications. But they also travel to distant libraries, to meet other journeymen at conferences, and even go on pilgrimages overseas. They have exploited the miracle of Caxton's press, and whatever the early modern counterpart of the internet might have been. Before the metaphor becomes too absurd, let me sketch the Memorial's involvement in the practice of history in more recent times.

For its first sixty or so years the Memorial managed very well without having any trained or designated historians on its staff. It could get away with this because it had the official historians for the two world wars either on the premises or on tap, and of course until the 1960s many members of staff had lived through or served in one or another of the world wars. It also made mistakes as a result (for example, in the late 1970s, by omitting 'Burma' from the list of 'battle honours' in the courtyard) but for most of its earlier history the presence of veterans provided some sort of authority and check.

In 1980 a couple of decades of benign neglect ended with a revised Australian War Memorial Act. It gave the Memorial broader responsibilities in documenting, displaying and interpreting Australia's experience of war and military history generally. It had become clear that just as it needed qualified curators and conservators, the Memorial needed historians if it was to do its job properly. Over the next few years what was called the 'History and Publications Section' became the 'Historical Research Section', the result of the recruitment of a dynamic branch head (Michael McKernan, enticed from the University of NSW) and an efficient section head, Margaret Browne.

'Camelot on Mount Ainslie'

Together, Michael and Margaret established the essentials of what we came to think of in retrospect, in another sort-of medieval metaphor, as 'Camelot on Mount Ainslie'. They developed a suite of initiatives which together kicked off serious research in our field and created a community of scholarship.

The 1970s had seen a revival of interest in Australian military history. It can be dated to the work of historians Ken Inglis, Lloyd Robson and Bill Gammage, and, in the popular arena, Patsy Adam Smith's *The Anzacs* (1978). The Memorial rode this wave of interest, urging it on in various ways, but generally taking the credit regardless. It led to a boom in Australian military history publishing which has never quite faded. That

this has led to the excesses of, say, Peter FitzSimons and Les Carlyon as well as books like Ken Inglis's *Sacred Places*, Joy Damousi's *The Labour of Loss* or Bart Ziino's *A Distant Grief*, is part of the price we pay for the popularity of the field.[5]

But the Memorial made a real contribution to this revival. It more or less simultaneously started the *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* (established in 1982 and still going, now on-line), organised a series of conferences and expanded a (since abandoned) Research Grants Scheme, and a Summer Vacation Scholarship Scheme, still in operation.[6] Our colleagues in the 'Editorial and Publications Section', hived off from the old 'History and Publications', began to publish books in our field.

In this period, from, say, 1981 to about 1995, the Memorial established itself as the premier institution in the field of Australian military history. The innovations in supporting research paralleled new exhibitions, new conservation and storage facilities, the creation of the Research Centre from the old library and a general mood of energy and engagement. The great advances in curating the collection led to the creation and digitisation of finding aids that has so encouraged research in what the Memorial's historians called, somewhat proprietorially, 'our field'.

The Historical Research Section numbered no more than five or six members through this time. Their roles were essentially to contribute to the development of galleries and exhibitions, to assist the publications program, and to service the grants scheme, the conferences and the *Journal*. In essence, we were the handmaidens of other researchers.

Some of us managed to research and publish history. I did a Litt B at the Australian National University from 1982 to 1984, and then a PhD part-time from 1989 to 1993, writing several popular books along the way at home, but there was little scope for serious research at work. The closest I came was to write a chapter for our Bicentennial book *Australia Two Centuries of War and Peace* in 1988, and in 1995 I began work on what became *Tarakan: an Australian Tragedy*.[7] This was arguably only the third serious history book written by a member of the Memorial's staff - Michael McKernan had published *All-in* in 1983, and *Here is Their Spirit* in 1991.[8] But in this period the emphasis was very much on helping 'the field' as a whole.

From handmaidens to producers

But from the mid-1990s this pattern changed. Before discussing this change, let me observe that during the several epochs I'm covering here, different conceptions of history and military history have prevailed at the Memorial. It's important to appreciate these changes over the long *durée*.

Before 1980 – before any professional historians were appointed to the staff, we would have to recognise that a rather simplistic view of history and military history prevailed. The Memorial was about recording events, events that were clearly outlined in the official histories. The view was essentially positivist, highly empirical, largely uncontested. During the 1980s that view was overturned, almost overnight. Michael McKernan and the small historical section that he created immediately established links with the academic historical community, and beyond it to amateurs and to an extent with the Defence Force, not least through the *Journal* and especially the annual conferences I mentioned.

While the first recognisable conference – called the Australian War Memorial Bicentenary Military History Seminar – had actually been held in 1979, the annual conferences held between 1981 and about 1996 constituted a distinct phenomenon in

this field. Each year about 200 people gathered in Canberra (at first in February, then from about 1989 in winter, at first at the Memorial, then at various venues, latterly at the Defence Force Academy, but once in Melbourne). Participants came to hear about and discuss what everyone seemed happy to call military history. As we always wrote in the brochures and the various blurbs we penned, 'participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including academics, students, librarians, archivists, current and retired service people…'. The essence of these gatherings was variety, and a real if uneven dialogue.

Looking back, somewhat nostalgically of course, I now see it as a time when a new understanding of 'military history' emerged from that slew of papers. The conferences became large – perhaps larger than the field could really sustain, with four days of two or three concurrent sessions. It soon became clear that a split existed between what were loosely called 'operational' historians – traditional students of commanders and battles, and 'social historians'. Some of us, guerilla-like, managed to swim in fresh and salt water simultaneously. It was an exciting time to be involved with new ideas and especially new approaches in a field which was waking from a slumber dominated by antiquarians and unit historians and by supposedly definitive official histories written decades before.

As time went on two things became clear. The first was that the various proponents of these two schools – the social historians and the military historians – actually did start to talk to each other, rather than going to separate sessions. (I like to think that that was one effect of our clever shaping of conference programs: I certainly tried to integrate and engage these two seemingly opposed factions.) The other conclusion reflected broader currents in the world of military and cultural history beyond Canberra – that military history neither could, nor should, ever be isolated from broader understandings of people in time. The new military history wasn't spoken much about, but its effects gradually became apparent. As I'll mention, eventually the great series of large annual conferences ended, but I think that the idea of a military history that encompassed social and cultural history, the home front as well as the battle front, was one great legacy of that time.

To return to the chronology, from the mid-1990s, that pattern changed. In 1996 a new Director arrived – Steve Gower, who had been the Major General in charge of the Army's Training Command. A strong supporter of traditional military history, Steve was inclined to look favourably on the Memorial doing more than support other people doing history. He also gradually increased the size of the section, partly by merging it with the rump of the Official History Unit which had been working on the southeast Asian official history series.[9] By 1998 then, what was now re-named the Military History Section had seven or eight members. The change in name, from 'Historical Research Section' to 'Military History Section' in 1998, reflected a change in focus.

The formation of a new section coincided with the redevelopment of the Memorial's galleries. This meant that historical skills (along with curatorial knowledge and project management abilities) became more directly relevant to the institution. There was an irony here. In the 1980s the Memorial's historians had been the drivers of new ways of developing galleries. In essence we urged that exhibitions should move from mere displays of 'relics' to developed and self-conscious engagements with the process of interpreting the past. In doing so we had exasperated or even alienated our curatorial colleagues, but by the mid-1990s we had developed a model of what we called the 'exhibition-curator' approach, in which historians seemed to prevail. The irony was that the historians were then caught up in a wave of gallery redevelopment, in which project

managers and senior managers as a whole, seized – and have retained – control of exhibition development. But there remained a need for specialist historical knowledge and skills. One of the reasons for the Military History Section's expansion is this greater role in an exhibition program that is still the Memorial's main priority.

But gallery redevelopment has been only one stimulus to the increased presence of history at the Memorial. The other was the acceptance that the Memorial should be, as the corporate plan has put it for the past two triennial planning cycles 'a centre of excellence' in the field of military history in this country.

A centre of excellence

From the late 1990s the Memorial's historians stopped being handmaidens and started becoming producers. This was not necessarily a painless transition. Crucially, in 1996 the Research Grants Scheme was cut (except for supporting one intermittent PhD scholarship and three annual undergraduate summer scholars). I have to say that I did not agree with the loss of the Research Grants Scheme, not least because it represented a loss of influence and patronage. It's pleasant to be courted and deferred to, even though your grants scheme is run along strictly meritocratic principles, and handy to be able to encourage worthwhile projects. With the loss of the grants-in-aid program we were left only with the influence we could muster by example and exhortation.

I now realise that losing the grants scheme enabled my section to *do*, as well as support, historical research, and over the seven years after I returned from curating the Second World War gallery we developed quite a different profile as a section. Essentially, we became producers in the field.

To pick up an earlier strand, in this period the kind of military history that the Memorial advocated, encouraged, funded and did also changed. The change in name, from 'Historical Research' to 'Military History' was emblematic. While not explicitly forbidden, what was crudely called 'social history' was regarded suspiciously.[10] One sign of this is that we established much closer ties with the Defence Force. That has been in some ways no bad thing. It has enhanced the Memorial's ability to document conflicts and peacekeeping missions. I've personally been a member of the Army's advisory committee for over a decade, as well as winning several grants from the Army History Unit to do field work for several books. But it is a very different relationship, tying the Memorial to Defence and to particular ways of conceiving what 'military history' is or is not, in ways that previously did not occur or were not especially strong.

Let me give you a telling instance. Soon after Steve Gower arrived in 1996, I was given the job of curating the major redevelopment of the Second World War galleries. I can recall having long and involved negotiation with Steve to reach agreement on the notional percentage split between social and military history in the galleries, before a word had been written or a photo or a relic selected for display. It was rather like two medieval schoolmen debating the composition of the nails in the true cross. Neither of us had a means to measure the percentage we thought it should be, but we both thought we knew what we wanted: naturally, he won. I have to say that as time went by Steve softened his suspicion of 'social history', though he remains more comfortable talking tactics. Fortunately, I became bi-lingual and fluent in this lingo.

Over the past decade the Memorial as an institution has been less comfortable with the diversity and contention which were so much a part of the big Memorial

conferences in the 1980s. This may reflect the fact that Steve's tenure as director has exactly corresponded with the Howard government's time in office, though he was appointed by the Keating cabinet in one of its final acts. There is no suggestion of overt political influence, and the Memorial is not subject to open persuasion from government, still less direction; but institutions, like individuals, read the prevailing mood and trim their sails accordingly.

With Australia embarking on greater international engagement from the early 1990s, the Memorial's historians faced greater challenges in researching contemporary history, and this context is only now becoming apparent. History at the Memorial had got underway seriously in the wake of Vietnam and in the period of calm between Vietnam and the first Gulf war. We had it easy, I now realise. Since then we have seen both contentious wars and a large number of demanding peacekeeping deployments. Both have affected what and how military history is done at the Memorial. A clear example of this was the development of an exhibition on Australia's part in the 2003 invasion of Iraq which opened within a year of the fall of Baghdad. This exhibition, dealing with a commitment that many Australians opposed, but which the government obviously supported, was handled with subtlety and skill by my colleague Peter Londey. It would be instructive to hear his reflections on that task. We now live in an era of what Mark McKenna calls 'the new militarism'. 'Military narratives serve as instructive parables of national virtue for Australian children', he writes, so that 'fighting for king and country in 1915 provides the rationale for fighting for the US alliance in 2003'.[11] This level of engagement is a very different context to the detachment prevailing, say, twenty years ago.

Ironically, though, outside the Memorial, the decade following the first of the Gulf wars saw the integration into traditional military history of many of the themes that had been contended through the 1980s. It became commonplace to see women, children and civilians generally at the centre of military history. Servicewomen, though often claimed to have been overlooked, actually became proportionately more visible in many ways than servicemen. It meant that the field of military history remained contentious, but in different ways. One of the most significant developments in the 1990s and later was the way in which government agencies began to fund and promote military history. The Australian Army began a research grants scheme that became the single largest source of funds for military (army, that is, not navy or air force or civilian) history. As well, following the 'Australia Remembers' year of 1995, the Federal government promoted commemoration explicitly and abundantly, though not without criticism.[12] This occurred publicly in a series of official pilgrimages, but also through a well funded 'commemorations program' run by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This boom in funding occurred at exactly the time the Memorial was withdrawing from funding historical enterprise through its research grants scheme.[13]

One consequence of this change is that 'veterans' have become much more important in public debate than they had ever been during the 1980s. The Memorial consulted veterans extensively while redeveloping the Second World War galleries, for example, through a 'stakeholder' policy - the largest single element of which involved consulting ex-servicewomen's groups. For the Post-1945 galleries, which will open in 2007, it sometimes seems that the motivation for the entire project is to acknowledge veterans as much as to inform the great majority of visitors, who have no direct experience of war. That's a sign of a major change in the way the Memorial looks at military history, and a sign of how changing perceptions and interests in the community at large influence the Memorial's practice of history.

It's a change that is, in many ways, exactly the opposite of what we thought would occur. In the mid-1970s, we assumed that Anzac Day would wither and die: as Eric bogle sang in his 1979 song 'And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda',

> But as year follows year, more old men disappear
> Someday, no one will march there at all.[14]

For a time, we thought about the Anzac legend the way federal Australia thought of Aborigines: as heading for extinction. Neither they nor the Anzac legend consented to this fate, and we are seeing a seeming increase in attendances and a profound and not always congenial change in associated attitudes to war, to nationalism and to commemoration. In many ways it's more difficult to be a military historian at the Memorial today, because war and warriors are accepted and even celebrated in ways no one foresaw twenty years ago. Military history may remain as popular, but it surely will also become more contentious as the 'War on Terror' and Australia's military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan continue.

Where to now?

Good history is being done at the Memorial. The value and the complexity of the Memorial's historical responsibility can be seen no better than through the Official History of Peacekeeping and post-Cold War operations. This project, headed by Official Historian David Horner, deserves a detailed description in its own right. The first Australian official history to commence in over twenty years, it is a joint undertaking between the Memorial and the Australian National University. The Memorial has assigned Senior Historian Peter Londey (author of *Other People's Wars*, the first general history of Australian peacekeeping operations) and John Connor (author of *The Australian Frontier Wars*, who has recently become a lecturer at the Australian Defence Force Academy), to the project.[15] Garth Pratten, a former Summer Scholar who has just completed his PhD on Australian battalion commanders in the Second World War, is the project's Principal Research Officer.[16] Under a large grant from the Australian Research Council Professor Horner has also recruited several research assistants, thereby giving potential future scholars valuable experience.

The Military History Section hosts a program funded by the Embassy of Japan: the Australia-Japan Research Project (AJRP). For the past nine years the AJRP has documented and stimulated research on the relationship between the two nations, especially in the Pacific war. The AJRP is headed by Steve Bullard, who with Keiko Tamura has published *From a Hostile Shore*, comprising essays in English and Japanese examining the two sides' experience and memory of the war in New Guinea.[17] Both are proficient in Japanese and have established the AJRP as a locus of cooperation between scholars in the two nations. Steve and Keiko's latest joint book is *Blankets on the Wire*, a study of the Cowra breakout in English and Japanese in parallel texts.[18] One of the project's great achievements – a diplomatic triumph in securing permission to translate and publish as well as an achievement in editing – is to have translated the Japanese official history dealing with the Papuan campaign; a pressing need, given the obsessive Australian interest in Kokoda.[19]

The AJRP Project represents a triumph. A project that could have become a political hot potato has survived for ten years and produced solid benefits, not just in books and website pages, but in building real relationships between institutions and individuals in Japan and Australia over years.

In the Street of the Historians some changes can be seen: some established residents have left; newcomers will take their places. Some workshops are idle; some are busy (in the case of the peacekeeping historians, energetically turning swords into ploughshares) and newcomers – Japanese, surprisingly – have taken up residence in a neighbourhood of their former foes. In the most recent change, the Memorial has just appointed as Principal Historian a relatively inexperienced person, one not even holding a journeyman's ticket as an historian. What this betokens for its standing as a serious historical institution is uncertain, though it suggests no great commitment to the (relatively recent) tradition of academic attainment as the foundation of the Memorial's historical expertise.

Through all these changes, however, the Memorial's historical mission continues. Regardless of shifts in staffing and personalities, it must always be at the centre of the understanding of Australia's military history, both as a source of sources and as a source of interpretation. We can expect further changes as the years pass, though it might be imprudent to predict what they may be.

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[This article is based on a seminar paper delivered in the History Program at the Australian National University in August 2006.]

1   Gammage, Bill (1974). *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, ANU Press, Canberra.

2   Condé,Anne-Marie (2005).'Capturing the records of war: collecting at the Mitchell Library and the Australian War Memorial', *Australian Historical Studies* 125, April: 134–152,

3   Gammage, Bill (1986). *Narrandera Shire*, Narrandera Shire Council, Narrandera; (1998). *The Sky Travellers: Journeys in New Guinea 1938-1939*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

4   Stanley, Peter, (1993). 'Happy birthday, HRS: a decade of the Australian War Memorial's Historical Research Section', *Public History Review*, Nov: 54-65.

5   FitzSimons, Peter (2004). *Kokoda*, Hodder Headline, Sydney; Les Carlyon (2006). *The Great War*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney; KS Inglis (2005). *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, Melbourne University Publishing, Melbourne; Joy Damousi (1999). *The Labour of Loss : Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, Cambridge

University Press, Melbourne; Bart Ziino (2007). *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth.

6   *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, now at http://www.awm.gov.au/journal/

7   Browne, Margaret and Michael McKernan (1988). *Australia Two Centuries of War and Peace*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra; Peter Stanley (1997). *Tarakan: an Australian Tragedy*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney..

8   McKernan, Michael (1983). *All in!: Australia during the Second World War*, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne; (1991). *Here is their Spirit: a History of the Australian War Memorial 1917-1990*, University of Queensland Press/Australian War Memorial, St Lucia.

9   The final volume, being written by Ashley Ekins, still isn't published, and there is no certainty when it will be, particularly – surprisingly – since he was appointed Principal Historian in July 2007.)

10 This was partly a reflection of the last, or perhaps the latest, of the periodic bouts of institutional blood-letting that had afflicted the Memorial in the 1980s and 1990s. What were stigmatised as 'young, academic social historians' were seen as tainting the pure record of Anzac achievement, and social history was discouraged, discountenanced and disregarded.

11 McKenna, Mark (2007). 'Patriot act', *Australian Literary Review*, 6 June: 3, 14-15.

12 Marilyn Lake makes an articulate critique of Department of Veterans' Affairs sponsorship of military history in primary and secondary schools in her article, (2007) 'Independent histories' in *Dissent*, Autumn/Winter: 6-9.

13 It was this withdrawal from funding research that led me to comment in passing in a profile published in the *Canberra Times*, 30 April 2007, that the Memorial had 'lost its edge' in fostering and especially, funding research. The Memorial's management unfortunately took this as a criticism of the Memorial in general. As this article demonstrates, I respect the historical work of the great majority of my former colleagues, and acknowledge the Memorial's primacy as a most important repository of the sources on which the continued interpretation of Australia's military history depends.

14 Bogle, Eric (2000). *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda*, Larrikin Music, Sydney.

15 Londey, Peter (2004). *Other People's Wars: a History of Australian Peacekeeping*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney; John Connor (2002). *The Australian Frontier Wars, 1788-1838*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney.

16 Garth was recently awarded the Australian Army's CEW Bean Prize for Military History for his thesis.

17 Bullard, Steven and Keiko Tamura, (eds) (2004). *From a Hostile Shore: Australia and Japan at War in New Guinea*, Australia-Japan Research Project/Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

18 Bullard, Steven (2006). *Blankets on the Wire the Cowra Breakout and its Aftermath*, Australia-Japan Research Project/Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

19 Bullard, Steven (trans) (2007). *Japanese Army Operations in the South Pacific Area : New Britain and Papua Campaigns, 1942-43*, Australia-Japan Research Project/Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Beyond the Paper-Trail:
National Archives in the Digital Age
Graeme Davison

The modern study of history was based on a quiet, but momentous, nineteenth century revolution in record-keeping. Its most enduring legacy was the public archive, a publicly-funded repository of the written transactions of the local or national state. The national gallery, the national museum, the national library and the national archives became the four pillars of national history-making. Visiting the British Public Record Office, the French Archives Nationales or the National Archives of Australia was an almost obligatory rite of passage in the apprenticeship of the professional historian. Reading documents drawn from these archives was also the foundation of undergraduate history education. As a first year student, I cut my teeth on Stephenson and Marcham's *English Constitutional Documents*. In In Australian history I studied Manning Clark's *Select Documents*, many of them drawn in turn from *Historical Records of Australia*, the state-sponsored collection of Colonial Office documents transcribed from the British Public Record Office. The national archive remains integral to the historical creation of the nation.[1]

The heart of the modern state archive is the file, a sheaf of papers, often fastened in a manila folder or bound in pink ribbon ('red tape'), which documents the train of political and bureaucratic transactions on a particular topic of policy or administration. In working through a file, from the bottom to the top, the historian can reconstruct a narrative of official actions. Each step in the story is ideally recorded in the file - letters and memoranda, notes of important meetings or telephone conversations, the minister's or departmental secretary's marginal comments on draft documents, right up to the most recent transaction. Political historians cross-reference the sequence of official actions with other written or printed records – politicians' personal papers, newspaper accounts, Hansard reports and the like. In the heyday of the penny post, the newspaper and the telegraph, there was little in the process of political communication that did not leave its spoor in the paper-trail. A historian of the Irish crisis of 1886 can track the thoughts and actions of Prime Minister William Gladstone and his ministers almost hour by hour through the letters and telegrams passing between their great country houses, the public servants in Whitehall and the officials in Phoenix Park in Dublin. The historian's job was to pursue that paper-trail.

Australians inherited this tradition of record-keeping from their colonial masters. The political scientist Alan Davies once observed that Australians have a talent for bureaucracy.[2] We are a democratic people, but we were also among the first nations to adopt the systems of impersonal and accountable government that we associate with modern bureaucracies. Bureaucratic government was, in part, a function of our remoteness from Europe. As the lines of communication lengthened the bonds of bureaucratic accountability tightened. The British Empire, says Alan Atkinson in his perceptive book *The Europeans in Australia*, rose on the foundation laid by an ever-increasing mountain of bureaucratic paper. The instructions given to Captain Arthur Phillip in 1787 that led to the establishment of the British colony at Sydney Cove, were 'symptomatic', says Atkinson, 'of an empire tied by paper - instructions, reports, legislation – to its metropolitan heart'.[3]

Colonial administrators often pioneered record-keeping techniques adopted only later in Europe. Long before the KGB and the Stasi, Australia had its system of security files

– the indents recording the names, identities and offences of the convict settlers of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. In a recent interesting book of essays by Australian archivists and their international colleagues, Barbara Reed notes that the colonial correspondence files actually anticipate some of the characteristics of modern electronic records by incorporating a system of 'top-numbering' analogous to the current use of metadata.[4]

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the system of ruling by writing had begun to break down. The telephone soon became the main instrument of higher-level political communication. 'Tiberias on a telephone' was Gough Whitlam's acid description of his predecessor, Billy McMahon. In fact all succeeding Prime Ministers, especially Paul Keating, whose late night calls inspired fear in his ministers, have often consciously preferred the immediacy and informality of the phone call to the formality and permanence of written communication. Only in unguarded moments – such as notorious intercepted mobile telephone conversation between Jeff Kennett and Andrew Peacock – does this vital stream of political communication find its way onto the public record. Now the telephone is being challenged in turn by the internet. Some of what we previously said over the phone is now conveyed by email. This gives us more control over the order in which we tackle the day's work, and puts more of our thoughts into writing, but it leaves only a sequence of electronic impulses rather than a trail of paper. Capturing the email record could retrieve some of the information lost to the telephone, but only if we take deliberate measures to capture it.

Even in the electronic age the paper archive remains the definitive record of state activity. We have only to consider the critical importance such records now assume in historical debates over Aboriginal land rights, 'stolen children', Australian policy on Timor, Nazi war crimes, the operations of the Stasi and the 'children overboard' affair to recognise how dependent we remain on the systematic and permanent qualities of the paper-based official file.

But now this traditional concept of the archive is undergoing a new revolution. The primary driver of these changes is technological: the arrival of the electronic age of computers and digital databases. But it is reinforced and given shape by other changes in contemporary politics, such as the neo-liberal drive towards smaller government through privatisation, out-sourcing and commercialisation, and the growing politicisation of the public service. During the six years I sat on the Advisory Council of the National Archives of Australia, I was often prompted to consider the implications of these changes for the future of Australian history. The following reflections are my own unauthorised response to some of the issues that came before us during those years.

From words to bytes

How does the digital or virtual archive differ from its predecessors? The paper on which the traditional archive was based could decay, but it was otherwise highly stable. The computer file, on the other hand, is capable of being constantly changed, updated or deleted, often in ways that would be invisible to anyone but a digital detective. It makes records that are simultaneously compact and unstable. If the paper shredder is in operation, someone other than the operator may notice; but hardly anyone notices if the delete button is pressed. In a 2002 green paper the National Archives underlined the differences between these old and new record regimes:

For many years lack of attention to record-keeping has been mitigated by the existence of long-standing, well known practices for the use of paper records. Paper records also have a robustness that enables them to survive long periods of neglect. In contrast, the sometimes haphazard use of electronic systems for communicating and storing recorded information is more fragile.

. . . Although electronic systems offer many advantages, agencies must ensure that these records are captured, survive as long as they are needed, and can be read and understood. For example, important email messages must be captured into corporate record-keeping systems where they can be preserved securely and found easily. Databases containing case records with long-term value need to be migrated forward with hardware and software changes so that the records are still accessible.[5]

How should the public archives of the twenty-first century respond to this challenge? If adequate records are to survive, decisions will have to be made now rather than many years in the future. Only by deciding in advance whether a record should be kept for say two years, or seventy, or forever, can its preservation be ensured. Where the records are electronic it may be important to ensure, not only that the data is not over-written or scrubbed, but that arrangements are made to preserve it in stable formats and to migrate the information through changes in software and hardware that might otherwise render it obsolete or unreadable.

Already changes in office environments have rendered the data once stored in five and a quarter inch floppy disks all but unreadable. How many further generations of electronic data-storage will occur before the electronic records of today reach the 30 year statutory release date? Will the technology then in use be capable of retrieving them? The volume of electronic data now being generated is immense. The US National Archives captured the more than 25 million email messages from the files of the Clinton White House. (How many have been generated - and deleted - by the Bush White House is unknown). These digital letter files arguably constitute a database of even greater potential for historical inquiry - and political embarrassment - than Richard Nixon's notorious White House tapes. The future archive may no longer need kilometres of shelf-space, but it will surely require terabytes of computer storage space.

The records continuum

The advent of digital technology has prompted a reappraisal of some fundamental features of archival practice. Australian archivists have been notable innovators in this regard. As early as the mid-1960s, well before the digital revolution was under way, an Australian archivist Peter Scott had made the conceptual shift from a record system based on physical arrangement to one based on functionality. More recently Sue McKemmish, Michael Piggott and Frank Upward have moved away from the traditional custodial idea of the archive as a deposit of the past, to be guarded and conserved, to the more dynamic conception of a 'records continuum'. They visualise the archival domain as a set of interrelated activities or processes that transform documents, the individual traces of human activity, into systematic arrangements or records, individual records into archives, and archives in to the wider domain of archival knowledge. 'Records', says Sue McKemmish, 'are in a constant state of becoming.'[6] By shifting the focus from the archive as a collection and the archivist as a custodian to record-keeping as an activity and the archivist as a records-manager, they argue, we are

better able to conceptualise the essentially fluid and increasingly virtual world of the information age.

This avowedly postmodern perspective has attracted wide international interest, especially in northern Europe, although it is not without its critics, for example in the United States where custodial approaches still hold sway. However, as Upward argues, events such as the recent corporate collapses and the failure of intelligence in the lead-up to the Iraq war suggest that, there too, public accountability might be better served by a more dynamic approach to the management of records.[7]

This conceptual shift also implies a shift in the role, and perhaps in the status, of the archivist. The old definition of the archivist's role, as 'the neutral, impartial custodian of inherited records', was possibly fictitious even when it was first articulated; but it was a useful fiction in guaranteeing the archivist a degree of institutional immunity from those, like politicians and bureaucrats, who may wish to cook the books. No longer neutral custodians, archivists are now, McKemmish, Reed and Piggott suggest, 'building social structures of remembering and forgetting'. This is a bold conception of the archivist's role, although in abandoning the fiction of neutrality I wonder if they could also be inviting future political trouble.[8]

'The National Archives of Australia (NAA) has embraced many of the lessons of this new approach to archival management. In a series of policy initiatives, collectively known as *epermanence*, the NAA has given force to the new international records management standard AS-ISO 15489, itself based upon the earlier (1996) groundbreaking Australian standard AS 4390-1996 devised by McKemmish and Upward, acting as consultants to the NAA.. *Epermanence* involves a significant shift in the approach to records appraisal, the decision-making process that determines which records are kept for long-term archival purposes. In an electronic environment, it is argued, records must be 'sentenced at birth'. Decisions about which records are to be kept, and for how long, must be made from the moment they are created. 'Sentencing at birth' is a conceptual challenge for historians as well as archivists. How can we forecast which records will be of most use to the historians of the twenty-second century? Many of the interpretative advances of the past half-century have been made by historians reading records 'against the grain', that is, to retrieve information about past societies deposited incidentally to the record creators' original purpose. Thus the official records can be used to reconstruct 'history from below'. These official records have survived through a mixture of luck and institutional inertia, certainly not because any contemporary archivist predicted that future historians would want them. (Of course many other records which historians would now love to be able to consult, such as the enumerator's returns from Australia's colonial censuses, were destroyed by earlier generations of bureaucrats).

In its discussion paper *Why Records Are Kept*, the National Archives mandated 'a top-down approach to appraisal, beginning with analysis of functions of government rather than an appraisal of accumulations of records'. Foremost in its thinking are the current and future needs of government for information that assists the formulation and execution of policy. Such an approach is likely to capture records of high governmental significance – cabinet papers, for example – rather than routine branch correspondence. But how well will a 'top-down' policy of appraisal satisfy the 'bottom-up' curiosity of future historians? The Archives note, almost as an afterthought, that the appraisers should also conserve 'records which illustrate the condition and status of Australian people and the impact of Commonwealth government on them' and 'records

that have substantial capacity to enrich knowledge and understanding of aspects of Australia's history, society, culture and people'.[9]

How will the National Archives meet this formidable challenge? Who is best equipped to forecast which records are most likely to 'enrich knowledge of . . . Australia's history'? Archivists? Public servants? Historians? Futurologists? The language of the discussion paper is vague and circumspect:

> We will take into account assessments by appraisers and stakeholders as to the significance that Commonwealth records may have because of their association with events, phenomena, persons, places or themes. Beyond functional context we will preserve only those Commonwealth records that we are convinced have the highest levels of historical, aesthetic, scientific, research or technical significance. Preference will be given to records that can provide a broad community benefit.

Who are the 'appraisers and stakeholders'? What constitute 'the highest levels of . . . significance'? Through what process will the National Archives be 'convinced'? What constitutes 'community benefit'? It is inevitable, given the hierarchical structure of computerised records, that a policy of 'sentencing at birth' will be constructed around 'functional context'. But in placing the onus on stakeholders to demonstrate *in advance* that other preserved records have 'the highest . . . historical significance' is it also effectively destroying too much of what future historians will regard as significant? Historians have often lobbied the NAA to broaden access conditions to existing paper-based records. Should they be equally vigilant about the processes that are already determining what records their successors will be able to consult in centuries to come? Right now the National Archives has a significant problem of surplus paper; but will the electronic revolution and the lower costs of electronic storage eventually enable 'stakeholders' to put the onus on government to prove why records should be destroyed rather than to show why they should be kept?

The politics of information management

What the present leaves to the future depends, not just on our ability to surmount the challenge of new technologies, or to foresee what future historians will want to know about us; it also depends crucially on how much of their actions the politicians and officials allow to get on the record in the first place. Controlling the flow of information, especially the flow of information between governments and the public, has always been one of the black arts of politics. In the 1970s and 80s many parliaments, conscious of the threat to democratic process, passed 'freedom of information' (FOI) statutes. Occasionally they were abused by vexatious journalists who generated an avalanche of requests in the hope of netting a good story; more often the requests were refused or circumvented by politicians intent on frustrating legitimate inquiry.

Over the past twenty years the senior echelons of the public service at both state and national level have become increasingly politicised. Departmental heads are employed on five-year, or even three-year, contracts, their remuneration and future employment depend more on realising the political objectives of the government of the day than on impartial service to the public. In several recent court cases, the Commonwealth government has demonstrated its resolution in prosecuting public servant whistleblowers. Combined with the possibility of FOI access, the general effect of these conditions has been to create an environment in which decisions that could subsequently embarrass the participants are either not recorded, or deleted from the record, before they can be captured by the archive. In a recent interview with the ABC's Kerry O'Brien, former Public Service Commissioner

Andrew Podger noted the increasing reluctance of senior public servants to document their actions:

> Fewer file notes, diaries destroyed regularly, documents given security classifications at higher levels than are strictly required and handled to minimise the chances of FOI access . . the trail that is left is often now just a skeleton without any sign of the flesh and blood of the real process, and even the skeleton is only visible to those with a need to know.

Would not such practices ultimately limit the prospects of historians being able to accurately reconstruct the process of decision-making, O'Brien asked. 'I wonder about this myself from time to time, Kerry', Podger agreed.[10]

When it introduced *epermanence* the NAA pledged itself to assist in educating departments on appropriate record-keeping practices; their compliance was to be monitored, along with other aspects of public service performance, by the Auditor-General. Five years later, however, reports by both the Commonwealth Audit Office and the Public Service Commissioner have shown that few government departments so far achieve the recommended standards. Like other organisations, the Australian Public Service is still adjusting to the new challenges of record-keeping in an electronic environment. Most of its shortcomings are probably inadvertent rather than calculated. The National Archives now faces an invidious choice: should it maintain a standard that no branch of the public service is within range of achieving, or should it set a more realistic standard in the hope of increasing the level of compliance? In coming months, it is expected to launch a new approach to the government record-keeping program, still based on the international standard ISO 15489, but with more simplified protocols, more achievable targets and a new name.

Transparency and privacy

Digitisation not only transforms the process of preservation and appraisal; it may also soon revolutionise public access to the archival record. For professional historians, visiting the archive has long been a rite of passage, surrounded with its own mystique. Travelling to a far city, applying for a reader's ticket, becoming familiar with arcane systems of classification and citation, cultivating the most knowledgeable and friendly archivists – these were part of a process that set the professional historian apart from the casual student of history. Historians prided themselves on their command of the contextual knowledge and critical skills that enabled them to interpret the archival record correctly for a wider public. Working through the records file-by-file, box-by-box, enabled the historian to see the individual document in its wider administrative and political context. The inconvenience of access was also a buffer between the professional and the public. In recent years that buffer has worn thinner as the volume of inquiries from genealogists and other non-professional historians has swelled. But soon it may dissolve almost completely.

In 'Taking it to the streets: why the National Archives of Australia embraced digitisation on demand', Ted Ling outlined the NAA's experience in offering remote access to its deposits via the World Wide Web.[11] A large proportion of visitors to the National Archives are genealogists, and their inquiries are concentrated on a relatively small section of the institution's holdings, such as passenger lists, immigration records, First and Second World War military records and the like. If these records were digitised and placed on the World Wide Web, then, it is argued, many inquirers in remote locations could save themselves the trouble and expense of a trip to Canberra. The

Archives might also save the costs of handling a large number of mail and telephone inquiries from people who could simply help themselves. Other inquiries for records not already digitised could be handled by scanning the document and placing it on the web, where future inquirers interested in the same topic might also consult it.

This is an exciting prospect. Democrats will surely welcome a regime under which Aborigines in Broome can research their family history as easily as public servants in the ACT. It will strengthen links between the National Archives and a wider public with benefits to its public profile and acceptance. Could there be any reason not to digitise as much as possible as fast as possible?

At present inquirers in Canberra can inspect a wide variety of documents on application. These include files containing sensitive matter about individuals such as war atrocity files, accident files, criminal records of living individuals, ASIO files, and files relating to Indigenous people which may contain culturally sensitive matter. In the past an individual inquirer had to consult the Archives' on-line indices or call an archivist, make their way to Canberra, ask for the specific file and read it in the reading room, or contact the archives to ask for a photocopy to be sent to them. The buffer of inconvenience was also effectively a barrier to indiscriminate publicity.

When these files are digitised and placed on the web they become available to anyone, and the inquirer may leave no track of his or her inquiry. The URLs of sensitive files could be posted on other websites possibly for discriminatory, conspiratorial or prurient purposes. When these more sensitive records were open only to visitors to the Archives reading rooms, who must request specific files, the privacy of other individuals was less likely to be seriously threatened. The professional protocols of historians and the publishers' concerns about defamation may also act as a protective barrier on the publication of such records. But when sensitive files are posted on the World Wide Web, the public reaction could possibly force the closure of the records to everyone, including professional historians. Already there have been complaints from some individuals embarrassed by the fact that information about their lives, or those of their relatives, are now accessible to anyone who simply keys their name into a search engine.

'Digitisation on Demand' is a program better tuned to the needs of family historians, who typically request only one or two files and can generally afford the modest service charges ($16.50 for standard files; $38.50 for large files), than to interests of scholars and teachers who would often prefer to see a more systematic and comprehensive approach to the digitisation of historically significant archival records. The NAA is able to digitise some records in response to the suggestions of scholars (about 5000 pages a month in the case of the Victorian office) but nowhere near the volume of material that ideally should be available.

It is now a century since the Commonwealth Government, through the agency of Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, assumed responsibility for the publication of the series *Historical Records of Australia* (*HRA*), a landmark in disseminating the archival record of the early years of the Australian colonies.[12] The digital revolution that is now transforming the making of national archives has also put within our reach the means of further democratising access to the national past. The publication of edited collections of select documents with scholarly commentary, such as the volumes published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on Australian foreign policy, remains a valuable scholarly activity, but the volumes themselves are costly and the selected documents represent only a fraction of those that could be made available far

less expensively in digital form if the Australian Government were now to fund and support a new project – let's call it 'Historical Records of Australia Online' – to select, edit and digitise the most significant documents in our twentieth century history. Such a collection has the potential to transform teaching and research in Australian history as profoundly as the publication of *HRA* did a century ago.

Fellows of the Academy would doubtless have many suggestions about which records deserve to be digitised. They might include some already published, frequently used, but inaccessible sources such as the tabular returns of the Bureau of Census and Statistics. Recently I consulted the transcribed evidence to the Rural Reconstruction Commission, a major official inquiry into the state of Australian agriculture, conducted during the early years of the Second World War. The Commission travelled widely across Australia, interviewing hundreds of individuals and taking over 10,000 pages of typewritten testimony on almost every aspect of Australian rural life. Either because of its volume or wartime economies, the evidence was not published in the customary way as a parliamentary paper, but it remains an invaluable source for any student of Australian rural society in the twentieth century. This is just one example of the rich archival heritage to be exploited in such a new national records project. The learned academies, working in partnership with the National and state archives, would be ideally placed to take up the challenge.

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William Douglas (BAhons) has joined the Secretariat as Project Manager for Workshops and Policy and Advocacy. Previously, William worked at the National Library of Australia, in a variety of capacities, including in the publications division. He is currently completing his doctoral thesis on 20th century genre fiction.

Integration in a Diverse Plural Society
Laksiri Jayasuriya

The current unease in many countries (eg, Holland, France, and the UK) exposed to heightened Muslim immigration has brought to the fore critical issues relating to notions of multiculturalism, citizenship, and national identity. Controversies surrounding these same issues have also been apparent here in Australia, since the days of *Tampa* and *SIEV 4* ('children overboard') were vividly portrayed during the Cronulla Beach riots in 2005.[1] The cryptic nationalist slogan of the beach goers was 'we grew' here, you 'flew here'. Therefore, it was not surprising that the Prime Minister chose to make issues of Australian identity and multiculturalism the centrepiece of his Australia Day Address in 2006.[2] On this occasion, the Prime Minister forcibly defended his long held views on the need to reframe questions of Australian identity by linking 'Australian multiculturalism … to a common culture … [on the] symbols we hold dear as Australians and beliefs that we have about what it is to be an Australian'.[3] Since then, the Prime Minister has reaffirmed and reiterated these views in his advice to some members of the Islamic community in Australia, where he argued that 'fully integrating means accepting Australian values'.[4] The notion of 'full integration', understood primarily as 'cultural integration', was notably characterised by the Prime Minister specifically in terms of learning the English language and respect for Australian values. These views have led to devising a citizenship test affirming the acceptance of Australian values.[5]

In the ongoing controversy, there have been varying reactions to the Prime Minister's Statement of 2006 on Australian multiculturalism and related issues One of the earliest reactions to the Prime Ministers understanding of 'full integration' was from a Muslim Community leader Dr Ameer Ali, Chair of the now disbanded Prime Minister's Advisory Body, The Muslim Community Reference Group. Dr Ali argued that this point of view when translated into public policy 'threatened to drive young Muslims into isolation and inflame racial tensions…because when you antagonise the younger generation they are bound to react'.[6] The Shadow Minister of Immigration, Tony Burke, also entered the debate, observing that from a policy perspective the Prime Minister's views were a 'synonym for "assimilation"'[7] and highly reminiscent of the migrant settlement philosophy in the pre-Whitlam era. More recently Paul Keating has joined in as well, characterising John Howard as a 'Gallipoli nationalist' in contrast to a 'Kokoda patriot' like himself.[8]

In response to these criticisms of John Howard some commentators have chided the critics for their 'politically correct' objections by pointing to Australia's remarkably successful policy of accommodating waves of migrant settlers from Europe and Asia. This successful integration of newcomers, however, was due primarily to the skilful management of post World War II policies of migrant settlement which were incorporated into the wider Australian welfare system. Although the latter is now in disarray, following the collapse of notions of social and industrial citizenship, there is no doubt that this Australian success story in the heyday of mass migration was not due to adopting a nebulous notion of 'Australian values'. Rather it was the intended outcome of the sensible implementation of a settlement philosophy, especially during the Fraser and Hawke-Keating era[9] and later identified as 'multiculturalism'.

This settlement ideology entered the political lexicon as '*Australian multiculturalism*' when John Howard somewhat reluctantly embraced the 'm' word in 1997. Importantly, this policy strategy, framed in terms of an inclusionary model of citizenship, enabled the incorporation of immigrant settlers - without denying their right to be different - into the structures of the society as full and equal members. What is more, the legal status of being a citizen or a 'denizen' (ie, a permanent resident without formal citizenship status) was guaranteed to all newcomers. This was not just a matter of civil and political rights, and procedural equality, but also one of equal access to the benefits of the Australian welfare state.[10]

From this it is clear that what Australia endorsed as 'multiculturalism' was a *conditional multiculturalism* in which the acceptance of the right to be culturally different was always subject to the acceptance by new settlers of the rights and duties governing Australian citizenship and embodied in the institutional fabric of Australian society. It was readily accepted and understood that the rights of citizenship as well as the freedom to express one's views and values also entailed a corollary, *viz*, a willingness to abide by the duties and obligations of citizenship. Accordingly, all versions of multiculturalism since the Whitlam era have maintained that the endorsement of multiculturalism as a social ideal was subject to an acceptance of the basic structures of society and an overriding commitment to Australia.[11]

What this form of *Australian multiculturalism* decreed was a pluralistic understanding of integration as 'social integration', rather than a 'cultural integration'.[12] Whereas the latter places emphasis on the acceptance of cultural values, beliefs, and sentiments, social integration is more a matter of the rights and duties linked to a common citizenship, a political as well as a social citizenship. This approach to 'multiculturalism' and citizenship underlines a sense of nationality modelled on western democracies that have sought to emulate an American or French model of a 'nation state' where all citizens are integrated into a common societal culture. This is one which involves a common language, social, and political institutions rather than a common religion or other personal life styles such as those derived from the 'culture' of the majority group. In other words, a 'common societal culture' acknowledges that in a modern liberal and secular democracy, the culture of 'life styles' is pluralistic and accommodates different religions, and other social groups.

One major shortcoming of Australian citizenship however has been that unlike some other leading western democracies, the rights of citizenship are not constitutionally entrenched as in the *Bill of Rights* of the United States, or built in as Statutory Acts such as the Canadian *Charter of Freedom of Rights* or the *European Convention of Human Rights* recently adopted in Britain.[13] Thus, in the United States an American sense of identity or belonging is derived primarily from one's loyalty to, and identity with, the Constitution, signifying what citizens share in common.[14] In other words, a sense of identity and belonging does not rest on a shared prescriptive set of cultural values, but in one's membership of the political community. These civic republican sentiments are clearly evident in the political credo of Obama, the rising Black African Presidential aspirant, in the USA.[15]

What this signifies is that central to building a sense of identity, of belonging and gaining social solidarity in settler societies like Australia, Canada, and United States, is adaptation to common social and political institutions; or, as some writing about sport have suggested, that the 'social superglue' which forges 'the bond of tribalism rests on a common interest and not in a shared space'. Extending this analysis, what matters in the case of a sense of identity is not shared *values* but shared *identity* derived from an

acceptance of, and identification with, a common public culture. In this sense, for social solidarity the glue of a 'common interest' lies in defending a free and open liberal political order, emboldened by a sense of democratic citizenship framed within a charter of freedom of rights.[16] In short, it is the civic culture which provides the bond and glue that binds the nation and integrates varied segments of society.

Robert Hughes[17] reinforces this approach by making the pointed observation that it is the 'civic virtues' which enable multiculturalism to serve as a bulwark against cultural arrogance, chauvinism, and the tendency to universalise the particular. It is the c*ivic cultur*e which is central to any concept of 'pluralistic integration' in an evolving and dynamic, ethnically and culturally diverse society. This standpoint of a 'civic multiculturalism' affirms that the integration of those from varied cultural backgrounds is achieved by ensuring them full and equal participation in all aspects of social and political life. What we *all* share and belong to is the public culture of the nation, its institutional culture, social and political practices, and inherent civic virtues; in short, membership of the political community.[18]

In sharp contrast, the proponents of Australian values maintain that 'unity in diversity' and a sense of an Australian identity requires integration into 'core cultural values', all derived from the core values of the Anglo-Celtic cultural heritage. Accordingly, in the absence of an institutional framework built around racial and cultural homogeneity such as in the heyday of White Australia, policy,[19] it is suggested that there is a need for a 'cultural/ethnic multiculturalism' based on cultural assimilation. This form of a 'cultural/ethnic multiculturalism' recreates a new 'identity politics' exemplified in the way Howard uses 'values and symbols in politics … [to invest] citizenship with a deeper meaning [and reinforced by] loyalty to nation, individual responsibility, social obligation, and cultural unity'.[20] This model of citizenship finds admirable expression in the Government Discussion Paper entitled *Australian Citizenship* and the subsequent introduction of *a* Formal Citizenship Test.[21] In short, what this form of 'Australian multiculturalism' does is to introduce a form of 'new assimilationism' by the back door.

However, the notion of *social integration* too is in need of refinement because it fails to take account of the pluralistic nature of contemporary society as manifest in the fast changing social demographics of Australian society. Thus, for, example, ethnic minority groups in whatever way they are labelled ('NESBs' or 'CALDs') are now more differentiated and complex. This is mainly because of the extensive social and demographic transformations arising from such factors as heightened interethnic marriage and the presence of second and third generations of ethnic origins.[22] Consequently, ethnicity itself has become more fluid and second and third generations of ethnic origin are more likely to express a 'symbolic ethnicity', such as nostalgia for their parents' homeland rather than a desire for cultural maintenance. Ethnic identity is clearly not a reified fixed identity but one of 'mixed' identities operating in the political domain. This again, underscores the need for diverse plural democratic societies to have a common understanding and acceptance of the *political dimension* of a nation.[23] What is fundamental to any sense of social solidarity in a pluralistic society is the unifying commonalities of the *political nation*, stemming from a common citizenship, rather than a *cultural nation* based on elusive shared values.[24]

The Australian multiculturalism that evolved from Whitlam and Fraser through to the Hawke–Keating era has been critical to the absorption of several waves of migrant settlers in the post World War II period. The experience of settler societies like Canada and Australia clearly demonstrates that liberal political theorising is able to

accommodate diversity and pluralism in the polity without recourse to notions of assimilation of an earlier era. It is a mistaken belief that 'assimilation' – explicit or hidden – is a prerequisite for integration and maintaining social solidarity in a diverse and plural society. Furthermore, this model of multiculturalism has survived without any disruption of social solidarity for over three decades.[25]

In this context it is instructive to look at the social dynamics of 'integration' in France which presents a not too dissimilar context to that of the current Australian scene. This relates to the social turmoil in recent years surrounding ethnic and religious tensions in the French housing estates. One of the main explanations offered has been that this social turmoil is mainly due to the failure of young Muslim youths on these housing estates to 'integrate'. In the French context this has been understood as a failure of the processes of cultural assimilation or the absence of 'cultural integration'. This explanation, however, has been challenged by those who point to the conflicting evidence which shows that these young settlers were quite adept in quickly absorbing the culture of the mainstream bourgeois youth of Paris.

In this light, the French sociologist, Denis Duclos, in a perceptive piece on the 'crisis of integration' in the housing estates observes that 'culture, especially in hard times, is not a top down process but may rise, phoenix like, from suffering'.[26] And, importantly, Duclos goes on to argue that a genuine integration policy can succeed, among other considerations, only if there is 'a radical shift in attitude and [a willingness to] discard any paternalism or unconscious denigration [and] acknowledging that the *Other* has a right to his or her place in a more unified world'. Hence, the need to acknowledge that 'when a society is socially differentiated, then citizenship must be equally so'.[27] This is primarily a question of how we conceptualise a liberal citizenship, one that guarantees full and equal membership in the political community.[28] We need, therefore, to reclaim the notion of a 'pluralistic integration' along the lines advocated by a former British Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins in the 1970s, as, 'equal opportunity with a clear recognition of "differentiations" accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.[29]

The challenge of pluralism, arising form cultural diversity is to confront the paradox of cultural pluralism, of having to straddle difference with sameness, by discarding the outmoded *identity politics* of culturalist multiculturalism. However, this quest for a 'visible statement of separation *and* difference', according to Kurshid Ahmed, a British Muslim leader, requires 'a definition of an integrated society, not within a model of cultural assimilation as in France',[30] but as a democratic pluralistic citizenship incorporating 'equality plus engagement'.

This approach to multiculturalism and integration is well articulated in the 'civic multiculturalism' model adopted by the West Australian Government's recent *Charter on Multiculturalism*. This model of multiculturalism enshrines a radical view of a liberal citizenship which posits a 'differentiated citizenship and the politics of difference'. The WA Charter, while being firmly anchored to liberal citizenship theorising, particularly to such notions as equality and citizens rights and duties, is not blind to particularity and difference.[31] Furthermore the Charter, with its four 'principles', *viz*, civic values, fairness, equality and equitable participation, espouses three key themes: *participation*, *recognition*, and *representation*.[32]

Citizenship, in this sense, acts as a powerful integrating factor, and has a bearing on the *political* nation, rather than the *cultural* nation characteristic of an 'ethnic' identity model of citizenship based on shared values, as advocated by John Howard and

others. Accordingly it has been argued that 'the political culture must serve as the common denominator for a constitutional patriotism which simultaneously sharpens an awareness of the multiplicity and integrity of the different forms of life which co-exist in a multicultural society'.[33] From this point of view, social solidarity, normally associated with culturally homogeneous societies, may equally be found in multicultural societies committed to a civic identity and a liberal multiculturalism. The civic solidarity in a well ordered society with a common political culture derives from the civic virtues in the public and political culture linked to a radical view of citizenship that serves to integrate and contribute to nation building within 'a collective political identity, or political peoplehood'.[34]

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Academy News

Annual General Meeting 2007

ASSA Annual Symposium and Cunningham Lecture 20 November 2007

Power, People, Water: Urban Water Services and Human Behaviour in Australia is the theme for this year's Symposium and the venue is the Australian Academy of Science's Shine Dome in Canberra.

The Symposium draws upon social science knowledge of our evolving urban landscapes and the demands, expectations and behaviour of those who occupy those landscapes. These are considered in the context of variable annual and seasonal needs and the compromises that must be made with the requirements of rural industry and environmental sustainability.

The 2007 **Cunningham Lecture** will be presented by Professor Robert O'Neill who will consider *World Order under Stress: Issues and Initiatives for the 21st Century.*

Fellows' Colloquium

The Colloquium this year will discuss the topic *Social Science Research: making our research count,* led by Anne Edwards and Don Aitkin. The Colloquium will be held in the Drawing Room at University House on Monday 19 November from 7.30 p.m.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and ASSA Census Project

On 3 May Stuart Macintyre attended a meeting at the ABS to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the funding of a research project based on data available from the 2006 census. Specialist contributors have now been approached to write a series of essays about life in Australia based on the census data. Topics to be researched are: Housing; Beyond Life Expectancy; The New Social Productivity; Creative Australia; Living Alone; Different Lives; Lives of Diversity; and Immigration. The project team will meet in Melbourne on 14 September.

International Program

Closing dates for international programs in 2007

Applications are called for the following international programs which will be funded in 2008:

Australia-Netherlands Exchange 14 August, 2007; Australia-India Exchange 20 September, 2007; Australia-Britain Special Joint Project Funding 28 September, 2007.

Australia-China Exchange Program

Li Wen, Senior Research Fellow, Head of the Department of Political Studies, Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, will visit Australia from 7-21 October. He will be hosted by the Monash Asia Institute, Monash University. His area of research is focused on Australian and East Asian regional cooperation and the building of the East Asian community. During his visit he will seek opportunities for future academic cooperation between China and Australia.

Australia-Netherlands Exchange Program

Jacomina Nortier of the Department of Dutch Language and Culture, Utrecht University will visit Australia from 24 September to 15 October. Her host will be John Hajek, School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne. Professor Nortier will be giving some guest lectures and investigating the way research in the field of sociolinguistics, multilingualism, language contact and education is conducted in Australia.

Policy and Advocacy Program

In conjunction with the Institute of Public Administration in Australia (IPAA), and with the support of Minter Ellison Lawyers, the Academy convened a policy roundtable on Federalism. The roundtable was held at the University of Canberra on Friday 18 May, and was well attended, with a large group of over forty policy scholars and practitioners making up an inner circle, and several observers constituting an outer circle.

The purpose of the roundtable was to contribute to informed debate on the current and potential future state of Federal relations in Australia. For IPAA the day's proceedings represent part of a year long program of events and publications on the issue of Australia federalism.

Proceedings focused on the issues pertaining to the division of responsibilities within the current federal arrangements, with a view to identifying weaknesses and strengths, as well as proposing ideas for change and progression.

Workshop Program

Forthcoming Workshops

'Police Professionalism', Jenny Fleming (Tasmania Police Academy), 20-21 September 2007.

'The Future of Australian Anti-Discrimination Law', Beth Gaze and Margaret Thornton (Australian National University), September 2007.

Reports from workshops conducted under the Workshop Program, including policy recommendations, are published in *Dialogue*, usually in the first issue following the workshop.

Reports from Workshops and Roundtables

Mediating Across Difference: Indigenous, Oceanic and Asian Approaches to Conflict Resolution

Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker

From terrorism to local insurgencies, conflict is endemic in today's world. The clash between different religious, ethnic and civilisaboral norms is widely seen as particularly fateful. Dealing with the ensuing dilemmas is thus one of the most challenging tasks ahead. It requires drawing upon a diverse range of insights and practices. But often responses to these important dilemmas focus almost exclusively on Western approaches to security and conflict resolution. In many instances such approaches, particularly in the context of the 'war on terror,' can work against cross-cultural and interdisciplinary cooperation among scholars, practitioners, and non-government actors.

To address this dilemma, the 'Mediating across Difference' workshop, held at the University of Queensland (UQ) from 29 - 31 March 2007, drew upon a range of insights emanating from Asia, Oceania and Indigenous Australia. Although often overlooked, these local traditions offer potentially useful ways of dealing with difference. They can provide scholars, policy makers and diplomatic practitioners with new ways of knowing peoples, new ways of opening up dialogues among seeming antagonists, and new ways of resolving and preventing conflict. To date, many of these local sources of understanding have not been taken into account by dominant ways of practising conflict resolution, security and international diplomacy.

The project, which was supported by the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, UNESCO, the Japan Foundation and the School of Political Science and International Studies at UQ, brought together a range of experienced scholars and practitioners. An important methodological aspect of our approach, consistent with the principles informing the project, involved crossing boundaries both within academia and between scholars and culturally knowledgeable community practitioners and leaders. Scholars from international relations, conflict resolution, sociology, Indigenous studies and anthropology came together with local conflict resolution advocates and practitioners. Case studies included Japan, Korea, China, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Bougainville and Indigenous Australia. The exchange allowed academics to be appropriately challenged by rich cultural traditions, and provided practitioners with the opportunity to expand upon their approaches and enhance legitimacy through a scholarly forum.

Papers were circulated prior to the workshop to provide maximum opportunity to critically discuss approaches and practices for mediating across difference, and hence enhance our efforts to deal with contemporary security and conflict dilemmas. Political tensions in Timor-Leste forced our Timorese colleague to cancel his participation close to the workshop, and last-minute travel difficulties prevented leading conflict resolution scholar Professor Oliver Richmond from joining us. Oliver was, though, able to join us by teleconference on the second day of the workshop.

***

A brief Reception was held on the evening prior to the workshop. Participants were welcomed to the University of Queensland by Deborah Terry, Executive Dean of the

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The co-directors, Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker, thanked sponsors and provided a brief outline of the project for participants and guests from the University.

The workshop was opened by Michael Williams, director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit at UQ and member of the Gooreng Gooreng Aboriginal community. Michael welcomed participants and spoke of how the goals of the project aligned with his and his Indigenous colleagues' long-term efforts to see Indigenous knowledge and approaches recognised as legitimate within the University institutional setting and wider society.

Papers for the workshop were prepared in response to a document prepared by Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker which outlined the rationale for the workshop, the importance of expanding access to non-traditional approaches to security and conflict, and introduced seven key elements of Western conflict resolution. The seven elements, designed to serve as a foil for the preparation of papers, were emphases on: reason over emotion; speech over other forms of communication; *a priori* and universal procedures over cultural diversity; linear understandings of time over cyclical and other alternatives; non-violence over violence; the individual over relationships and the collective; and rational procedures over magic. Early discussion acknowledged the usefulness of these categorisations, but also a need for caution about dichotomous framing of an overall project which draws neat boundaries between 'the West and the rest'.

In the first session, Mary Graham, member of the Kombumerri people, and Polly Walker, Postdoctoral Fellow with the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) at UQ, introduced their paper (prepared jointly with Morgan Brigg) on 'Australian Aboriginal Approaches to Security and Conflict Management'. Mary framed the paper with the observation that Aboriginal people have had many millennia to reflect upon fundamental questions: How do we live together without killing each other? How do we live without substantially damaging the environment? Why do we live? And how do we find answers to these questions in a way that does not make people feel alienated, lonely or murderous? Aboriginal philosophy does not answer by pursuing human perfection, and nor is Aboriginal society 'peaceful'. Rather, Aboriginal societies tend to foreground process-oriented activities which manage conflict by according individuals a wide range of autonomy in the context of networks of relatedness. Aboriginal concepts of Place, Dreaming and Law establish an overall framework for accommodating and negotiating a multiplicity of perspectives. Individuals are expected to self-manage within a system of relationships which generates 'emergent' rather than proscribed conflict management practices. Pursuing social balance in this way can be time consuming, frustrating and involves relatively independent (yet ideally controlled) expression of violence which may clash with Western non-violent understandings of conflict resolution.

Deborah Bird Rose, FASSA (Fenner School of Environment and Society at the Australian National University) explored Indigenous contributions to conflict resolution through a series of vignettes which speak to wider case studies. By tracing shifts in land claims processes and drawing upon other aspects of her fieldwork, Debbie showed that recursive relationships between land, people, and other-than-human sentient beings bring into question mainstream Western orientations to land and assumptions about the centrality of separate individual selves in conflict events. She explained the role of stories as a vehicle for managing time and relationships in processes of conflict management. Her paper highlighted the importance of

relationship: in contrast to the typical position of the Western mediator as a neutral or impartial outsider, the mediator position in Aboriginal society is constituted such that people are *so complexly involved* that they cannot take sides. Debbie also explored the importance of violent yet rule-governed expression of emotions, the cross-cutting of differences by relationships so that difference is primarily complementary rather than hierarchical, and the importance of ritual for conflict management.

Debra McDougall (School of Social and Cultural Studies, University of Western Australia) spoke about varying paths to peace in the Western Pacific, particularly by drawing upon her long-term fieldwork on Ranongga Island in the Western Solomon Islands. Debbie showed that Ranonggan pursuit of three paths to peace (church, custom, and Law) demonstrates – contrary to popular imaginings of 'closed' island societies – openness to foreigners and foreignness. This openness is accompanied by a widely shared sense of the reciprocal rights of people of a particular place and foreigners, and a pluralism and pragmatism in conflict processing. Debbie's paper stressed an extensive and complex entanglement of social relations whereby problems in one realm of life (eg, illness) can be entwined with those in another (eg, land disputes). One implication of this complexity is that locals, rather than outsiders, are best placed to devise satisfactory conflict resolution interventions.

In the second session, Lorraine Garasu, community development worker and trainer from Bougainville, and Volker Boege (Visiting Fellow at ACPACS, UQ) explained how Bougainville, as perhaps the only recent successful instance of post-conflict state-building, can serve as a source of inspiration for conflict resolution. Lorraine clarified and elaborated the important elements in what she terms a 'road to sustainable peace'. A mode of reconciliation which carefully engages emotion and includes everyone – including ancestral spirits – is central. This process must adopt a long-term (rather than short-term and outcomes-oriented) perspective which allows layers of problems to be dealt with carefully and progressively as individuals and groups become ready. Time is crucial: reconciliation has taken years on Bougainville and the process continues today. Reconciliation must also attend to the complexity of entwined relationships and to spiritual and ritual dimensions. The latter are not simply additional elements which serve a ceremonial function; religious ceremonials and ritual exchanges are an integral and indispensable element of conflict resolution.

Frans de Jalong (Centre for Peace and Security Studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta) considered two of Indoneisa's most noted traditional conflict resolution methods in the context of recent ethno-religious conflicts. Frans showed that Pela-Gandong of Ambon and Motambu-Tana of Poso are ties of brotherhood across religious and ethnic differences which have emerged over centuries in specific locales. These practices have proved successful over time for managing violent conflict, including when they were used as a 'last resort' in recent communal conflict. But Frans argues that a tendency by some academics, the state, and international non-government organisations to view Pela-Gandong and Motambu-Tana as primordial and unchanging mechanisms is problematic. These practices derive their efficacy from longstanding concrete local processes of narrative, performance and inscription. So to frame them as primordial and unchanging ignores the grounds of their efficacy and comprises efforts to revive Pela-Gandong and Motambu-Tana at a time when they are under pressure from state-led forces of modernisation and the introduction of modern Western conflict resolution practices.

Norifumi Namatame (Tohoku Fukushi University) spoke to a paper prepared by himself and Jacqueline Wasilewski, of the Division of International Studies, International Christian University in Tokyo. This exchange between and international relations and an intercultural

communication scholar presented Japan's current defence and security dynamics from a macro international relations perspective and explored the wisdom the Japanese, drawing upon their cultural, social and historical resources, might be able to contribute to the construction of a more cooperative and mutually secure world order. The paper referred to a variety of Japanese cultural notions, often drawn from everyday life, which might be valuable resources for moving beyond realist conceptions of security. Among the most interesting are an emphasis on the entangling of social relationships and a 'multiplicity orientation' which accepts and accommodates contradictions which might not be tenable from mainstream Western perspectives.

The third and final session for presenting papers began with a teleconference link with Oliver Richmond, Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Oliver spoke of how the neoliberal peacebuilding consensus serves as a challenging context for the introduction of alternative cultural approaches to conflict resolution. Although international interventions refer to the importance of engaging local peoples and cultures, this remains rhetorical rather than substantive. Interventions continue to be led by Western (and Western-educated) elites who draw upon their values and philosophy in efforts to build peace. In this situation local cultures tend to be viewed alternately as the source of a magic 'silver bullet' to address conflict, or as the source of problematic behaviours which drive conflict. Intervenors are absolved of responsibility for failures through this process. Efforts to draw on alternative and local cultural sources will have to grapple with this challenging context.

Chengxin Pan (School of International and Political Studies at Deakin University) spoke of 'Perspectives on self and other from Chinese tradition'. Chengxin noted that the tendency to view China as a monolithic threat forecloses on a potential contribution of Chinese culture to building a less confrontational world, and that Confucian and Taoist schools of thought offer less dichotomised understandings of self and other than are on offer through realist international relations perspectives. In Confucianism, the self can only come into existence through and with others. And the governing principle of the relationship between the self and the world is *ren*, or benevolence, which means extending self-respect into love or concern for others. While the Confucian view of self and other promotes concern for others in their interaction, Taoism approaches interaction between self and other through the principle of non-action. Here it is unnecessary, and perhaps even harmful, to interfere with others. While Chengxin acknowledges that such principles might not map easily or directly into current international affairs, he maintains and continues to explore how they could together offer a fresh approach to international security and conflict resolution.

Hoang Young-ju (Pusan University of Foreign Studies, South Korea) and Roland Bleiker (UQ), introduced their paper entitled 'An Inquiry into the concept of *Han*: Korean sources of Conflict Resolution'. *Han* is a collective emotion, usually translated as sorrow or sadness, which emerges as a result of grievances arising injustices done to a person or a group. Han involves explicit engagement with the emotional nature of conflict and the conceptualisation of mediation as a process of engaging broad societal issues, rather than merely settling clashes between individuals. Young-ju and Roland note the problematic features of a tradition that subsumes individual rights and interests to societal harmony, but also seek to appreciate such a cultural tradition on its own terms. By doing so they show that Han identifies a path from grief and sorrow to a gradual transformation of conflict, and thus important possibilities for breaking cycles of violence. Locating a way out of anger and feelings for revenge, the concept of Han and its direct engagement with emotions validates forgiveness and compassion as central elements of reconciliation and conflict resolution.

Presentation and discussion of individual papers was followed by a response to all papers by Stephen Chan, Professor of International Relations and Dean of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Stephen provided participants with suggestions for reworking papers for publication, as well as suggestions for organising the papers into an overall edited volume. Discussion then moved to shared themes which emerged across the papers, potential structures for a book, challenges to be negotiated in coming phases (including romanticising or appropriating local cultures), and publication options. The participants continue to collaborate with the project co-directors in an effort to produce a high quality edited book. Our initial inquiry with the editor of the Writing Past Colonialism series with the University of Hawaii Press has received a very positive response, and we are also pursuing the possibility of a Japanese translation. We expect to have the book in press by late 2007.

Student Engagement with Post-compulsory Education and Training: meaning making in a context of blurred boundaries and shifting contexts.

*Alison Mackinnon, Terri Seddon, Marie Brennan,
Eleanor Ramsay and Lyn Yates*

The genesis of this workshop was in an ARC linkage grant *Pathways or cul-de-sacs: the causes, impact and implications of part time senior secondary education* [Eleanor Ramsay, Alison Mackinnon, and Marie Brennan in partnership with the South Australian department of education (DECS), the board of senior secondary accreditation and assessment (SSBSA) and the Premier's Social Inclusion Unit]. As this project got underway it was quickly realised that the phenomenon of increasing part time senior secondary schooling was not well documented, was little understood and was part of radical changes in work, in training and in the lives of young people today. In relation to that grant a one day roundtable was held in July 2006 at the Hawke Research Institute (University of South Australia) involving key researchers from three states in the field of post-compulsory education and training and youth studies. This roundtable explored the socio-economic and gendered dimensions of the trend towards part time/extended completion of senior secondary education as well as new related findings in youth studies, employment, education and training. At the conclusion of the day it was decided that a further workshop on the topic would be desirable and ASSA funding was sought.

Many of the participants, as well as the conveners of the workshop, were engaged in ARC-funded research which looked at closely associated issues. For example: Jane Kenway, Julie McLeod, Alison Mackinnon and Andrea Allard had recently investigated the educational, labour market, biographical and social experiences of young women

negotiating from the margins of education and work. Terri Seddon (*et al*) is examining the way learning is increasingly orchestrated through partnership arrangements, including the recognition and credentialing of learning in communities, workplaces and in situations constructed by social partnerships. Lyn Yates (with Tennant, Chappell and Solomon) was examining 'changing work, changing workers, changing selves': a study of pedagogies in the new vocationalism across different types of education sites. Yates had also, with Julie McLeod, recently finished the 12 to 18 Project, studying longitudinally and qualitatively the formation of orientations to self and future of young people in the context of school (*Making Modern Lives: subjectivity, schooling and social change*, SUNY Press 2006). Alison Mackinnon, Peter Bishop, Patrick O'Leary and Simon Robb were also looking at young people with very differing patterns of schooling in the project '*Doing Social Sustainability: the utopian imagination of youth on the margins*. The '*Schooling the Rustbelt'* ARC project (Hattam, Comber, Brennan, Zipin, *et al*) examines schooling issues relevant to retention and pedagogies. There were, as well, on-going conversations between researchers in education, youth studies, social policy and gender issues within and beyond the Hawke Research Institute.

The workshop, held in Adelaide 22-23 February 2007, was designed to build upon and explore the intersections between these diverse projects and to move the field forward. We realised that we would probably raise more questions than could be answered but we thought an interdisciplinary approach to changes in education and work would provide a generative frame for discussion.

The projects above and their related findings all pointed to the fact that the landscape of schooling and work has changed immeasurably from its twentieth-century antecedents. While the need for higher levels of educational attainment is seen as paramount, the means by which they are to be achieved have become increasingly complex. What does this mean for twenty-first century school systems and students? How are the needs of differing groups (lower socio-economic, ethnic and indigenous students, girls and boys) catered for? How does schooling fit with increasingly complex young lives? The workshop aimed to undertake a cross-disciplinary analysis of the blurred boundaries, shifting policy and practice frames, and dramatic shifts in the provision of and nature of students' engagement with post-compulsory education and training.

Much has been written about supporting young (and not-so-young) people through post-compulsory education and training and the need for a highly educated workforce in a globalised world. This occurs in the context of intense public policy pressures to achieve greatly enhanced retention and completion rates and of the simultaneous collapse of the fulltime youth labour market. While these two elements have been well traversed, the implications and the challenges of other still emerging impacts are much less well understood. In particular the decentralisation of education and training provision, the diversification of recognised learning sites and considerably more flexible accreditation processes which facilitate distributed learning and extended (and non-continuous) engagement with post-compulsory education and training need to be analysed. The picture is complicated by the new delivery modes available from information and communication technologies which contribute to further de-centring.

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The workshop was opened by former ASSA President, Emeritus Professor Fay Gale, who welcomed participants and spoke of the importance of the topic and of her own

interest in youth studies as demonstrated in her recently jointly edited publication in the area.

The first session began with Bob Gregory providing a broad brush overview of changing employment and education trends. He stressed *inter alia* the fact that those with more education have a higher involvement with the labour market and that more individuals are combining education and labour market activities. Interestingly he noted that for those on the margins we cannot be really sure of the financial returns of additional education. Bob's remarks and related statistical analysis made a useful and continuing backdrop to workshop deliberations. A series of papers throughout the first day fleshed out the picture in relation specifically to education and work Margaret Vickers outlined alternative pathways to adulthood, a theme many of us returned to throughout the workshop. Eleanor Ramsay presented a quantitative analysis of the data on SA part time senior secondary schooling highlighting the difficulties of the multiple definitions of 'part timeness' in the school context and the lack of policy in the area. She also reported that there were strong correlations between large numbers and proportions of part time students and disadvantaged schools. Alan Reid, who has recently been part of a three person ministerial panel to review the senior secondary certificate in SA (the SACE), which aims to accommodate less advantaged and part time students through providing flexibility and extended completion, discussed the policy challenges and the politics of that exercise.

Later sessions focused on issues in the vocational education and training (VET) sector and alternative approaches to gaining senior secondary qualifications. Terri Seddon reported on new and emerging learning spaces, and social partnerships which include such diverse spaces as commercial kitchens and cafes. Others discussed opportunities in vocational education and in apprenticeships. Erica Smith noted the increase in apprenticeships and traineeships but cautioned that the qualifications gained were not always readily accepted and that the economic boom which has advantaged some young people may not continue. Like many others she noted that most young people now combined study and part time work.

Several participants throughout both days focused on the changing subjectivities young people required for the new 'hybrid' world of work/study. While new patterns of globalisation shaped all young people's lives, social class continued to be a strong defining aspect of subjectivities. Lyn Yates and Julie McLeod independently discussed issues arising from their longitudinal study, while Jo-Anne Dillabough noted the historical continuities in the lives of marginalised urban youth, drawing on her Canadian work. Simon Robb graphically illustrated the workings of hopefulness in the imagination of marginalised youth in South Australia drawing on images produced through photo elicitation. He argued that hopefulness, at least for the young people in the Utopia project, is drawn to transient, ambiguous, in-between zones of space and time. Rochelle Woodley-Baker spoke about the experience of young women attempting to combine complex lives of study, work and, at times, motherhood, in a daunting social environment.

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To begin the second day's discussions, Alison Mackinnon offered a series of provocations. Drawing on the history of education she asked *inter alia* if the school system as we know it is unraveling around the edges, if the linear trajectory through school, training, work has blurred and if the means of meritocratic mobility no longer applied. She spoke of the cycles of instrumentalism and liberal education and

reminded participants of the role of education in changing women's lives throughout the last century. Jane Kenway's paper on masculinity beyond the metropolis also took a gender focus. She looked at the lived cultures of young men in peripheral places, noting the impact of globalisation on places and masculine identities. Katherine Hodgett's work returned to the specifics of part time senior secondary schooling, challenging several 'myths' about the students who undertook the senior years part time. One aspect which has surprised both the researchers in the Pathways project and the workshop participants is the fact that part time senior secondary students do not undertake significantly more part time work than full time students (almost 40 per cent of part timers are doing no paid work). It was also clear, unsurprisingly, that where schools strongly supported part timers both through the curriculum and through attitudes to their participation in the school community, part timers were more likely to achieve high levels of completion.

Johanna Wyn's work with youth life patterns has led her to reject the notion of ' youth as transition' and she has developed the concept of social generation as a tool for understanding young people's lives. This approach decentres the notion of transition, and in particular 'failed transitions' in relation to school and work, seeking instead to foreground what is important to the young people concerned.

Several papers drew on policy perspectives. Tom Stehlik outlined issues in relation to his involvement in evaluating South Australia's Retention Action plan, pointing out that the concept of retention has now been replaced by the wider notion of student engagement, which might take place in a much wider group of settings. Elspeth McInnes drew on her role as President of the National Council of Single Mothers and Their Children Inc to elucidate changes to the welfare to work legislation, and impacts upon single mothers who are seeking to gain further qualifications and part time work.

Both days ended with a vigorous discussion session chaired by Marie Brennan, where the themes and issues were debated and developed.

Workshop outcomes

Several strong overall themes emerged from the deliberations.

Participants agreed that the time frames of school and work, with the inbuilt notion of lockstep progression, are out of step with the contexts in which young people live. Boundaries are increasingly blurred and a linear life trajectory is no longer the norm. And what is a 'normal' school pattern today? Does the assumption of a particular full time pattern produce students who appear to be problematic by following other trajectories?

The critical challenges for young people are not simply in the post compulsory years of schooling (roughly equating to 15-19 year olds) but the way changes in work, learning and young people's lives means that there is an extended period of intense engagement in youthful living, learning and the labour market from about 15 -25 or 30. It is this post compulsory and young adult period that is critical as young people move from the institutions and relationships of childhood, through to the institutions and relationships of consolidated adulthood in established employment patterns and partners.

This extended period of experimentation and exploration shows the hot-house pressure on young people in year 12, to finish their exams and gain a score and a university place, is quite ideological (one might explore the way that this emphasis on the single score advantages private schools by simplifying their marketing strategies) as most young people muddle between learning and earning over a period of years

and mostly find themselves in something that will sustain them and their interest in adulthood.

In relation to post-compulsory schooling in particular, there appears to be a policy vacuum in relation to part time senior secondary study with a general assumption that full time progression through the senior years is the norm. This is not the case in South Australia at least, where the majority of students now undertake the SACE in multiple patterns more consistent with a part time approach to the senior years. The question arises: how do we make an understanding of this situation more widely known? Do governments and policy branches want to know? Is the notion 'full time' or 'part time' useful any more?

On a practical level there is an issue in accessing data on the dimensions of the issue of part time senior secondary work and in gaining a broad national picture. So many varied definitions of part timeness exist, as Eleanor Ramsay made clear, that it is hard to establish hard and fast parameters. It is clear that the number of years necessary for senior secondary completion is increasingly flexible thus making measurement difficult. When does someone complete if they have no boundaries on the time to do so? As well as looking at statistical analyses, participants found that methodological approaches drawn from history, politics, from representations and from subjectivities all underlined the dimensions of rapidly changing lives for young people.

Having started from examining senior secondary schooling we find the changes there mirrored in wider changes in the labour market, in gender relations and in the relationships young people form. When 75-80 per cent of young people still at school are already in part time work, this needs to be better understood in the labour market data analyses. There needs to be much wider 'joined up' research about these issues. Participants felt that they had shone a spotlight on several patches in relation to young people and their lives but more inquiries were essential to connect the patches.

A key theme for development was the notion of well being - a key concern for students now and in the future. What constitutes well being in the current globalising context? There are connections/ synergies here with the Policy Roundtable on Wellbeing, reported in *Dialogue,* 25 (3/2006). Young people are centrally concerned with identity. Who are they and what will they become? This is a compelling question for young people and, drawing on Johanna Wyn's work, there are signs of a post 1970s generation who are experiencing a new adulthood, one concerned with leisure, consumption and interpersonal relations as much as the linear pathways through school and work of the past.

It was refreshing to join in lively discussion across the fields of education, labour markets, youth studies and policy. Conversations over breaks and a dinner gave participants further opportunities to network. We were fortunate to be joined by Jan Patterson from the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet. The conveners plan a special issue of a journal (under negotiation) and an edited volume which aims for a general readership.

Policy Roundtable
Community and Social Policy

In November 2006 the Academy of the Social Sciences of Australia, in conjunction with the Federal Government's Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, convened a policy roundtable on Community and Social Policy. The roundtable was held to address the need for a better theoretical understanding of community in contemporary Australia and as a means of considering new opportunities for financial interventions by government.

The roundtable comprised four sessions. In each session speakers addressed issues of concern – followed by roundtable discussion. A brief summary of discussions is provided below.

Community in the contemporary era: a new relevance?

It was noted at the outset that dealing with aspects of 'community' is difficult as the term is often used nebulously, and is frequently perceived in abstract or utopian terms. Additionally, while noting the diversity of community types - from group or interest based communities, such as police, academic, or corporate communities through to place-based communities, such as gated residential communities - it was nonetheless observed that communities of all types were undergoing, or were subject to, significant change. Forces of globalisation, information technologies, and consumerism (among others) were identified as altering communities and community dynamics. Discussions at this 'macro' level included the following key points:

• Economic changes wrought by larger forces, such as globalisation, are felt particularly at the level of community. The process of electronically off-shoring work - which, it is estimated, will result in between 30 and 40 million jobs being lost in the US in the near future - can result in significant economic changes within a particular community.

• While accounting for the impact of larger trends in the development of policy at the national level will make it increasingly difficult for policy makers to cater for service delivery programs, the challenge remains for social policy analysts to anticipate and respond to global (and other, broader) risks which will impact at the community level.

• Addressing economic vulnerability and social dysfunction in communities benefits from the presence of a broad framework of policy approaches. In particular, joint policy approaches incorporating economic and social policies - with implementation of hard and soft infrastructural components - has the scope to provide greatest benefit to communities as a whole.

• For governments to meet the challenge of reducing community welfare reliance, it is necessary to create a diagnostic framework at the level of community to identify social, human, economic and environmental capabilities, as well as shortcomings, in a community's human, social, natural, infrastructure and economic capital. This rigorous approach is crucial in facilitating the creation of policies that give people the capabilities to achieve the things that they value, while at the same time encouraging mutual obligation and engagement.

• Strategies developed at the national level to build economic capital often have a neutral or even negative impact at the level of community. If economic incentives

are drawn up and applied without consideration of, for example, community capacity or existing levels of social capital, they may not be efficacious. Rural communities, in particular, suffer from not having the wherewithal to take advantage of wider policy initiatives in the same way as urban communities do.

Assessing community strength and building on it - using community wellbeing indicators to support policy development and strategic planning for successful outcomes.

It was observed during this session that although there are various indicators of community wellbeing which have been used as proxy indicators of social capital or community strength, there are currently no comprehensive measures of social capital at the national level. This can lead, and has led, to problems assessing community strength and building upon it in the development and implementation of policy. Discussion in this session included the following points:

- The need to take into account the existing balance of various 'capitals' - including economic, environmental, human and social capital - when determining what kind of assistance, if any, is needed in a particular community.

- Strategic planning (usually a top-down process) of community programs must take into account social capital mechanisms (usually bottom-up processes). This will help to guard against undermining existing community initiatives and eroding trust within the community.

- Despite its limited revenue-raising capacity and its demonstrated inability to tackle catchment management problems, local government is nevertheless a potential key to formulating creative means of encouraging communities to develop their own initiatives. Local government is likely to know best the unique shape of local issues and strengths of the community. Local government is in a good position to link local community groups with external sources of funding - particularly that from State and Federal governments.

- The tendency of current funding models to favour those communities which already have strong local governance. The result is that funding often builds on existing strengths which, while further enhancing 'go-ahead' communities, does little to address the problems faced by more marginal and vulnerable communities.

- Policies that intervene with the aim of building capacity by supplying services are often more successful when based on demand from within communities. Thus, it is important to foster collective decision-making within those communities so that they are the ones identifying the infrastructural and service funding they need, rather than having interventions imposed from 'above'.

Community program responses: critical issues and opportunities

As noted earlier 'community' is, in both theory and practice, a concept that must be approached with great caution. Its complexity is often ignored and it can be conceptually problematic. 'Community', like 'progress' or 'democracy', is now a feel-good term which can lull people into believing that Australian society is an organic entity that provides benefits to all. Roundtable delegates noted that 'community' can be an ideological mask that helps to disguise social exclusion.

- Following from this, where power differentials are involved, the concept 'community' is especially problematic and this is clear when it is employed by the relatively privileged (including government and other middle class) policy makers, as a basis

for policy responses to issues of social disadvantage. It is important that approaches to policy-making are critically assessed to ensure that programs match the target audience and are not some 'blanket' attempt to meet the supposed needs of a nebulous 'community'.

- For governments to improve service delivery at the local level in Australia it is necessary to identify structures that will expedite this process. Such identification requires resolving existing governmental tensions in policy formation and program implementation, particularly competition between different levels of government.

- Pursuant to this, a lack of data-sharing between Federal, State and local governments makes it difficult to keep abreast of the changing social and economic circumstances of communities and highlights the need for agreed-upon community indicators to identify areas where there can be evidence-based evaluation.

- While submission-based assessment and allocation of funding lends itself towards accountability - as reporting tends to be of higher quality - it diverts energy towards filling in forms for only small amounts of money and favours those more advantaged communities adept at formal submission-writing. With this is mind, FaCSIA is currently moving away from submission-based allocation of funding. Such a shift requires a commensurate change in outcomes measuring and accountability.

Working across the whole of government: outcomes-identification and funding models – place-based approaches in Indigenous communities, and the challenges of working across government to achieve outcomes

This session's discussions noted the need for policy development and implementation to be sensitive to place. This includes, for example, differentiation in desired outcomes based on the differences between communities and also attention to the specific implementation needs of a remote or Indigenous community. Included in the discussion were the following points:

- The importance, when using statistics, of benchmarking communities individually. The likelihood of achieving the same outcomes from programs delivered in different communities is low. For example, the outcomes of programs in Indigenous communities may be very different from those achieved in predominantly non-Indigenous communities.

- In implementing infrastructural and service policy, innovation is necessary in the measurement of positive economic outcomes. For example, re-conceptualising communities in remote regions as providing environmental or defence services allows for a different, but nevertheless measurable, outcome in policy terms.

- Policy formations must recognise evolution in communities' conception of themselves, especially when interpreting trends in statistical and other social indicators. This is particularly the case with regards to policy formation for Indigenous communities. For example, it appears that the increase in the past ten years of violence in Indigenous communities is, in part, due to normative changes in Indigenous society and its acceptance of the need to report violence, rather than an increase in the actual level of violence.

- It was noted that programs which incorporate an active community component (such as in catchment management and other natural resource programs) have positive outcomes whereas those that provide 'passive welfare' are less likely to be of value. It was further noted that the simple addition of resources to communities can be

problematic: what is important is the extent to which the community 'owns' both the problem and the proposed solution.

- In the past, issues have arisen as a result of the disparity between government promises on the announcement of new programs and initiatives, and the community's perception of what was actually delivered. When there is a 'gap' here, as there often is, trust in government is undermined. Having face-to-face discussions at both the formative and the implementation phases between community-based public servants, and community members, is one means of addressing mistrust in government.

- It was noted that the implementation of policies at the community level is always 'place based'. Despite this, government policies often do not focus on place based approaches. Devolution of authority/control from the Federal level to the local level is likely to improve both implementation and the overall outcome of policy initiatives. That is, new forms of local governance might provide a novel and effective approach to future Federal/local funding arrangements.

Policy Roundtable
Federalism

In conjunction with the Institute of Public Administration in Australia, and with the support of Minter Ellison Lawyers, the Academy convened a policy roundtable at the University of Canberra in May. The roundtable was well attended, with a group of about forty five policy academics and practitioners making up an inner circle, with several more observers constituting an outer circle.

The stated objective of the Federalism roundtable was to 'contribute to informed public debate about Australia's federal relations'. The expertise and unique mix of practitioners of public policy which IPAA and ASSA brought to proceedings allowed both organisations an opportunity to pursue a common agenda.

Introduction

Proceedings were opened with two brief speeches whose emphasis on the practical and political realities of the state of Australian federalism served to focus the later contributions of participants.

The first statement stressed the importance of focusing on outcomes for citizens, rather than the rights of a particular level of government, when undertaking any assessment or reform of the current federal arrangements, citing the preoccupation with 'States rights' as an example of how not to proceed. The question 'why not simply abolish the States?' often arises in broad, abstract terms, but the practical reality remains the need to focus on making the current system work, as change is unlikely

other than in the very long term. The more pertinent question is how to make such federalism function better.

One inadequacy of Australian federalism is the regrettable trend of blurring the borders of accountability and responsibility: An obvious managerial issue in the federation, as in any organisation, is clarity about areas of responsibility.

It is important to be able to apply pressure to State governments who perform poorly, rather than bribing them to provide an increased level of service. However, as an approach to federalism and the federation, the current Commonwealth strategy of 'pragmatic federalism' - which in general connotes a process of picking individual Commonwealth/State policy areas and addressing them in the same manner - is a minimalist approach which holds no possibility of systemic reform. With regards to such systemic reform, it was proposed that if the premise that the States will remain in their current form is accepted, a meaningful role for them needs be defined, along with clear definition of the areas which represent the national interest. However, 'areas requiring national standards' does not necessarily equate with 'national control'.

Both opening speakers pointed out that it cannot be assumed that the 'body politic' considers federalism or its reform a priority area, and that there was no mindset of reciprocity at the level of government.

The second statement began with the observation that, despite the view that federalism does not have much 'political traction' as a stand-alone issue, in a time of a close political contest such as the looming 2007 federal election, the examination of such issues becomes more pressing as they are made more real to the electorate. The next State government election is 18 months away. While this is not a long time in terms of the process of policy implementation, such a period in political terms represents an opportunity to engage in dialogue on issues which wouldn't necessarily be undertaken by leaders on the eve of an election, and it was within such time frames that progress in the reform of federalism would likely have to take place.

Despite the multiplicity of state and territory governments with often conflicting priorities, frequently it has been the character of the various state leaders and the approach of their teams which has had the most impact on the manner in which the federation has functioned.

Participants were then reminded that there are multiple avenues by which Federal/State relations would work better, including specific policy areas eg, the recent duplication of technical colleges. The formal prioritisation of areas such as infrastructure development and, say, the delivery of hospital-based health services seem obvious such areas. They have suffered from being seen as everybody's problem and nobody's responsibility. An assessment of policy in an area-by-area manner could, and should, lead to reform principles which could be applied through a cooperative federalism. Some of the components of the 'federal architecture', for example could be generally agreed upon as ineffective, for example the current system of ministerial councils. While some are productive, there are upwards of 40 and many, if not most, could point to no significant policy achievements. Such areas can be seen as representing an excellent opportunity for collaborative reform.

Political factors, and the international trends and influences affecting Australian federalism

With regard to the political forces acting on the Australian federation, globalisation can be seen as a factor shaping both the policy decisions of government, and the actions of voters. Pressures from globalisation have led the Commonwealth government to

legislate the creation of a national capital market, and, more recently, a national labour market.

The increase in Commonwealth power over the last century has also been encouraged by an increasing sense of national identity and the homogeneity of Australians – with greater differences within states than between them. Australians are now more inclined to focus on the national level of government to solve what they increasingly see as common national problems. To some extent, however, this centralising tendency has been balanced by the public wanting more say in decisions, or at least in those that affect them personally. The increasing level of education of voters and an extended recognition of citizens' rights have led to increased demand by people to be consulted on issues affecting them, and citizen participation is often best achieved at a sub-national level. Thus a counterpart to globalising pressures is the phenomenon whereby people want to 'shop globally, but vote locally'.

Both speakers in the first session observed the remarkable homogeneity of the Australian federation. Canadian federalism for example, which must accommodate the often divergent pressures brought to bear by Quebec, is responding to very different internal pressures than those in the Australian Federation.

The second speaker argued that the substantial vertical fiscal imbalance current within the Australian federation has contributed to Australia becoming one of the most centralised of all current federal arrangements. A period of massive Commonwealth fiscal surplus has brought to light issues with which federalism as a system is no longer equipped to deal. This surplus has provided the means to pursue a systematic, or uniform, approach across internal jurisdictions in areas such as the labour market, health services delivery, and vocational education and training (VET). Coincident with this, it was suggested, universal values, such as the notion of rights, have replaced the particularities which smaller jurisdictions were set up to address locally, and had rendered such jurisdictions largely redundant.

Healthy debate at the end of the first session included the comment that the multiplicity of jurisdictions should logically have resulted in an increased level of legislative and policy innovation, in line with the notion of 'laboratory federalism'. The success of federation in this regard is difficult to quantify however, and a call was made for more empirical work to be done to examine the extent to which such innovation has resulted from Australian federation, and the extent to which the containment of 'bad policy experiments' has been beneficial to the majority of citizens.

Australian federalism with regard to three key sectors

Health and aged care: Key drivers within the health system could be listed as clinical decisions, technical changes and an ageing population. These are areas in which, it was suggested, government control was largely inappropriate. Policy decisions resulting from the vertical fiscal imbalance have created disparities which have contributed to an unbalanced approach to health care delivery as a whole. An example cited was a comparison of the Commonwealth PBS scheme, which is uncapped, to the various funding agreements for State hospitals, all of which are capped. Pursuant to this was the tendency for people to be pushed into the hospital system, which highlights the general lack of use of demand-management tools within the healthcare system as whole. The uncapped nature of a Commonwealth programs impacting on the demand for State run health care services is symptomatic of the manner in which

this sector is providing a challenge to federalism to achieve more cost effective outcomes.

Education: This area had been solely a State responsibility until the High Court's decision on the Commonwealth's 'Work Choices' legislation. The Commonwealth/ State relationship with regard to education policy and implementation is problematic and has not been stable over time. This stems from several factors, including the highly politicised nature of Commonwealth/ State exchanges in this area. Contributing to the increasing foothold of Commonwealth policy in the State's education landscape is the fact that universities (which now represent Australia's third largest export sector, roughly equal with tourism) draw most of their funding from the Commonwealth and respond largely to Commonwealth policy. Attention was drawn to attempts at both State and Commonwealth levels to address deficiencies in the VET scheme which have arisen in the last decade, and the current environment of competition and recrimination which exists between the Commonwealth and State tiers.

Infrastructure and regulation: It was argued that reform of the current federal system as a whole, while necessary, represents too great a challenge to be undertaken in one go. The reform of infrastructure policy development and implementation presented a more tractable field in which real progress could be made by reforming the inefficiencies generated by the current state of federalism. Targeted Commonwealth grant schemes were suggested as a productive method for developing infrastructure. As well, the idea of 'a single bucket' of funds, which offers more choice in allocation, could be complemented by competitive bidding for the right to implement policies developed at the Commonwealth level with regard to long term plans and national parameters.

Notable in the debate that followed was the general emphasis placed on the distinction between horizontal and vertical government competition within the current federal system. In particular, debates on federalism question the appropriate level at which policy development should take place - at Commonwealth or State levels - which is distinct from questions concerning the manner and method by which the means to implement policy are distributed across the various jurisdictions.

Accountability, subsidiarity and responsibility in Australia's federation

It was noted at the beginning of this session that despite the changing dynamic in Australian federalism under the past two governments, the States nonetheless retain a great deal of power. This is highlighted by efforts at policy standardisation in certain areas made among the States, independent of the Commonwealth, such as mutual recognition of each other's regulatory standards in some fields. Expertise resides largely at the state level in the specifics of service delivery and management - for example, in the reality of running a school, or managing a forest - and this represents a major negotiating point for States, despite their apparent vulnerability as a result of legislative and fiscal weakness in the face of centralist Commonwealth tendencies. Despite the growth in the identification of voters as a nation and a correspondent increase in the relevance of government at the Commonwealth level, there was no indication of a corresponding weakening amongst voters in their identification with their States and State governments. In particular, residents of a State were generally aware not only that their Premier spoke specifically for them, but also that Commonwealth representatives did not speak specifically for them, but rather for an aggregate of the whole of the national electorate.

Note was also made of the importance of including the local government level of the federation in any debate on, and ratification of, alterations to the functioning of the federation. Attention was drawn to the role that local government plays as a conduit - including in circumstances where the private sector is involved - for the delivery of location specific services and infrastructure which arises from the policy and funding of higher levels of government.

Group sessions and panel comments

External forces shaping the federation in the short, medium and long term

Such forces are of two kinds: those directly affecting the federation, and those affecting the way that the State and Commonwealth governments interact with the rest of the world. Treaties such as those concerning human rights or the environment were cited as examples of the former. The need for a common legislative approach was one of the most common results of the pressure treaties exert on the federation as a whole.

Pressures affecting the way governments interact include structural changes to the domestic landscape resulting from the need to respond competitively to international market pressures, and the cooperative approach engendered both domestically and internationally as a result of concerns arising from issues such as terrorism.

Internal forces shaping the federation in the short, medium and long term

There are numerous internal forces acting on the federation, some of which were missing from the day's discussions; for example the impact of focus or interest groups, or of the media. Another significant internal force affecting the federation is the booming economy - which has notably affected the recent scope of government aims and projects - which is exerting very different pressures than were present in the 1980s or early 1990s. Changing demographics, coupled with a continuing increase in public expectations of the type and quality of services to be delivered, also represent dynamic internal forces acting on the federation.

The business community was noted as an internal force and an example of an interest group, distinct from voters, to which the components of the federation must and do respond. For instance, the response of the Coalition government to skill deficiencies in the labour market, through the vehicle of education policy, is in part a response to the views of business with regards to the training and skills of employees.

Other forces which should be noted as acting upon, rather than simply arising as a result of, the federation, include the centralising impulse of the Commonwealth government, which may, but does not necessarily, represent a long term trend. The movement under the current Howard government from the use of the private sector as a delivery vehicle to more centralised control of policy implementation illustrates the inconstant nature of the centralising impulse, and highlights its role as a force acting on, rather than an inevitable component of, Australian federalism. Another internal force is the push for uniform standards, such as in secondary education. This pressure, which can be seen as arising not only from government but also the media, is resulting in policy discussions and proposals which are in turn exerting pressure on Australia federalism. Given that there may not always be a pressure from these groups for uniformity of standards - indeed, at some point in the future the opposite may occur - this should be also be seen as an internal force acting on federalism, rather than one arising from it.

Collaboration and cooperation within the Federation, including within the policy fields which most require this.

Many areas represented inter-jurisdictional spillovers. As noted by the opening speakers, policy areas such as Aboriginal health and the Murray-Darling Basin represent those in which policy development and delivery is insufficient, owing in part to the need for a simultaneously horizontal and vertical inter-governmental approach. As well, improvements in the efficacy with which COAG operates would greatly aid policy development in inter-jurisdictional contexts.

Roles and responsibilities within the Federation

There are several principles which govern the division of responsibilities, namely the Australian nation principle, subsidiarity and structural efficiency. A national interest does not automatically entail a level of Commonwealth involvement in policy areas, which for reasons of structural efficiency, for example, are best handled at the local government level.

Conclusion.

In general, it was agreed that approaches to Australian federalism fall into two general categories: those of 'principles-based architecture'; and of 'pragmatism', or the area-by-area, policy-by-policy approach. There will always be a role for the States in the management of place, a need which will remain within areas of the broader national interest. Within the context of cooperation and collaboration on those issues which go beyond a specific place, the unwillingness inherent in recent vertical intergovernmental relations was highlighted. A constant theme in discussion was that within the context of our current and future inter-governmental relations, which will be become increasingly necessary, the will to find a common solution as well as an appreciation of the benefits different levels of government bring, will be pivotal in the functionality of the federation.

These discussions will no doubt serve as a platform for the further development of ideas and directions for Australian federation. Two themes recurred repeatedly:

- *The importance of an effectively functioning COAG.* A number of different proposals were made for specific improvements, such as the ratification of a more formally cooperative approach, or the integration of COAG into the functional levels of the Commonwealth and State governments - at the level of the bureaucracy for example, or of the Ministerial Councils. However, there was also a more general theme that in future the vitality of COAG would be a crucial part of a productive and healthy Australian federation.

- *The need for a clearer division and understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the different levels of governments and other institutions of the federation.* This was proposed both from the point of view of accountability of the division to whom responsibility fell, and from the point of view the elimination of the inefficiencies arising from a duplicate, often competing presence in policy areas (examples cited included urban water and road infrastructure development).

Chair: Michael Keating
Conveners: Geoffrey Lawrence, School of Social Science, the University of Queensland and Robyn Oswald, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra

Book Reviews

Cabinet Government in Australia, 1901-2006

By Patrick Weller, UNSW Press.

C abinet is at the centre of Australian government. As Weller comments, politicians see Cabinet 'as the high point of the political game, the source of power and authority'. However, Cabinet and the office of the Prime Minister are not mentioned in the Constitution. Partly as a consequence, the roles and functions of Cabinet and the Prime Minister, how they operate and their powers, are not readily defined. In addition, many commentators differ not only in describing these important institutions of our governance, but they often differ even more in drawing normative conclusions about Cabinet government and how it *should* operate.

Weller has now provided us with a most authoritative history and analysis of cabinet government in Australia and his book should greatly increase our understanding. The focus is on the problems of cabinet decision making and management, and how these problems have changed over the years with changes in the demands upon governments. In particular, we can now better understand how the centre of government has adapted to meet the enduring challenge of providing both cohesion and coherence in the development of policy, while maintaining political support for its actions.

The book is divided into two parts. The first is a history of cabinet government from Federation to the present, with a focus on how cabinet has evolved, and what remains essentially the same. The second considers five views or perspectives on the functions of cabinet. This consideration then provides the basis for a short concluding analysis of those features of cabinet government that are most likely to endure.

Weller's history of cabinet governance chronicles the pressures on government at various times since Federation and how cabinet as an institution responded to those pressures. Although the focus is on how cabinet functioned, there is also a fascinating account of the principle political challenges to our government over the last century. Even for those readers not interested in cabinet *per se*, the book is an outstanding account of our political history in the just over 100 years since Federation. The critical events described in the first 50 years include the tensions over the arbitration bill leading to the resignation of Kingston, the split over conscription, the division over how to respond to the depression, the collapse of the first Menzies government, and Curtin's difficulties in handling the 'maverick' members of his cabinet during World War II. By comparison the difficulties faced by cabinet as an institution in the last 60 years seem comparatively mild, although the dashed hopes of the Whitlam government provided valuable lessons for the Hawke and Keating Governments. But for the most part, the period since 1950 has largely been one of consolidation, with the Howard Government reaching perhaps the apogee of discipline and control.

In his consideration of how cabinet has evolved, Weller's history starts with the original nine members of cabinet being sworn in on 1 January 1901. From the beginning they were familiar with the norms and practices of cabinet government, as six of them had been premiers of their states. In tracing the subsequent evolution of cabinet, Weller suggests that the initial informality has largely disappeared, replaced by a highly

institutionalised structure. There are many more ministers, organised into tiers of senior and junior ranks, who participate in an array of cabinet committees. Over time officials have increasingly become involved in organising, recording, and following-up on the implementation of cabinet decisions.

At the beginning the Prime Minister kept the only records of cabinet discussions. Indeed, the first Prime Minister, Barton, was reported as reminiscing that 'when he travelled from Sydney to Melbourne he could carry the whole federal archives around in his Gladstone bag'. What needs to come to cabinet has also changed. Today cabinet would not be concerned whether anyone should attend the Geelong firemen's ball, which was listed on an early cabinet agenda. But more fundamentally, I think that Weller's history demonstrates that in its essentials cabinet has changed very little. In particular, the Australian cabinet has always been built around the notion of collective decision making and collective responsibility. Most of the changes in the rules and procedures that cabinet has adopted have been designed to reinforce that collectivity; in particular by endeavouring to make sure that cabinet members are properly informed. As the former cabinet secretary Sir Geoffrey Yeend remarked, ministers are more often concerned when what may seem to be bureaucratic rules are not followed than when they are.

One major change that does emerge from Weller's history is the change in the relationship between the government and the political party from which it is formed. As Weller argues, in Australia cabinet government is party government, with cabinet requiring the continuing support of the political party. Particularly in the Labor Party, up to and including the Whitlam Government, there was a tradition of caucus dictating to the cabinet. This tradition was in turn founded on the principle that *all* parliamentary members should be bound by caucus discipline and national conference decisions. Successful Labor governments, such as the Curtin and Chifley Governments, then owed much of that success to their ability to manage caucus. Conservative governments have never been as constrained by their parties, with members having the right to vote their consciences without risking expulsion. But the party can influence decisions, and in order to maintain the coalition, conservative Prime Ministers (Menzies, Howard) have sometimes judged it prudent not to pursue the policy preferred by the majority of their cabinet. In the last couple of decades, however, the impression left by Weller's history is that cabinet discipline has been tightened and there is now less risk of a caucus revolt bringing down the government. Also, at least in this respect, the development of Labor's factions, and their capacity to negotiate, has probably helped Labor governments in particular.

The five issues explored in the second part of Weller's book reflect different criteria that are often cited to support judgements about whether cabinet is working well, and how it could be improved. Weller contends that first, constitutional theorists focus on responsibility and accountability, examining the relations between cabinet and the needs of the broader political system. Second, the public administration school concentrates on cabinet's rules and procedures, and whether these are adequate and effective. Third, public policy advocates explore how cabinet makes decisions, whether that leads to good policy outcomes, and whether cabinet has adequate strategic and priority-setting capacity. Fourth, political realists will look at the balance of power among the key players and institutions and ask whether that balance should be altered. Finally, network analysts consider whether cabinet is indeed the centre of real authority or whether that power has been ceded to others.

As Weller explains, judgements about the effectiveness of cabinet government at any point of time may differ according to the emphasis placed on these different criteria. Weller then analyses the effectiveness of the Australian cabinet system and its future using each of these five criteria.

Perhaps the two most interesting of these chapters deal with the relationship between the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, and whether cabinet government is being over-taken by a 'core-executive' of people who are closest to the Prime Minister. In the first of these two chapters Weller considers whether the power of the Prime Minister relative to cabinet has increased, resulting in some loss of collective decision making. In my view, there may have been some such loss; in particular, developments in communications technology have encouraged greater media focus on the leader and have allowed for much more frequent communication between heads of government. But cabinet has proved to be a remarkably flexible institution in its actual procedures, and different Prime Minsters and their personal styles have always heavily influenced how cabinet government actually worked in Australia. Indeed, as Weller shows, from early on Prime Ministers such as Billy Hughes were adept at getting their own way. On the other hand, Prime Ministers are continually being judged by their parliamentary party colleagues, and, in Australia, can readily be removed by those colleagues. As a result Australian Prime Ministers in practice have been loath to risk the loss of political capital that would be involved in over-riding another minister without a good reason.

For these reasons the development of the core executive has also not proceeded as far in Australia as in Britain or Canada. Nevertheless, a concern here as elsewhere, is that cabinet, with its emphasis on collective decision making by our elected representatives, may be increasingly replaced by a less accountable core-executive, comprising only some cabinet members along with selected outside advisers. Weller argues, however, that there is nothing unusual in Prime Ministers consulting outside the cabinet on critical issues that matter most to them. If this happens more than it used to I think we also need to recognise that the interconnected nature of problems, as they are now being presented to government, has resulted in much more emphasis on whole-of-government solutions and how that has impacted on traditional notions of cabinet government. Traditionally government has been organised along functional lines where individual ministers were accountable for the delivery of specific services. However, today there is increasing emphasis on clients, and the resolution of their problems may require the coordination of a number of services from different ministerial portfolios. This increasing emphasis on whole-of-government solutions inevitably calls for a more active Prime Minister and a more active advisory capacity to meet his personal needs. But in the end policies in Australia are usually taken back to cabinet or one of its committees for the final decision, even if only for ratification, and without such cabinet decisions there is really no authority for the bureaucracy to act and implement those decisions.

Overall what is most striking about this book is its authority. Weller has long been the outstanding student of cabinet government. His knowledge of our cabinet system is based on many years of meticulous research, and this knowledge is backed by his exceptionally sound judgement. I had a close association with cabinet for over twenty years, under a number of governments, and I thought this book's account was always accurate for those events in which I had some involvement.

My only significant difference of judgement is that Weller has a 'realist' interpretation of the power of Prime Ministers and how that power should be used. Other observers

who are more critical of certain events are likely to take a more normative stand, particularly as regards the ethical use of power and accountability for that use. In my view, just as there can be a tension between ethical considerations and a realistic pursuit of national interest in foreign policy, ethical considerations cannot be entirely dismissed when judging cabinet government. Weller is correct in suggesting that governments find it difficult to live by the codes of conduct that they establish, but these rules for good behaviour still influence ministers' conduct, although perhaps not always as much as some of us would wish. In such instances, although the penalty for breaking these rules may not end ministerial careers, transgressions can seriously retard those careers and/or damage the government even if the Prime Minister decides to tough it out. To this extent both ministers and governments can be held accountable.

My other modest reservation about Weller's book is that I think he has stuck very closely to what he knows and is confident about as a political scientist. As a result the main focus is on cabinet as an institution, how that institution has evolved, and how that evolution has affected the distribution of political power. Another broader interpretation might have given greater emphasis to the effectiveness of cabinet government in meeting present and future challenges. To my mind these challenges include:

- First, the role of expertise in policy making. In particular, Weller's discussion of the public service focuses on its role in servicing the machinery of cabinet, but there is little discussion of the changing influence of public service expertise over policy and why. Such a discussion would include the implications of cabinet now insisting that it be provided with different options and its ability to draw on alternative sources of advice outside the public service, as well as the suggestion that cabinet membership might be extended beyond members of parliament.

- Second, how can the traditional and understandable demand for cabinet secrecy best be reconciled with demands for more open and inclusive government? In particular, there may be pressure for change because a more educated and critical electorate is less inclined to trust government to make decisions on people's behalf. In that case there is an increasing risk that the successful implementation of policy may require more than a cabinet decision and legislation. Instead success may require that people accept that they have some ownership of the policy and a preparedness to work towards achieving its objectives. Thus the authority and legitimacy of government may well require a change in cabinet procedures to encourage more open and inclusive government, at least for those issues that touch people most personally.

- Third, as Weller demonstrates, cabinet has responded to the increasing volume of issues and their complexity by introducing more orderly – bureaucratic – processes. A continuing concern by cabinet members, however, is that there is now an excessive reliance on process and incremental short-term decision making to the detriment of long-term strategic thinking along with an accompanying loss of political responsiveness. In particular, how does an ageing government renew its political agenda and its ability to respond to new political developments? The immediate temptation has been to rely (excessively) on the bureaucracy, but while the bureaucracy is reasonably good at answering questions, it is often less so in identifying the right questions to ask. Again there have been a number of ideas to achieve improvements in cabinet's ability to think strategically and innovatively,

including think tanks reporting directly to the cabinet or the Prime Minister, and the Howard Government initiative to establish a separate cabinet office as part of his private office to provide strategic advice about longer term issues.

These are all difficult questions for which there are no easy answers. The present closed argumentative but collective cabinet system has proved to be remarkably flexible and relatively successful in achieving policy coherence and coordination, especially in what is a very adversarial political climate. But how can we retain the benefits of this cabinet system, while developing a more open system of decision making, that could better engage stakeholders, take greater advantage of outside expertise and improve the capacity for longer-term strategic policy development?

Unfortunately Weller does not really explore this territory. It is to be hoped that in a future edition of his book on cabinet government Weller will extend his formidable insights and understanding to consider how the cabinet system might change to better achieve the results that governments and their constituents are undoubtedly seeking. In the meantime the present edition is a 'must-read' for any serious student of government, and for the non-professional this book is now the best and most authoritative account available of how government really works.

Michael Keating

How Well Does Australian Democracy Serve Australian Women?

Prepared by Sarah Maddison and Emma Partridge. Australian National University, 2007. ISBN 978097755127 (pbk). Free. ISBN 078-0-9775571-3-4 (online) http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au.

This report, a strand of the Democratic Audit of Australia being conducted by the School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, documents the relationship between Australian women and the democratic system. It outlines the initiatives taken and machinery developed and evaluates how successful they have been. Specific attention is paid to the role of sex discrimination legislation, policy machinery, Parliamentary and institutional representation, as well as Non-Government Organisations.

The report compellingly demonstrates that there has been a resiling by Australia from its commitment to equal opportunity for women in the public sphere. The regression has been pronounced in the last decade, supporting the conclusion that the Australian democratic apparatus is not serving women well.

The report shows how cutbacks in benefits and policy initiatives at both State and Federal levels are underscored by cutbacks in the support for NGOs which formerly enabled the voices of a diverse range of women's groups to be heard and reflected in policy. The report reveals that the savagery and frequency of the cutbacks have had the effect of silencing dissentient voices and reasserting a subordinate position for Australian women within the polity.

The absence of an entrenched guarantee of equality reveals how rapidly progressive policies can be jettisoned by a neoliberal government espousing conservative views. The international framework, which Australian once took seriously, and which represented the impetus for remedial legislation, is now treated with contempt. While

Australian women have relied on the state as a benevolent force for social change, the report shows it to be a fickle ally.

While the report clearly reveals Australia's decline from a world leader to a lacklustre performer on women's policy, the authors eschew a simplistic one-way slide and are careful to qualify what they say and give credit where it is due. In a multi-jurisdictional Federal system, there is inevitably going to be some variation. For example, the South Australian Office for Women is being rejuvenated at a time the status and influence of other women's policy advice units around the country are being eviscerated.

The report is well structured and clearly written, and would be accessible to a wide cross-section of general readers. For example, the explanation of equality is succinct, while bringing out its contradictions, as highlighted by the sameness/difference debate. The report constitutes a useful reference source, with up-to-date information in an attractive and simple tabular format that can be taken in at a glance. The lists of strengths and weaknesses at the end of each chapter are also very reader-friendly.

Margaret Thornton

Management Ethics: Contemporary Contexts.
Edited by Stewart R Clegg and Carl Rhodes. Routledge, 2006.

This short and sharp book began life in 2004 as an ASSA special project entitled 'What is to be done with management ethics?' An odd question perhaps, because it might presume that management ethics exist. If they do, this book has little evidence that there is a prevailing consensus about conventional models of management ethics. What does exist is a prevailing consensus that more should be done to map and chart the various practices that display a sense of management ethics. Hence this edited collection shows great promise as an attempt to restart a discussion among social scientists about what models of management and ethics deserve close consideration when searching for the high principles of management ethics, and what organisational practices stand out for scrutiny when gathering together reports of the everyday life of management ethics.

The two editors and the eight contributors have produced a nicely balanced work that reframes social science approaches to management ethics. The editors are clear about what they want from their contributors. Their introduction states that the book seeks to question the ethics of management practice, which implies that the focus is on relevant management practices that can be assessed to reveal questionable ethics, or at least question-begging ethics. The contributors are more interested in the horizontal task of laying out how different forms of management rely on ethical qualities, rather than the vertical task of ranking the ethical values embedded in different management settings. Philosophers will search in vain for their pet theories of ethics, abstract or applied, but along the way they will learn much about how social scientists can describe and analyse ethics as it is understood in the many worlds of management.

'We follow Zygmunt Bauman…' begins one characteristic sentence in the introduction. Bauman gets the prize for most citations in the 15 pages of references. The same paragraph in the introduction also cites Derrida, Lyotard and Foucault, which conveys the ethos of this collection as a postmodern reworking of management themes. A more conventional orientation emerges in the conclusion where the editors enlist US

social theorist C Wright Mills who expected so much from the creative use of the sociological imagination in modernising but also liberating organisational theory and practice. Arguing for an 'imaginative notion of ethics', Clegg and Rhodes warn against 'nostalgia for moral certainty' that can attract or even motivate critics of contemporary management ethics, who fail to appreciate that 'the intellectual imagination at its best' welcomes postmodernity precisely because of the promise of greater personal choice that postmodern social analysts can see, potentially, in the mores of management.

The contributors come in two waves. The first wave reports on global issues for management ethics, with René ten Bos dealing with business communities, Ibarra-Colado with globalisation, Banerjee with corporate social responsibility, and van Krieken with corporate legal responsibility. These four chapters deserve to make their way into reading kits for university students of business, organisation and management. The second wave deals with management ethics in organisations, with four chapters that seem to be of even broader appeal. Muetzelfeldt investigates the state of public management, Stephen Cohen with the good cop/bad cop duality of responsibility and accountability, Usher with organisational networks, and Ritzer with consumers and the ethics of consumption.

The text makes its point in around 175 pages, ahead of the references and useful index. Most contributors write for the general reader although there is clearly a shared enthusiasm for postmodern formulations which might baffle those used to relying on conventional management language. But ethical reflection arises from wonder, so more power to those with a capacity to baffle, particularly as here they resist the temptation to waffle. No edited book is free of waffle, but the editors have done their best to contain it in this new contribution to the social science of management ethics.

John Uhr

Opinion

Where is Full Employment?
Ian M McDonald

Introduction

Unemployment in Australia is now at its lowest in over 30 years. The rate for April 2007, for example, of 4.4 per cent, is substantially less than the previous trough of 5.6 per cent, in 1989. This experience of low rates of unemployment has prompted a number of statements that the Australian economy is at or very close to full employment. The Prime Minister, John Howard, says Australia is at 'effectively full employment'. The Treasurer, Peter Costello, sees 'an economy which has got full employment or near full employment'. The Secretary to the Treasury, Ken Henry, reportedly said in a leaked speech to Treasury staff, that 'for macro-economic purposes, it's probably reasonably safe to assume that we are already at full employment - or, at least, very close to the NAIRU: the non-accelerating-inflation rate of unemployment'.[1]

However, even though unemployment is low in comparison with the previous 30 years, it is greater than the rates experienced in the 1950s and 1960s, during which the average was slightly below two per cent. Furthermore, the 4.4 per cent rate of unemployment in April 2007 included 84,000 who had been unemployed for more than a year.[2] To be classified as unemployed, a person has to be searching for a job. Searching for a job a year after one's previous job does not sound like the voluntary unemployment which alone comprises full employment. There are also currently substantial numbers of people who would prefer to work but are not searching and others who have moved to a disability pension partly at least because of difficulties in finding a job.[3] In addition there are the underemployed - that is, people with jobs who would like to work extra hours.[4] The comparison with the 1950s and 1960s and the large numbers of long-term unemployed, of people who can reasonably be thought to desire work at current wage rates and of people who are underemployed casts doubt on whether we are currently at full-employment.

These doubts about whether the Australian economy is currently at full employment are supported by findings of a body of research reported in this paper. This research suggests that, given current policy settings on labour market regulation, microeconomic reform and welfare support, full employment may occur at a rate of unemployment as low as 2.5 per cent.

The estimation of this low rate of unemployment is based on a model of a range of equilibrium rates of unemployment. This range model is an alternative to the natural rate model. Because the latter model dominates the macroeconomic literature we begin with a comparison of the two models.

Keynes versus the natural rate

The natural rate model is based on neoclassical microeconomic foundations and has classical properties. The range model has different foundations and Keynesian

properties. The contrast between the two models can be understood through the following historical perspective.

In the 1930s, at the birth of macroeconomics as a distinct area within economics, Keynes (1936) recognised that full employment set a limit on the gains in employment to be obtained from expanding aggregate demand; that is, a limit on the influence of aggregate demand on the rate of unemployment. Keynes suggested that inflation would set in if aggregate demand policy aimed for a rate of unemployment less than full employment. However, his concern was with the severely unemployed economy of the time and so he spent little time exploring the issue of what determines full employment. His disciple, Joan Robinson, in a set of essays expanding on the themes of Keynes' General Theory,[5] did pay more attention to full employment. In one of her 1937 essays, entitled 'Full Employment', she took up the inflation issue raised by Keynes and set out what would later be called the accelerationist hypothesis. This is the hypothesis that claims that attempts to push unemployment below the full employment rate would cause an increasing rate of inflation. The mechanism put forward by Robinson that caused increasing inflation relied on continual upward adjustments to the expected rate of inflation, as employers learnt from experience about increases in actual inflation. As Robinson made clear, this learning by employers would lead to further increases in the rate of inflation, as employers competed for labour in a seller's market.

Three decades later, this expectational analysis of Robinson was taken up, without attribution, by Friedman (1968) and Phelps (1967).[6] However, in contrast to Robinson, and implicitly to Keynes, they postulated symmetry in this expectational mechanism, in that for high rates of unemployment they assumed that the mechanism would operate in reverse, causing a decreasing rate of inflation. This theoretical implication of decreasing inflation at high rates of unemployment will be called here the deceleration hypothesis. It played a crucial role in the development of the natural rate hypothesis by Friedman and Phelps.

Keynes and Robinson rejected the deceleration hypothesis. To them the proposition of classical economics, that at high unemployment wages and prices would fall without limit, was patently unrealistic. They saw this 'plasticity' of wages as the crucial shortcoming of classical economics. Instead the evidence suggested to them that at high levels of unemployment wages would 'find a level' rather than be falling.[7] However, they did not offer a detailed theory of wage determination that would explain this non-classical behaviour. Instead they argued that wages are influenced by social psychology but were sceptical about the state of the discipline of psychology at the time, arguing that psychology had little to offer in the way of systematic rules of behaviour from which a satisfactory theory of wage determination could be developed. They suggested that future developments in psychology might rectify this situation.

The analysis of Friedman and Phelps in the 1960s did not use insights from psychology. Instead their analysis can be described as classical economic theory extended to include imperfect information. According to Friedman and Phelps, it was through imperfect knowledge by workers about the true rate of inflation that the rate of unemployment will be influenced by the Keynesian aggregate demand mechanism. In as far as imperfect knowledge is temporary, aggregate demand would only have temporary effects on the rate of unemployment. Thus the Keynesian mechanism was severely circumscribed, reduced from the proposition that changes in aggregate demand can have long-lasting impacts on the rate of unemployment to the natural rate

proposition that changes in aggregate demand can only have temporary impacts on the rate of unemployment. In this natural rate world, the actual rate of unemployment does not deviate from the natural rate for long.

Behavioural economics as a foundation for Keynes' economics

At the present time, insights from psychology are being used to significantly modify and extend economic analysis. Much of this is based on prospect theory and the associated concept of loss aversion, developed by Kahneman and Tversky (1979).[8] This psychological theory has significant implications for the inflation-unemployment relation. Bhaskar (1990)[9] combined prospect theory with bargaining theory, the latter being an area about which Robinson in the 1930s was sceptical but which has subsequently been developed as a tool of analysis in the study of wage determination.[10] By combining prospect theory and bargaining theory, Bhaskar produced a model with a range of equilibrium rates of unemployment. This model provides a theoretical basis for the empirical views of both Keynes and Robinson referred to above, namely that while the acceleration hypothesis holds at low unemployment, the deceleration hypothesis does not hold at high rates of unemployment. In the range model, aggregate demand management can have the long-lasting effects that characterise Keynes' analysis.

In the range model, the boundary rate of unemployment below which inflation will be increasing is called u^{min}, for minimum equilibrium rate of unemployment. This boundary determines the limit of the influence of aggregate demand on the actual rate of unemployment in that the theory suggests that any excess of the actual rate of unemployment over u^{min} is determined by the level of aggregate demand. u^{min} itself is influenced by supply factors and so u^{min} determines the extent to which aggregate supply policy can have an influence on the possibilities for unemployment.

The estimated series for u^{min}

Estimates for Australia of the range model[11] show that u^{min} is positively influenced by two supply factors: the unemployment-benefit replacement ratio, that is unemployment benefits divided by average weekly earnings; and trade union density, that is trade union membership as a proportion of the labour force. Trade union density is an indicator of trade union power (see below). The level of unemployment benefits can influence both search unemployment and unemployment caused by excessive union real wage demands. The estimated u^{min} series for Australia for the period 1964:1 to 2007:2 is shown in Figure 1. (The series is based on estimates in Lye and McDonald,[12] extrapolated to the quarters after 2005:4).

u^{min} is not necessarily full employment. For example, the classical unemployment in the 1970s caused by excessive real wage growth, the real-wage overhang episode,[13] is reflected in Figure 1 by the large increase in u^{min} at that time. In the 1970s there was a dramatic increase in the unemployment benefit replacement ratio by the McMahon government in February 1972 followed by further increases by the Whitlam government between 1973:1 and 1974:3, and a more gradual increase in trade union density. These changes, according to the estimates of the determination of u^{min} in the range model, increased u^{min}, and so, by implication created the 'real wage overhang' of the 1970s.

The unemployment caused by such high real wages is involuntary, in that the unemployed would prefer to be employed on the same terms as the employed but are not offered such employment. Thus, u^{min} is not necessarily full employment. At full employment, any person unemployed would be voluntarily unemployed.
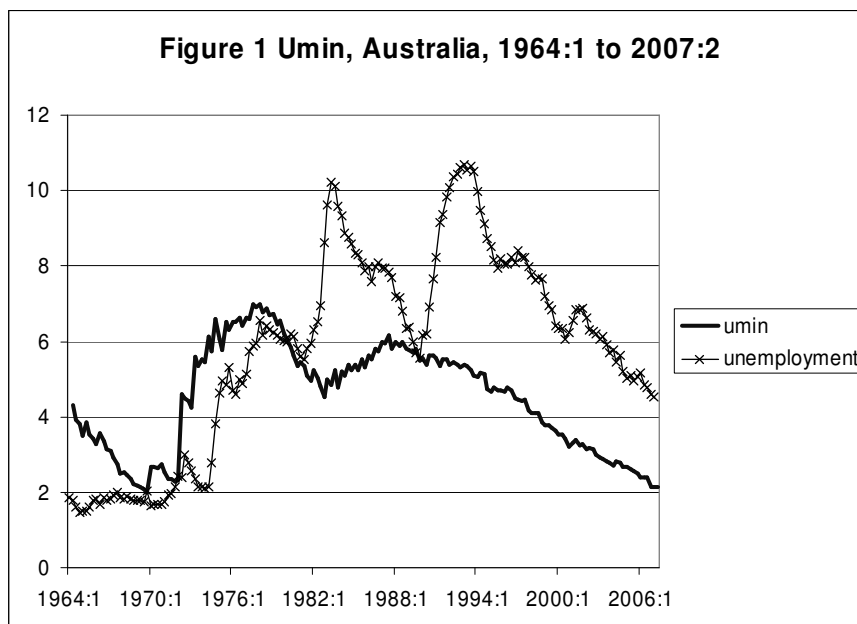
Figure 1 Umin, Australia, 1964:1 to 2007:2

Figure 1 shows a large decline in u^{min} since 1988. This decline has been driven by a large decrease in trade union density. The change in the unemployment-benefit ratio has been minor.[14] A lower trade union density implies, both directly and indirectly, lower trade union power. The direct implication of lower trade union density is that the monopoly power of unions is reduced because, with reduced trade union coverage, competition from uncovered firms will increase. The indirect implication is through trade union density responding to changes in trade union power caused by other factors. Less union power will reduce the attractiveness of union membership because unions can offer less in terms of increased wages and improved conditions of work. Legislation to reduce union power and moves to decentralise wage bargaining will reduce union power. Furthermore, increased product market competition, which has occurred in Australia through microeconomic reform, such as reductions in tariffs, corporatisation, privatisation, tendering arrangements for utilities and government services and the floating of the exchange rate, will also reduce union power.[15] These considerations suggest that trade union density is a reasonable, albeit somewhat lagging, measure of trade union power and that trade union power is influenced by a range of aggregate supply policies.

From the estimated series shown in Figure 1, the current rate of u^{min} is inferred to be 2.5 per cent. This is the estimate for 2005:4. The slightly lower levels since 2005:4 shown in Figure 1 are extrapolations beyond the data set used for the estimation and so caution suggests using the 2.5 per cent figure. The figure of 2.5 per cent suggests that, with no change in aggregate supply policy the actual rate of unemployment could be reduced to 2.5 per cent by an increase in aggregate demand.

Of course, the inference that u^{min} is indeed 2.5 per cent relies on the estimation method. Other data sets, such as other measures of inflation or other determining

variables may yield different results (although our research suggests that the estimates of u^{min} would not change by much). Other specifications, such as non-linear relationships between u^{min} and the supply factors should perhaps be examined. The acid test of our estimate would be to experience an actual unemployment rate of 2.5 per cent with no tendency for inflation to be increasing. Only then could we know that u^{min} is no higher than 2.5 per cent. However, even without this acid test, the estimates give some ground for supposing that u^{min} is 2.5 per cent.

What can u^{min} tell us about full employment?

At full employment, unemployed persons are voluntarily unemployed. That is, anyone who is unemployed can readily get a job at prevailing wage levels but has chosen not to take, at least immediately, the particular jobs that are available. If we assume that, given the current setting of aggregate supply policy, u^{min} is now 2.5 per cent, what does this tell us about the level of full employment?

As the earlier discussion about the experience in the 1970s makes clear, u^{min} is not necessarily equal to full employment. In the 1970s the high level of union power appears to have caused u^{min} to exceed the full-employment unemployment rate. However, by the 2000s union power had decreased considerably. It no longer seems to be the case that union power causes a substantial amount of involuntary unemployment, although perhaps in certain sectors of the economy there is union-determined involuntary unemployment. Even then, if union wage determination causes excessive wages in a few sectors, the job alternatives offered by the rest of the economy would pretty much nullify the involuntariness of any unemployment that results.

With regard to unemployment benefits, the other supply factor of importance in explaining u^{min}, although unemployment benefits relative to wages are twice their level of the 1960s, they are not excessive by OECD comparisons and are also heavily circumscribed by various requirements, such as work for the dole. Given this, unemployment benefits do not seem to be creating excessive wages that would cause involuntary unemployment.
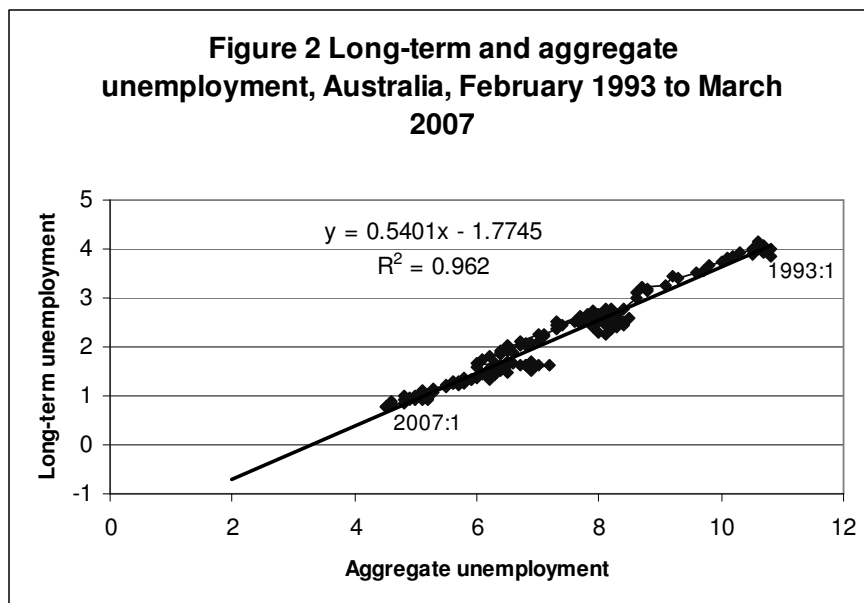
On balance it seems that, with the current levels of the supply factors, to achieve unemployment equal to u^{min} would be to achieve full employment. Thus, subject to the caveats noted above, full employment in Australia at the current time would be at an unemployment rate of 2.5 per cent.

Long-term unemployment and full employment

As noted earlier, in April 2007 there were 84,000 people who had been unemployed for more than a year. Such long-term unemployment is inconsistent with full employment. In the 1950s and 1960s long-term unemployment was unknown. Are there grounds for expecting long-term unemployment to disappear if the aggregate rate of unemployment decreased further and if so to what rate would the aggregate rate have to decrease in order to eliminate long-term unemployment? The disappearance of long-term unemployment is perhaps a necessary condition for full employment. The consideration of this question gives further information about the reasonableness of our contention that full employment in Australia would occur at a rate of unemployment of 2.5 per cent.

Let us consider the relation between the rate of long-term unemployment, defined as the long-term unemployed as a percentage of the labour force, and the aggregate rate of unemployment. As has been shown, this is a stable and well-defined relation.[16] It is plotted in Figure 2 for Australia for the period February 1993 to April 2007. The

closeness of the data to the line of best fit is striking. This line implies that a one percentage point reduction in the aggregate rate of unemployment is associated with a half a percentage point reduction in the rate of long-term unemployment. There is no sign that this degree of association is changing – the curve in Figure 2 is linear throughout the data set.

Figure 2 Long-term and aggregate unemployment, Australia, February 1993 to March 2007

$y = 0.5401x - 1.7745$

$R^2 = 0.962$

A similar relation between long-term unemployment and aggregate unemployment is revealed at the state level, where the aggregate measure is the state rate of unemployment. The relation has a positive slope and is well-determined for every state of Australia.

Returning to aggregate data for Australia, the extension of the line relating long-term unemployment to aggregate unemployment in Figure 2 implies that an aggregate rate of unemployment of 3.3 per cent would be associated with zero long-term unemployment. This suggests that reducing unemployment to the full employment rate of 2.5 per cent would eliminate long-term unemployment.[17]

The existence of categories of people who would like to work but have not found jobs, such as discouraged workers and some of those on disability support, implies that even if there were no long-term unemployment we could not conclude that all who wanted jobs at going wages had jobs, that is that full employment would be achieved. However, it is well known that the numbers of discouraged workers and of people on disability pensions would decrease as aggregate unemployment decreases. The proportion of people underemployed has also fallen with the fall in aggregate unemployment in recent years. Thus reducing long-term unemployment to zero will also imply substantial reductions in the numbers in these other categories. Given this,

the conclusion that full employment would occur at a rate of unemployment of 2.5 per cent is strengthened.

The two policy approaches – aggregate demand and aggregate supply

Assuming that full employment in Australia would require a rate of unemployment of 2.5 per cent, how can such a rate be achieved?

Policy to reduce unemployment to the full employment level can be usefully divided into aggregate supply and aggregate demand policies. Aggregate supply policies operate through labour market regulation, microeconomic reform and the setting of welfare payments. Aggregate demand policies operate through monetary and fiscal policy. The division of policy into these two categories is necessary for analysis because they operate in different ways. Indeed there is an element of incompatibility between them. For example, aggregate demand policy cannot reduce unemployment below a rate that is determined by aggregate supply policy. This impotence of aggregate demand policy was brought home to Australians in the 1970s when an excessive real wage caused the rate of unemployment to increase dramatically. As discussed above, the concurrent increase in u^{min} was due to aggregate supply factors. This episode brought the low unemployment rates of the 1950s and 1960s to an end. Faced with a real wage fixed above the full-employment real wage, aggregate demand policy had no power to reduce the rate of unemployment. Attempts to do so would instead have caused increasing inflation rather than reduced unemployment. In the event, policy makers in Australia came to realise this and eschewed expansionary aggregate demand policy even although the rate of unemployment was generally regarded as excessively high.

In the range model, increases in aggregate demand, including increases caused by expansionary aggregate demand policy, can reduce unemployment to the rate of u^{min}.[18] Let us call the region of unemployment rates above u^{min} the Keynesian region and any excess of actual unemploymyent over u^{min} Keynesian unemployment. Aggregate demand expansion can get unemployment to the lower boundary of the Keynesian region, reducing Keynesian unemployment to zero. The estimated value of u^{min} of 2.5 per cent suggests that expansions in aggregate demand can reduce the actual rate of unemployment to 2.5 per cent without generating a situation of increasing inflation. Full employment can be achieved through aggregate demand policy alone.

How the inflation target enhances the employment-creating effectiveness of aggregate demand policy

In Australia the setting of aggregate demand policy has to satisfy the inflation target that CPI inflation averages between 2 and 3 per cent. Does this policy constraint prevent aggregate demand policy from reducing unemployment?

Our (Hugh Sibly and the writer) research suggests that it does not.[19] Indeed, we argue that an inflation target can enhance the unemployment-reducing potential of aggregate demand policy. Our argument is that an inflation target is an anchor which keeps inflationary expectations in check. Without an inflation target there is a danger that if an expansion in activity causes an increase in inflation, then expectations will adjust rapidly and convert what could have been a temporary blip in inflation into a permanent increase. An inflation target can prevent such a conversion.

The range model implies that for reductions in unemployment to be achieved the inflation target should not be the only objective of aggregate demand policy. The inflation target should be accompanied by an aim to reduce unemployment to the u^{min}

level. Our formulation of this is hierarchical – aggregate demand policy should be set to give the lowest rate of unemployment subject to not violating the inflation target.[20]

How has Australia fared under the inflation target policy? Does the evidence give grounds for optimism that full employment can be achieved? Figure 3 plots the relation between CPI inflation and Keynesian unemployment for the period since the introduction in 1993 of the inflation target.[21] It appears that there is justification for optimism. Since 1993:1 there have been three non-inflationary expansions (NIEs) in Australia. (An NIE is a reduction in the rate of unemployment with no trend increase in inflation.) The bold sections of the inflation-unemployment relation in Figure 3 show the three NIEs. The first, 1993:4 to 1994:3, ended with an increase in inflation caused

Figure 3 Non-inflationary expansions (NIEs), Australia, 1993:1 to 2007:1
(bold sections are NIEs)
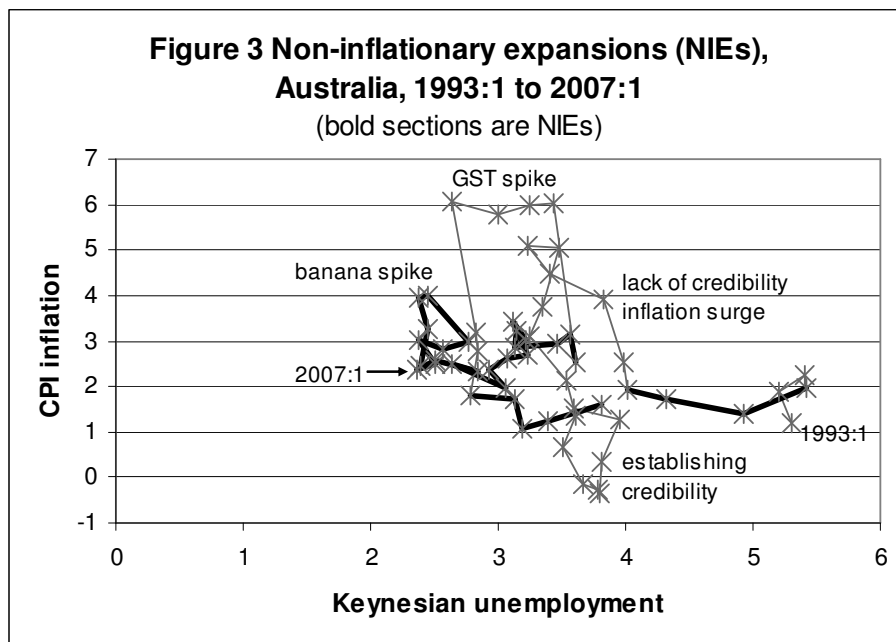
by inflationary pressures; these inflationary pressures were thought to be a sign that the new policy lacked credibility. The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) reacted quickly by tightening monetary policy, an act designed in part to establish the credibility of the inflation target policy. It appears to have worked. The increase in inflation was reversed. A second NIE occurred from 1998:4 to 1999:4. The ending of this second NIE was accompanied by an inflationary spike associated with the introduction of the GST in 2000. During this spike, Keynesian unemployment increased by over one percentage point. But the inflation increase was a spike. Inflation quickly returned to the target range, suggesting that the inflation target was effective in keeping inflation under control, albeit at the cost of an increase in Keynesian unemployment. A third NIE began in 2001:3 and has continued to the end of the data period, 2007:1. During this NIE, there was a massive increase in the price of bananas and this made a substantial contribution to the increase in CPI inflation in 2006. The massive increase

in the price of bananas and the associated increase in CPI inflation was temporary. During this inflationary spike there was a mild and short-lived increase in Keynesian unemployment. This experience provides similar qualified support to the effectiveness of the inflation target in keeping inflationary expectations under control.

The RBA does not state a target for the rate of unemployment, or even state that it aims to reduce unemployment subject to not violating the inflation target, that is, the hiearchical policy described above. The unemployment-reducing aspect of the NIEs experienced by Australia in the 2000s are perhaps driven by increases in aggregate demand coming from non-government sources, especially the buoyancy of the world economy including the very high growth rates of the Chinese economy. Just as the Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan, 'tolerated' the reduction in unemployment in the US in the 1990s below the existing estimates of the natural rate of unemployment, so the RBA has, perhaps, acted with similar tolerance in the 2000s.

Non-government influences notwithstanding, the theory of the range implies that aggregate demand policy does have the potential to create an NIE. Indeed the first NIE, in 1993-94, was associated with expansionary aggregate demand policy. Governor Bernie Fraser announced at the time of the introduction of the inflation target policy that 'The task now is to hold the gains on inflation while releasing the brake on activity'.[22]

Just how fast the approach to full employment should be is a question of judgement. Policymakers have to allow for the possibility that there is a speed limit effect, namely that a rapid decrease in unemployment could cause an increase in inflation. This possibility should constrain the chosen speed of expansion. As it happens, the wage-inflation speed limit effect has been absent in the expansions experienced in the Australian economy since the early 1980s. But a wage-inflation speed limit effect would most likely recur if faster rates of expansion were chosen. The fact that the average rate of inflation in the third NIE is slightly higher than that of the preceding NIEs suggests that there was perhaps not much room for a faster decrease in unemployment.

The experience of the NIEs and the estimate of u^{min} suggest that the rate of progress towards full employment in Australia can be maintained and that monetary policy should be set with this in mind, while keeping in mind the need not to violate the inflation target.

Fiscal expansion should also contribute to the progress towards full employment. The interaction of fiscal and monetary policy and the associated implications for interest rates and national saving are beyond the coverage of this article.

In addition to locking-in inflationary expectations, a further advantage of the inflation target policy is to prevent aggregate demand policy from trying to push unemployment below u^{min}. For example, an inflation target policy in the early 1970s would have reacted more quickly to the actual increases in inflation experienced at that time.

Conclusion

The research reported in this paper suggests that full employment would occur at an aggregate rate of unemployment of 2.5 per cent. Whilst this figure should be treated with caution and should not be regarded as a rigid target, it does suggest that the current unemployment rate of 4.4 per cent can be reduced without causing increasing inflation.

Given the extent of economic reform in Australia since the 1970s, the suggestion that the unemployment rate could be as low as 2.5 per cent without causing an increasing rate of inflation is not surprising. Over the three decades since the early 1970s there has been a stream of microeconomic reform including tariff reductions, decentralisation of wage bargaining and privatisation of government enterprises. Furthermore, the unemployment benefit system has been reformed through measures such as 'work for the dole' schemes. At the macroeconomic level, monetary policy has been reformed by the introduction of an inflation target and fiscal policy has been reformed by a more conscious intention to avoid government budget deficits. Were unemployment outcomes comparable to those achieved in the 1950s and 1960s unattainable, it would cast doubt on the value of these economic reforms.

Some economists argued that the large increase in unemployment in the 1970s was the result of an increase in real wages. The increase at the time in the share of wages in GDP supported these arguments. However, these increases have now been reversed. But an unemployment outcome of 4.4 per cent is substantially higher than the outcomes that were argued to have been ended by the real wage surge of 1974. If Australia could do no better than an unemployment rate of 4.4 per cent, then the validity of the real wage overhang explanation of the 1970s experience would be questionable.

The research on which this paper is based uses a model, the range of equilibria model, which differs from the model of the natural rate of unemployment. The natural rate model dominates economic thinking at the current time. It is based on microeconomic foundations implied by conventional neoclassical theory. By contrast, the range model includes psychological insights from behavioural economics.

The range model is in the Keynesian tradition in that it gives a more important role to the effects of aggregate demand than does the classically-based natural rate model. In the range model there is no automatic tendency for the unemployment rate to gravitate to the rate associated with full employment.

This paper suggests that an increase in aggregate demand could get the Australian economy to a rate of unemployment as low as 2.5 per cent with no further microeconomic reform and no further reform of the unemployment benefit system. Given that there is not an automatic tendency for this outcome to occur purely through the workings of the market, aggregate demand policy should play an important role in getting the economy closer to full employment. This role of aggregate demand policy does not imply that the inflation target policy should be abandoned. Indeed, by anchoring inflationary expectations, an inflation target can enhance the unemployment-reducing potential of aggregate demand policy. The inflation target needs to be joined by the aim of reducing unemployment.
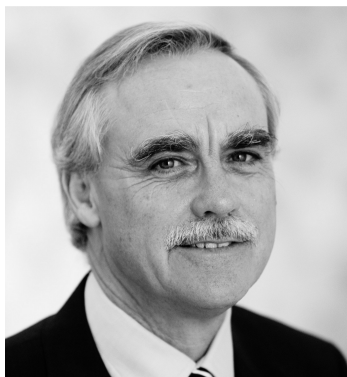
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SITE/staffprofile/imcdonald.shtml.

1   Reported in, respectively, *The Australian*, 23 April 2007, *The Australian* 17 April 2007 and
     The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 May 2007.

2   This is the seasonally adjusted number of people unemployed for more than a year since
     their last full time job. The number unemployed for more than a year since their last job, full-
     time of part-time is virtually the same, namely 78,000 in April 2007.

3   See Cai, Lixin and Gregory, Robert (2005). 'Unemployment Duration and Inflows onto the
     Disability Support Pension Program: Evidence from FaCS LDS Data', *Australian Economic
     Review*, 38, 3: 233-252, September.

4   Wilkins, R (2007) 'The consequences of underemployment for the underemployed' *Journal
     of Industrial Relations*, 49: 247-75, finds that life satisfaction for underemployed people is
     less than that for other employed people, indeed not much greater than life satisfaction for
     those people who are unemployed. Thus the underemployed are an important component of
     the loss of social welfare from not being at full employment.

5   Robinson, J (1937). *Essays in the Theory of Employment*, Oxford, Blackwell (1947 edition).
     Robinson, in the later edition in 1973, claimed Keynes agreed with the main points. See
     Keynes, JM (1936). *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Prices*, London,
     Macmillan.

6   See Friedman, M (1968). 'The role of monetary policy' *American Economic Review,* 58: 1-
     17; Phelps, E (1967). 'Phillips curves, expectations of inflation and optimal unemployment
     over time', *Economica,* XXXIV, 135: 254-81.

7   See Keynes (1936): 250; Robinson (1937): 88.

8   Kahneman, D and Tversky, A (1979). 'Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk',
     Econometrica, 46: 263-91. Kahneman was awarded the Nobel prize in Economic Science in
     2002 for this work – Tversky, having died in 1996, was not eligible.

9   Bhaskar, V (1990). 'Wage Relativities and the Natural Rate of Unemployment', *Economic
     Journal*, 100: 60-66.

10   See McDonald, IM and Solow, RM (1981), 'Wage bargaining and employment', *American
     Economic Review*, 71: 896-908.

11   Lye, JN and McDonald, IM (2006a). 'Union power and Australia's Inflation Barrier, 1965:4 to
     2003:3' *Australian Journal of Labour Economics,* 3: 287-304.

12   Lye, JN and McDonald, IM (2006b). 'An evaluation of unemployment policy in Australia using
     the range of equilibria', *Australian Economic Review*, 9, 3: 239-56.

13   See Corden, WM (1979). 'Wages and unemployment in Australia', *Economic Record*, 55,
     March, 1-19.

14   The unemployment benefit scheme has been tightened up by various measures, such as the
     'work for the dole' scheme. However, these measures are not included in the estimation of

the factors determining u^{min}. As a consequence, the reported estimate of u^{min}, on account of this omission probably overstates the true u^{min}.

[15] See Isaac, JE (2007). 'Reforming Australian Industrial Relations?: The 21st Foenander Lecture, 28 August 2006', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 49: 410-435.

[16] In McDonald, IM (1993). 'Long Term Unemployment and Macroeconomic Policy' *Australian Economic Review*, 2: 31-4.

[17] For Western Australia, where the rate of unemployment has fallen to 2.7 per cent by April 2007, there appears to be some tendency for the relation to flatten out at state unemployment rates below three per cent. This may qualify the conclusion in the text that long-term unemployment can be reduced to zero through reducing the aggregate unemployment rate. More investigation of state level data is required.

[18] As discussed by McDonald, IM and Sibly, H (2001). 'How Monetary Policy Can Have Permanent Real Effects With Only Temporal Nominal Rigidity', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 48, 5: 532-46 and McDonald, IM and Sibly, H (2005). 'The diamond of macroeconomic equilibria and the non-inflationary expansion', *Metroeconomica*, 56, 3: 393-409.

[19] McDonald and Sibly (2005) *ibid*.

[20] *Ibid*.

[21] Using actual unemployment instead of Keynesian unemployment yields a similar picture for Figure 3.

[22] Fraser, BW (1993). 'Some aspects of monetary policy', *Reserve Bank of Australia Bulletin*, April: 3.

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