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**Volume 22 1/2003**

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**Dialogue** is published three times per year and the deadlines are 1 March, 1 July and 1 November.

Contributions are usually commissioned, but offers to contribute are always considered.

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## President's Column

### Why Australia Needs a Fifth National Research Priority

*Leon Mann*



The issue of national research priorities has been the subject of several of my columns in *Dialogue* over the past 18 months.

Why do I keep coming back to this subject? Research priorities and national research priorities have been high on the Government's 'Backing Australia's Ability' agenda from the beginning of 2001. Priorities were centre stage in 2002 when there was community consultation and expert advice on the setting of national research priorities in the area of science, engineering and technology. Now in 2003, the social sciences and humanities have been invited to briefings with the Minister, to a working Conference, and to a Summit to discuss how they will

contribute to (add, refine, assist) the implementation of the Big Four designated national research priorities announced by the Prime Minister in December 2002.

I return to the subject because I see the designation of national research priorities as a litmus test of how far social and human concerns, and therefore social science ideas and knowledge, influence the thinking of Government, government departments, and the central research agencies. A more compelling reason for returning to the issue is my strongly held belief that truly national research priorities involve in most cases a combination of nature and society, environment and people, of the physical and the social. Social sciences knowledge and insight must partner natural sciences and technology concepts and discoveries in the identification and implementation of our most compelling national research priorities.

In this regard, Australia lags behind many overseas countries where there is a clear recognition that the social/human dimension is a key to the new knowledge society/economy and that complex problems and their solutions require both social scientific and natural science/technological inputs. But how far behind? Is there a prospect of catching up? I believe the answer to the first is a long way behind; and, that the answer to the second is elusive - time will tell.

#### **Where do we stand at present?**

The Prime Minister's strategy in announcing 'Backing Australia's Ability' in January 2001 was to focus the national research and innovation system on backing winners in scientific and technological innovation. The four winners were:

- Nano-materials and biomaterials;
- Genome/phenome research;
- Photonics; and
- Complex/intelligent systems.

The ARC was invited to redirect more of its funding to these 'high tech' areas.

The priority setting initiative became more national and 'whole of government' in 2002 when there was wide consultation and an expert advisory process aimed at determining national research priorities. Many observers - including the scientific community - thought it odd that this was to be accomplished in two stages: science, engineering and technology in 2002; then social sciences and humanities in 2003.

In *Dialogue* (2/2002) I predicted 'look out for sustainable environment, in particular the issues of salinity and land degradation. Look out for new technologies to support clean and renewable energy sources. Also look out for ageing and maintaining a healthy population'. I confess to a combination of calculated guesses and 'insider' trading of information to make those predictions.

In December 2002 Australia's Big Four national research priorities were announced by the Prime Minister. They are:

- An environmentally sustainable Australia;
- Promoting and maintaining good health;
- Frontier technologies for building and transforming Australian industries; and
- Safeguarding Australia.

I hadn't predicted Safeguarding Australia ... but that was pre-Bali.

Dr Brendan Nelson commented after the PM's announcement: 'The four national research priorities set a clear and coherent direction for Australian research. Science is now at the centre of government policy making, acknowledging the vital contribution that scientific achievements can make to the quality of all our lives'.

As noted in *Dialogue* (2/2002): 'in most of these areas social scientists will find plenty of scope and opportunity to make a significant contribution'. That is still the case, most obviously in regard to Promoting and sustaining good health, Environmentally sustainable Australia, and Safeguarding Australia, but also in regard to understanding the conditions for building Frontier technologies. The social sciences are not completely sidelined; but they are clearly not centre stage.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Conference on 28 March 2003, (sponsored by the Department of Education, Science and Technology) is the focal point for engaging social sciences and humanities as contributors to refining, adding to, and assisting in the implementation of the Big Four. Two aspects of the Conference are reassuring. First, that the implementing agencies, such as CSIRO and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), will be involved in discussing how their plans incorporate social science and humanities contribution and partnership. Second, the case for additional research priorities is on the Conference agenda. This is good news. It signals that while the Government and implementing agencies are trying to bed-down the Big Four, and devise new structures for their implementation, there is a willingness to listen to the case for an additional national research priority.

A first inclination is to push for a fifth national research priority squarely in the social science/humanities area. If successful, we could take satisfaction in gaining admission to the national research priorities club. Admittedly, the recognition comes a year behind and there is only one priority to display, but at least we have something to work with. But that inclination could be a mistake because it reinforces the archaic view in this country of a separation between science, engineering, and technology in one camp and social sciences and humanities in the other. Importantly, it undermines the idea that most of the national research priorities that really matter involve an

understanding of the *inseparable* nature of environment and people, of the social and physical. The way forward is to bring all knowledge domains together to identify Australia's compelling issues, problems and opportunities and from this basis, work out the highest priorities and how our research and innovation effort can be applied to make a significant difference.

I believe that there should be a fifth national research priority, and that the area can be justified in terms of the Government's priorities initiative as well as politically. I would define the fifth national research priority as '**Building Australia's creative and innovative capability**'.

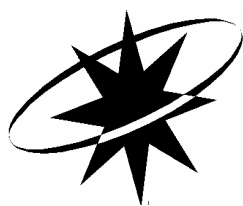
Such a priority incorporates 'developing human talent', one of the eight themes to emerge from the public consultations in 2002. The priority area focuses national research effort on such goals as devising new strategies and interventions to improve scientific and technological literacy, enhance reading and writing proficiency, foster numeracy and command of languages, and effective remediation for learning difficulties and dyslexia.

This priority area also focuses on research into the best models for schooling and life long education for nurturing creativity and innovation, and for devising new social structures and incentive systems to foster creativity and innovativeness in everything we do - and not only in regard to frontier technologies for Australian industries.

It also encourages research into all sectors of the community and their capacity to respond to, and participate in, the new knowledge economy. It also focuses research into how best to generate structures of support to those researchers who are challenged to make a significant - rather than incremental - difference in each of the Big Four national research areas, and all that might follow.

Australia's Big Four priority areas are, to put it simply: healthy people, safe people, better environment, and blue sky technology winners. A fifth priority area - research into fostering and developing capable, skilled, educated, creative, and innovative people - would be a national winner.

**Leon Mann**



*Ms Sue Rider* has left the Secretariat to explore other options, after 8 years working for the Academy. She made a substantial contribution to the development of the Workshop Program in particular, and her organisational skills were highly valued in the International Program and during the Annual Symposia. The Academy wishes her well in her future endeavours.

## The Illegality of the War Against Iraq

*Andrew Byrnes and Hilary Charlesworth*

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In the months leading up to the Howard government's decision to commit Australia to the war against Iraq as part of the 'coalition of the willing', the Prime Minister, Mr Howard, maintained that existing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions authorise the use of force against Iraq by the 'coalition of the willing'.<sup>1</sup> On Sunday, 16 March 2003, he endorsed the comments made by Mr Michael Costello, former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade suggesting the same.<sup>2</sup> Finally, on Tuesday, 18 March 2003 - after the decision to commit forces to Iraq had been taken by the Cabinet - the Prime Minister made public and tabled in Parliament the legal advice (dated 12 March 2003)<sup>3</sup> on which the government relied to support its assertion of the legality of its conduct.<sup>4</sup>

In our view, the arguments advanced to support the lawfulness of the government's action are unpersuasive. They depend on a distorted reading of the language of the relevant Security Council resolutions and of the context in which they were adopted. They also neglect the rationale of the role of the Security Council under the Charter in dealing with threats to international peace and security.

The government's legal advice relates only to the 'continuing Security Council authorisation' argument, although the Prime Minister has previously hinted at other legal bases as well.<sup>5</sup> The argument put forward by the government's legal advisers is essentially that the Security Council's 1990 authorisation of the use of force by member States to eject Iraq from Kuwait authorisation has either continued or has been revived, as a result of the failure of Iraq to comply with all the provisions of the ceasefire,<sup>6</sup> and that it is open to one or more member States of the UN to take it upon themselves to enforce the terms of that ceasefire.<sup>7</sup> In our view (and the view of the overwhelming majority of independent commentators) such an interpretation of this resolution and other UNSC resolutions concerning Iraq is untenable, since it contradicts their plain meaning, and is inconsistent with the scheme of the Charter and the context in which those resolutions were adopted.<sup>8</sup>

### **The background: the 1990 authorisation of the use of force**

Resolution 678 (adopted on 29 November 1990) gave Iraq until 15 January 1991 to withdraw from Kuwait and, if that deadline was not met, authorised the use by UN members of all necessary means for the specific purpose of upholding Security Council Resolution 660 and 'all subsequent relevant resolutions' (ie Resolutions 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 674 and 677 which all restated the demand that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait). The specificity of the authorisation is made clear in the wording of paragraph 2 of Resolution 678: member states must cooperate with the government of Kuwait in any action to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. The phrase 'authorises member states co-operating with the government of Kuwait ... to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660' is a very broad authorisation and includes military action.

Resolution 678 thus provided an enforcement mechanism for Resolution 660 of 2 August 1990, adopted the day that Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the subsequent reiterations of that Resolution between August and November 1990. Resolution 660

made the determination required by article 39 of the UN Charter as a precondition for the collective use of force that the invasion constituted a breach of international peace and security, and demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops.

It could be argued that, were Iraq to re-invade Kuwait, the authorisation for UN members to use force in Resolution 678 could be revived, although a more cautious view would be that, because the language of Resolution 678 is tied to a particular historical event, a new Resolution would be needed. In the absence of an invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, however, Resolution 678 cannot be read as a standing authorisation for the use of force by a UN member against Iraq.<sup>9</sup>

Resolution 678 thus clearly identified the breach of international peace and security that triggered Security Council powers under Chapter VII of the UN Charter as the invasion of Kuwait and does not constitute a general power for the use of force.

Moreover, the terms of Resolution 678 indicate that the authorisation for the use of force is granted and monitored by the Security Council. It is inconsistent with the clear terms of Resolution 678, and indeed the whole structure of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to argue one or more states could decide for themselves when and if the authorisation could be revived.

#### **Iraq's failure to observe the ceasefire as basis for the use of force**

Resolution 687 of 3 April 1991 set out the terms of the ceasefire that concluded the First Gulf War. It is divided into nine operative sections covering issues as diverse as boundary demarcation (section A), return of Kuwaiti property seized by Iraq (section D) and the payment of compensation by Iraq for loss suffered as a result of the invasion (section E). Section C deals with Iraq's obligations to destroy all weapons of mass destruction. It provides that the implementation of this obligation shall be through a verification regime monitored by a Special Commission (whose successor is UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Commission (IAEA).

No provision of Resolution 687 links Iraq's duty to destroy all weapons of mass destruction, to the authorisation to use force set out in Resolution 678. Indeed, the final paragraph of Resolution 687 gives the Security Council the power to decide 'such further steps as may be required for the implementation of the present resolution and to secure peace and security in the area', implying that further Security Council consideration will be needed. This is underlined by the pre-ceasefire resolution, Resolution 686 (2 March 1991), in which the Council explicitly preserved the operation of the authorisation of force until Iraq had complied with a number of conditions relating to the ejection of Iraq from Kuwait - an open-ended authorisation to deal with Iraq was clearly not foreseen. (The subsequent use of force by the US and UK to establish no-fly zones is claimed to be authorised by Resolution 688, a view rejected by most commentators.)

The Australian and the United Kingdom governments have argued that Iraq's failure to comply with the ceasefire agreement in Resolution 687 entitles member States to use force to respond to those violations, without additional Security Council authorisation. The ceasefire was, of course, between the United Nations and Iraq, not between the Iraq and the United States or the United Kingdom. The claim that individual member States can respond to alleged violations of the ceasefire agreement between Iraq and the United Nations without the consent of the Security Council (which is monitoring the ceasefire) is inconsistent with the Charter role of the Council and is an unsustainable view of international law.

This is not the first occasion on which arguments about continuing/revived authorisation or enforcement of ceasefire conditions have been made in relation to Iraq.<sup>10</sup> The imposition in 1991 of no-fly zones in the north and south of Iraq and the use of force to enforce them by the US, UK and France in the period since then was supported by reference to this type of argument (as well as to humanitarian necessity). The right of one or more members of the Security Council to use force on the basis of a purported continuing or implied authorisation when the Council itself has not clearly authorised force has not been accepted by most members of the Council.<sup>11</sup>

A similar claim was made in 1998 when the US and UK took military action in response to the non-cooperation with UN weapons inspectors as required by Resolution 687. The argument of a revival of the authorisation of force (in this case by Resolution 1205) made by the UK was not accepted by other States; nor was the claim that a breach of the ceasefire conditions entitled individual member States to take the initiative to enforce those conditions, regardless of the Security Council's current view on the matter, has not been generally accepted by other States or most commentators.<sup>12</sup>

The Security Council itself does not appear to have taken the view that member States were free to use force on their own initiative without a further decision from the Council - indeed, the deliberations over the adoption of Resolution 1441 make it clear that members of the Council assumed that a new substantive decision would be needed (and presumably therefore that any prior authorisation was spent).

#### **Did resolution 1441 authorise the use of force?**

Resolution 1441 of 8 November 2002 can be read as a further and more detailed response to Iraq's failure to satisfy the relevant authorities that it has fully complied with the obligation to destroy all weapons of mass destruction set out in Resolution 687. It sets up new powers for UNMOVIC and the IAEA to enhance the inspection process and warns that Iraq will face 'serious consequences' if it continues to fail to fulfil its obligations under Resolution 687. The Resolution leaves open the issue of what will happen if Iraq does not comply with its terms, implying that the Security Council will need to consider the matter when further evidence appears. Although, in standard UNSC style, all previous resolutions on Iraq are referred to in the preamble of Resolution 1441, there is no paragraph that suggests that UN members states may take 'all necessary means' (ie including military action) to implement the resolution. Indeed, France, China and Russia made a public interpretative statement on Resolution 1441 on the day it was adopted noting that they could vote for the resolution precisely because it contained no 'automaticity' in the use of force.<sup>13</sup> This understanding was confirmed in the United States and United Kingdom's formal explanation of their votes.<sup>14</sup>

Mr Howard has rightly pointed out that there have been 17 Security Council resolutions dealing with Iraq since 1990. The number of resolutions in itself however does not change the plain wording of the text adopted by the Security Council - cumulation of resolutions does not provide a justification for the use of force<sup>15</sup> - and the statements by various members of the Council that these resolutions have not authorised the further use of force.

#### **Conclusion**

Mr Howard has consistently assured the Australian public that Australia will act in conformity with international law in relation to an attack on Iraq. Neither the broad



arguments he has invoked in support of his claim nor the legal advice that he has now made public establishes the legality of Australia's action - the majority of published independent legal analysis has rejected the claim that existing resolutions justify the use of force or that there is any other basis under international law to justify the use of force against Iraq.

The argument that the 1990 authorisation has been subsequently revived is one that has been rejected on various occasions by most member States of the Council over the last few years, notwithstanding British and US claims to the contrary. One leading international law commentator has said of the UK/US approach - which is now also the Australian legal justification:<sup>16</sup>

It is no longer a case of interpreting euphemisms such as 'all necessary means' to allow the use of force when it is clear from the preceding debate that force is envisaged: the USA, the UK and others have gone far beyond this to distort the words of resolutions and to ignore the preceding debates in order to claim to be acting on behalf of the international community.

It is a matter of great regret that the Prime Minister released details of his legal justification for a war on Iraq only after he had committed Australia to this war. This undermined the possibility of a proper debate on the issues. The Prime Minister and the Defence Minister have noted that lawyers often disagree and that therefore as long as they can come up with a legal argument in support of their position, it is proper and lawful to proceed to war. However, it is clear that there are some legal arguments which are more solidly-based and persuasive than others, measured according to the accepted standards of international law argumentation - namely those that would very likely prevail if the question of legality ever came before the International Court of Justice for definitive resolution. The overwhelming rejection by most informed and independent international lawyers of the arguments now articulated by the government's legal advice - which barely refers to and certainly does not attempt to rebut the convincing counter-case - indicates the fundamental weakness of the government's legal position.<sup>17</sup> A decision to go to war is of course not made only on the basis that the use of force would be legal - there are ethical, moral, political and pragmatic considerations that may be determinative. However, a government that proclaims its commitment to the international rule of law should not go to war on the basis of a fatally flawed legal justification of this sort.



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and  
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Australian National  
University.*



An alternative view of the legality of the war, by *Emeritus Professor Don Greig*, can be accessed at <http://law.anu.edu.au/cipl/>. A late attempt was made to contact Professor Greig for permission to reproduce his article in *Dialogue*, but without success.

This article was commissioned at the last minute, when the Prime Minister declared that Australia would commit to war, and completed in less than 48 hours to meet printing deadlines. The Editor thanks the contributors for their cooperation at such short notice.

- <sup>1</sup> Statement on Iraq by The Hon John Howard, MP, Prime Minister, 4 February 2003, *House of Representatives Official Hansard*, 4 February 2003: 10642 at p 10651, available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/reps/dailys/dr040203.pdf>; Address to the National Press Club by the Prime Minister, Mr John Howard, 13 March 2003, available at <http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/2003/speech2185.htm> (visited 20 March 2003)
- <sup>2</sup> On ABC radio, Mr Costello argued that UNSC Resolution 678 (adopted 29 November 1990) provides continuing authorisation for such use of force without the need for a further specific UNSC resolution. <http://www.abc.net.au/sydney/stories/s806869.htm> (audio link at bottom of page). 'This is the simplest international law legal issue I have ever seen. It is clear, uncomplicated, straightforward, the legal authority is there.' (Michael Costello, 14 March 2003). The transcript of this interview was also tabled by the Prime Minister in Parliament on 18 March 2003: House of Representatives, *Daily Hansard*, 18 March 2003:12508, available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/reps/dailys/dr180303.pdf>.
- <sup>3</sup> *Memorandum of Advice on the Use of Force Against Iraq, provided by the Attorney General's Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, March 18, 2003 (authored by Bill Campbell QC and Chris Moraitis and dated 12 March 2003) [hereinafter *Government Legal Advice*], available at <http://www.pm.gov.au/iraq/displayNewsContent.cfm?refx=96> (visited 20 March 2003)
- <sup>4</sup> House of Representatives, *Daily Hansard*, 18 March 2003: 12508, available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/reps/dailys/dr180303.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> None of the other possible grounds are convincing. The justifications that that been suggested include (a) *self-defence* under article 51 of the UN Charter (which falls down in the absence of any actual or imminent armed attack); (b) a preemptive (or preventive) strike in line with the so-called Bush doctrine (which has not been accepted by the majority of States as part of contemporary international law); (c) *humanitarian intervention* (the status of which under international law is highly contentious and which is not applicable on the facts of the Iraqi situation); and (d) *regime change* (which has no status as a international law basis for using force against a State).
- <sup>6</sup> The United Kingdom government has made a similar argument to justify its decision to use force, most recently articulated by the British Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith in a recently released 342-word summary statement: *Legal basis for the use of force against Iraq*, Statement by the Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, 17 January 2003, <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page3287.asp> (visited 18 March 2003).
- <sup>7</sup> Some commentators have also suggested this as a possible legal justification: 'The case for a legal attack', *The Australian*, 18 March 2003 (signed by a number of mainly Australian or Australian-based lawyers); Don Greig, 'It would be legal to attack Iraq', *Canberra Times*, 17 March 2003, 13; Stephen Hall, 'A clear-cut case against Hussein', *The Australian* 24 February 2003. For a detailed critique of this position, see *Legality of the Use of Force against Iraq, Opinion prepared by Rabinder Singh QC and Alison Macdonald*, 10 September 2002, [www.lcnp.org/global/IraqOpinion10.9.02.pdf](http://www.lcnp.org/global/IraqOpinion10.9.02.pdf). See also Don Rothwell, 'War against Iraq

needs UN support', *Canberra Times*, 5 March 2003, [http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?story\\_id=213130&class=your+say](http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?story_id=213130&class=your+say) (visited 20 March 2003); 'War and law collide: illegal act or self-defence?', *Australian Financial Review*, March 15-16 (contending contributions by Donald R Rothwell and Neil Brown).

<sup>8</sup> In 1971, in a case arising out of the continued South African occupation of Namibia, the International Court of Justice considered the legal effect of certain Security Council resolutions. It commented, in terms relevant to the interpretation of SC resolutions more generally:

'The language of a resolution of the Security Council should be carefully analysed before a conclusion can be made as to its binding effect. In view of the nature of the powers under Article 25 [of the Charter, by which member States are bound by certain resolutions of the Council], the question whether they have been so exercised is to be determined in each case, having regard to the terms of the resolution to be interpreted, the discussion leading to it, the Charter provisions invoked and, in general, all circumstances that might assist in determining the legal consequences of the resolution of the Security Council.' *Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council Resolution 276 (1970), Advisory Opinion of 21 June 1971*, [1971] ICJ Rep 13, 52 at para 110.

<sup>9</sup> This point was pivotal to Michael Costello's argument, which turns on the mistaken assumption that 'subsequent relevant resolutions' in Resolution 678 includes resolutions after 1991, including Resolution 1441, rather than being limited to earlier resolutions. The Australian government's legal advice also relies on this argument: *Government Legal Advice*, *supra* note 3, para 16.

<sup>10</sup> For a review of the incidents and the legal argumentation, see Christine Gray, 'From Unity to Polarization: International Law and the Use of Force against Iraq' (2002) 13 *European Journal of International Law* 1-19.

<sup>11</sup> Gray, *supra* note 10, at 9-11.

<sup>12</sup> Gray, *supra* note 10, at 11-13.

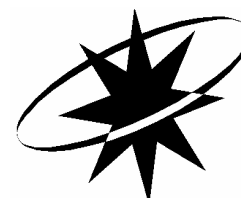
<sup>13</sup> Joint Statement by China, France and Russia interpreting UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002), 8 November 2002, available at [www.staff.city.ac.uk/willetts/IRAQ/INDEX.HTM](http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/willetts/IRAQ/INDEX.HTM) (visited 18 March 2003).

<sup>14</sup> United Kingdom explanation of vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002), 8 November 2002; and United States explanation of vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002), 8 November 2002, both available at [www.staff.city.ac.uk/willetts/IRAQ/INDEX.HTM](http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/willetts/IRAQ/INDEX.HTM) (visited 18 March 2003)

<sup>15</sup> See interview with Professor Gillian Triggs on *The Law Report*, 18 March 2003, <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/lawrpt/stories/s808226.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Gray, *supra* note 10, at 9.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example the views of leading British international lawyers: 'War would be illegal', *The Guardian*, 7 March 2003.



## Us and Them: Anti-Elitism at the Turn of the Millennium

Marian Sawyer

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**M**any of you will be familiar with the increased salience of anti-elitist discourse in Australia, articulated by Pauline Hanson but also by major party spokesmen and media commentators. It frequently turns up now in the opinion pages of the broadsheet newspapers, as well as in the tabloids and on talkback radio. It has been normalised as an account of society, but one that is politically loaded. This paper looks at the antecedents and implications of this anti-elitist discourse, of this particular way of understanding the world and mobilising opposition to elites (them) while speaking for ordinary people (us).

The binary opposition between people and the elite has long been available as an alternative to seeing society in terms of class divisions. It can displace and demobilise analyses that view society in terms of an exploitative relationship between capital and labour or between haves and have-nots. It can displace and demobilise analysis of gender and racial divides and render invisible the political significance of other forms of difference. It focuses attention on the 'betrayal' of the national interest by elites with a liberal and cosmopolitan agenda and suggests such elites have contempt for the interests and values of ordinary people. Such a discursive shift in itself represents a profound change in the political opportunity structure, placing new limits on what can be heard in terms of political debate and what can be done in terms of public policy.

We shall see that the genealogy of current anti-elitist discourse includes some surprising elements, from nineteenth century anarchism and populism to twentieth-century Trotskyism and public choice theory. They have added up to a heady mix, well illustrated by the section entitled 'The New Class Elites' of the 1997 book, *Pauline Hanson: The Truth*. It told how cognitive elites were selling out the national interest in the name of a new religion of internationalism, which meant 'anti-white racism, multiculturalism, feminism and Asianisation'.<sup>1</sup>

### Populism

Populism has had a persistent presence in Australian political history. Opposition to urban elites and cosmopolitanism has long been a rallying call in the bush whether for the labour movement or others. It appeals to an ethno-national identity, supposedly to be found in its purest form in rural areas. It may also be linked to the notion that all wealth comes from the land and those in the public sector of the economy are parasitic on primary producers.

The cities are a corrupting influence, because of their openness to foreign influences. In the United States this distinction is presented as that between small-town America and the big cities, rather than the city and the bush distinction found in Australia. Cosmopolitan elites are part of global liberal elites who pursue international human rights and other agendas contrary to national interests.<sup>2</sup>

The glibness and international connections of the city elites render them unmindful of true national interests. The spirit was nicely captured by Bryce Courtenay in a jingle composed to promote John Howard's 1988 political manifesto, *Future Directions*

(often remembered as the white-picket fence manifesto). The song, entitled 'Son, You're Australian', included lines such as:

Never mind the fancy dancers  
Plain-thinking men know their right from wrong  
Don't deal with silver tongues and chancers  
Keep your vision clear and hold it strong.  
I watched as things began to change around me  
The fancy dancers got to have their say  
They changed the vision, spurned the wisdom  
And made Australia change to suit their way.  
It's time we cleansed the muddy waters  
And do the things we know must be done  
So that we teach our sons and daughters  
What it means to be a true Australian.<sup>3</sup>

The subtext is always that silver-tongued elites are likely to betray the national interest. The classical theorists of elitism, like Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, were not anti-elitists in this sense. They believed that elite rule was inevitable and attempts to replace it with mass rule were misguided and dangerous.

#### **Marxism and new class theory**

But the genealogy of current anti-elitism contains other important elements, apart from traditional rural populism. The first of these is 19<sup>th</sup> century new class theory. New class theory had its origins as a critique of the concept of 'scientific socialism'. The anarchist theorist, Michael Bakunin, argued in the 1870s (for example, in *Statism and Anarchy*) that under a socialist state, a new ruling class would emerge, an aristocracy of scientists that would control entry to its own ranks just like any other scientific academy.

In the Bakuninist tradition there appeared, after the creation of the Soviet Union, a number of anarchist critiques of the new socialist intelligentsia. This intelligentsia, which included party officials and technocrats, lived off interest on its intellectual capital, which in turn was paid for out of the surplus produced by the proletariat.<sup>4</sup>

New class theory was further developed by dissident Trotskyists such as Bruno Rizzi and James Burnham at the beginning of World War II and then by Milovan Djilas in his influential critique of the Soviet model of socialism, published in 1957 and entitled *The New Class*. All of these varying theories of the new class had in common the idea of an exploitative relationship between an intellectual (sometimes technocratic) class and the workers. The new class had an interest in maximising redistribution at the expense of the direct producers, to support its own privileged position. They were able to do so because of their ownership of intellectual capital and their control of state power.

In the 1970s a number of conservative social theorists in the United States, including Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol, adapted this Trotskyist critique of Stalinist Russia for use in post-industrial western democracies. They argued in journals such as *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* that there was a new class of university-educated professionals employed in the public sector and in the communication industries who had come in from the streets to pursue the radical goals of the 1960s social movements by other means. It was paradoxical that just as class analysis was beginning to go out of fashion on the Left, it was taken up on the Right. Irving Kristol

suggested it was this 'new class', not the proletariat, that was the gravedigger of capitalism.<sup>5</sup>

Like the new class identified in state socialist societies this intellectual class had an interest in maximising redistribution at the expense of business and of ordinary workers. It used its dominance of the public sphere to pursue its own interests, using appeals to the public interest and equal opportunity to mask its indifference to ordinary Americans.<sup>6</sup>

Milton and Rose Friedman in their best-selling *Free to Choose*, took up Kristol's definition of the new class as made up of publicly funded professionals in the universities, federal bureaucracy, think tanks, public interest groups or communications industry. According to the Friedmans, preaching equality and promoting and administering the resulting legislation has proved an effective means of achieving high incomes for the new class. Needless to say it is at the expense of the ordinary taxpayer, who is not getting his money's worth for the 40 per cent of his income being spent on his behalf by government.<sup>7</sup>

So the 'new class' identified in state socialist societies and that identified in post-industrial western societies have something in common: a Marxist metaphor. In both cases the class is characterised by its intellectual capital. This is a form of capital that gives it a vested interest in maximising redistribution by the state, to support its own privileged situation. Here the commonality tends to end, as while the new class of state socialist societies was characterised by its control over the state-owned means of production, the new class of western democracies was characterised more by a particular set of values. The shift was required because in western societies the knowledge elite clearly did not control the means of production even if they were able to use their role in the production of knowledge to promote public expenditure and interference with business. Indeed one of the happy effects of new class discourse, as Carol Johnson has observed, is to render those who do own the means of production completely invisible.<sup>8</sup>

Particular values became the identifiers of the new class in the West - values never identified with the state socialist new class such as environmentalism, feminism, multiculturalism and minority rights more generally. Soon these values received the collective label 'political correctness'. The new class, in the influential essays of Christopher Lasch, was characterised not only by cosmopolitanism and political correctness but also by contempt for middle American values. This inclusion of the idea that the new class (or new class elite in Lasch's *Revolt of the Elites*) is contemptuous of ordinary people's values becomes very important, as we shall see, in mobilising political emotion around this new discursive divide.

By the early 1980s new class discourse had been imported from the USA to Australia and was appearing in conservative journals and in the publications of new and resurgent rightwing think tanks. Damien Cahill has found its first significant use in an article by Bob Browning in the *Bulletin* in 1981, claiming that the major anti-capitalist force was no longer blue collar workers but white collar professionals in the public sector.<sup>9</sup> In 1983 Robert Manne, in *Quadrant*, was talking of the 'new class' of university graduates, the products of the rapidly expanded higher education of the 1960s, who had taken the values of campus radicalism into their new well-paid positions. They had become dominant in key public sphere institutions such as teaching and journalism where values were defined.<sup>10</sup> They imposed 'political correctness', a set of values at odds with those whose taxes supported this new

privileged class. In his journalism Manne continued to support the idea of 'the great divide' that separated the world of ordinary people from the world of the elite.<sup>11</sup>

In importing American new class discourse, Manne also imported the idea of contempt as a characteristic of the new class. It was only when looking more closely at anti-elite discourse for the purpose of this project that I realised the origins of the repeated suggestions in political commentary in the 1990s that feminists were contemptuous of the values of ordinary women. I had found these suggestions very puzzling at the time, because my own experience of the women's movement suggested that feminists were, if anything, overly anxious to validate the choices made by women, whether these involved paid or unpaid work. From the 1970s Australian feminists, such as members of Women's Electoral Lobby, had been engaged in a long struggle for recognition of the contribution of the non-market work of women to the social economy. The attribution of contempt for ordinary women, it now seems to me, owes more to the way the new class was constructed by conservative American social commentators than it does to actual characteristics of Australian feminists. Nonetheless it became naturalised in anti-elitist discourse and became part of the explanation by Manne and others for Labor's electoral loss in 1996.<sup>12</sup>

On the other side of the binary, new class theory conjured up a constituency called ordinary people<sup>13</sup> - a homogenised abstraction that did away with plurality, difference and complexity, shifting identities and overlapping loyalties. What unified this constituency was their status as object of contempt of the elites, the very elites supported by their taxes. In other words, there is a mutually constitutive relationship between new class elites and the constituency of ordinary people.

One of those most influential in the introduction of new class discourse into Australia, apart from Robert Manne, was Katharine Betts, particularly in *The Great Divide* (1999). Betts argues that the new class is identifiable by its cosmopolitan and pro-immigration values, which serve as a badge of new class membership and a means of effecting social closure.<sup>14</sup> While suggesting that common values and discourse are more important in defining the class than common material interests, she also puts some emphasis on its social location. Because the state is a key employer for arts and social sciences graduates, and a vehicle for their social mobility, they will characteristically be found advocating increased public expenditure and market regulation.

The advocacy of increased welfare expenditure and regulation to prevent exploitation in the marketplace may make the new class appear sympathetic to the working class. However the new class is hostile to the materialism and 'parochialism' of the working class.<sup>15</sup> Internationalism and cosmopolitanism are status markers for the new class and crucial to understanding the underlying antipathy of new class and working class interests. The new class identified by Betts generally coincides with what political scientists since the pioneering work of Ronald Inglehart<sup>16</sup> have identified as 'post-materialist' voters, those who have tertiary education, a degree of material security and who are concerned with non-materialist issues such as the environment and human rights.

Betts, however, uses support for immigration and multiculturalism as the key new class status marker. One unresolved tension in her account is over those with degrees and professional qualifications who have liberal and cosmopolitan values but are identified with the private sector and the 'right'.<sup>17</sup> Although they are liberal and

cosmopolitan in terms of favouring integration into international markets, and hence are divided from those threatened by internationalism, they do not share the orientation towards the public sector and post-materialist values otherwise identified by Betts as new class characteristics.

This kind of dilemma over who is to be included is exemplified by the account of the new class in the collection *Pauline Hanson: The Truth*, produced to mark the launch of One Nation. This account is basically that of the American neo-conservatives, suggesting the new class is characterised by cosmopolitan and international values such as multiculturalism and feminism. However, One Nation was also influenced by traditional populist views regarding big business. Both Pauline Hanson and her followers were intent on including in the new class the economic rationalists responsible for opening up the Australian economy to greater competition.<sup>18</sup> This was contrary to the American characterisation of the new class that saw it as committed by definition to expanding the public sector rather than reducing it.

Because Hanson's version of the new class included economic rationalists it was not favoured by those otherwise happy to deploy the concept. For example, PP McGuinness noted that Hanson shared the hostility towards economic rationalism of the political elites, although it was the socially progressive (politically correct) policies of these elites that had contributed to the rise of Hansonism.<sup>19</sup> In general, proponents of new class discourse have been eager to suggest that it is the attitudes of the new class elite and their lack of sympathy with ordinary Australians that has fuelled protest politics. The complication is that it has been new class elites (for example, Democrat Senators) who have been most critical of competition policy for its impact on rural communities. So the new class is blamed both for being out of touch with ordinary Australians and for sharing Hanson's misguided nostalgia for economic protection. The varying components of new class elites are identified in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Who belongs to the new class or new class elite?**

Federal bureaucrats, academic researchers, journalists preaching equality	Irving Kristol, Milton & Rose Freedman, <i>Free to Choose</i>
University graduates with anti-capitalist and anti-American values in key public sphere institutions such as teaching and journalism	Robert Manne, 1983
Symbolic analysts with cosmopolitan values and contempt for middle American values	Christopher Lasch, <i>The Revolt of the Elites</i> 1995
Professionally educated with internationalist and cosmopolitan values	Katharine Betts, <i>The Great Divide</i> , 1999
Social professionals such as teachers, lawyers, journalists, social workers, clergy and people working in the arts	Katharine Betts, 2002 <sup>20</sup>
University educated cognitive elites with a religion of internationalism; including both liberal left radicals and elite economic rationalists	<i>Pauline Hanson: The Truth</i> 1997
Leadership elites in politics, bureaucracy, academia, big business, the churches and media pursuing an internationalist agenda	Graeme Campbell and Mark Uhlmann, <i>Australia Betrayed</i> 1995 <sup>21</sup>
Members of 'legal industry' defending civil liberties	Letter, <i>Australian</i> 2/3.11.02



For most who used it, the term new class was restricted to cultural elites who promoted equality agendas and public intervention in the market distribution of social and economic goods; it strictly excluded business elites and those pursuing economic deregulation. As we shall see, such demarcation coincided with the way that the related notion of 'special interests' was constructed.<sup>22</sup>

### **Public choice theory and 'special interests'**

The public choice-inspired concept of special interests was at first glance an element far removed from the Marxist origins of new class theory. It was a term applied to all advocacy groups, conflating citizen groups, public interest and equality seeking groups with traditional business and professional groups seeking benefits for their members. Public choice theory stemmed from rational actor premises, whereby both individual and collective action was motivated by the desire to maximise returns. However the term 'special interests' is particularly applied to equality-seeking or public interest groups rather than business or professional groups. For example, non-government women's organisations lobbying for reproductive freedom to be included in the Beijing Platform of Action (against the wishes of the Vatican and some Muslim governments) were described as 'special interest activists'.<sup>23</sup>

As with the Friedmans, equality and human rights have no credibility as values that might guide public policy. Hence it is important to expose the rent-seeking motivation, which underlies public interest groups and their desire to use the state to improve the returns they would achieve in the marketplace. Thus the Council for Single Mothers and their Children is seeking better rents for their members than they could obtain through the market or through marriage,<sup>24</sup> the Australian Council of Social Service is seeking to perpetuate poverty so as to maintain work for welfare workers and the Australian Federation of Pensioners and Superannuants is seeking to perpetuate old age so as to maintain their own advocacy status (oops!). Community-based peak bodies such as these have received public funding in Australia in order to enable disadvantaged sections of the community to be represented in the policy process. Now reducing access and weakening such voices is constructed as a victory over 'special interests' or new class elites. The same is true of the weakening of the ability of trade unions to represent employee interests.

The diverting of public resources from public institutions to private providers can be portrayed as a victory for 'ordinary Australians' over the interests of rent-seeking elites. The 'expert' knowledges that inhere in public institutions are delegitimised because of their association with elites rather than with the market choices made by ordinary Australians.<sup>25</sup>

In 1995 the future Prime Minister, John Howard, in a headland speech on the role of government promised not to be distracted by special interests, but to be guided by the sentiments of mainstream Australians.<sup>26</sup> In her essay 'Revenge of the Mainstream' Carol Johnson has analysed how this form of anti-elitism has shaped current liberal government policy discourse and enabled it to position itself as the champion of the mainstream against the influence of special interests.<sup>27</sup>

Populism, new class theories and the concepts of special interests provide the ingredients of today's anti-elitist discourse (Table 2)

**Table 2**  
**Components of anti-elitist discourse**

Origin	Key features of elite	Key features of non-elite
Populism	cosmopolitanism, betrayal of national interest	rural, traditional values, ethno-nationalism
New class theory (1)	intellectual capital, privilege deriving from control of state power	workers and peasants
New class theory (2)	intellectual capital, vested interest in the public sector to maintain privilege, contempt for non-elite values;	middle America/ Australia/ Canada, traditional values, free enterprise
Public choice theory	'special interests' using the state to maximise returns under the guise of equality seeking	mainstream, taxpayers, consumers, business

As Gerard Henderson has pointed out we have arrived at this strange pass where millionaire bankers do not have to divest property, change professions or even resign from gentlemen's clubs to move from the elite and be rehabilitated as 'one of us' - they simply have to support the views of 'ordinary Australians' on issues such as asylum seekers.<sup>28</sup>

Interpreting the world in terms of this discursive divide has proved most seductive. It is a real and present danger to rational policy debate, for example on law and order issues or asylum seekers, as such debate can always be presented as displaying contempt for the values of mainstream Australians. There has been surprisingly little outcry over the creation of this looking glass world in which equality seeking or defence of human rights can be portrayed as elite interests, contrary to the interests and aspirations of the mainstream and probably betraying the national interest as well.



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- 1 *Pauline Hanson: The Truth* (1997). PO Box 428, Ipswich, Queensland: 92.
- 2 For example, a recent headline from *The Australian's* Opinion Page: 'Seduced by liberal agenda of global elites' (24 July 2002).
- 3 Bryce Courtenay, 'Son You're Australian', Liberal Party of Australia, 1988.
- 4 See Marian Sawer (ed) (1978). *Socialism and the New Class*, Australasian Political Studies Association Monograph 19, Flinders University, particularly Chapter 1 by Marian Sawer 'Theories of the new class' and Chapter 7 by Ivan Szelenyi 'The position of the intelligentsia in the class structure of State socialist societies'.
- 5 Kristol, quoted in Damien Cahill (2000/1) 'Why the Right uses "class" against the Left', *Arena Journal*, 16:159.
- 6 Damien Cahill, 'The Australian Right's new class discourse', in Raymond Markey (ed) (2001) *Labour and Community: Historical Essays* University of Wollongong Press: 346–7.
- 7 Milton and Rose Friedman (1980). *Free to Choose*. London: Secker & Warburg: 142; 301.
- 8 Carol Johnson, 'Labor and the Left', in Paul Nursey-Bray and Carol Lee Bacchi (eds) (2001). *Left Directions: Is there a Third Way?* University of Western Australia Press: 143.
- 9 Bob Browning (1981). 'Opposition business fails to see', *Bulletin*, 24 November, quoted in Damien Cahill, 'The Australian Right's new class discourse', *op cit*: 347. Tim Dymond has tracked a much earlier example, an article by Irving Kristol reprinted in *Quadrant* in 1968 about the 'new class of intellectuals opposing the Vietnam War' (personal communication).
- 10 Robert Manne, at the launch of *The New Conservatism in Australia*, quoted in Damien Cahill, *op cit*.
- 11 Robert Manne's construction of 'ordinary people' is analysed by Cathy Greenfield and Peter Williams (2001) "'Howardism" and the media rhetoric of "Battlers" vs "Elites"', *Southern Review* 34, 1: 32–44.
- 12 Robert Manne (1998) 'How feminism can fail women', *Age*, 17 August: 18, also published as 'Why Labor must break the feminist stranglehold', *Sydney Morning Herald* 17 August 1998: 15.
- 13 Tim Rowse, quoted in Cathy Greenfield and Peter Williams, *op cit*: 35.
- 14 Katharine Betts (1999). *The Great Divide*, Sydney, Duffy & Snellgrove.
- 15 *Ibid*: 81ff.
- 16 Ronald Inglehart (1977). *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* Princeton University Press.
- 17 Betts (1999) *op cit*: 93, Fig. 3.1.
- 18 *Pauline Hanson: The Truth* (1997) *op cit*: 92.
- 19 PP McGuinness (1998) 'The political elites' contribution to Hansonism', in Tony Abbott *et al*, *Two Nations: The Causes and Effects of the Rise of the One Nation Party in Australia*, Melbourne, Bookman: 131–40.
- 20 Katharine Betts (2002) 'Blue-collar workers chafe at new world order', *Australian*, 30 September.
- 21 Graeme Campbell and Mark Uhlmann (1995) *Australia Betrayed*, Perth, Foundation Press.
- 22 See Darin David Barney and David Laycock (1999) 'Right-populists and plebiscitary politics in Canada', *Party Politics*, 5, 3: 317–339.
- 23 Janet Albrechtsen (2002) 'Seduced by liberal agenda of global elites', *Australian* 24 July.
- 24 P Swan and M Bernstam (1987) 'Brides of the State', *IPA Review*, 41,1: 22–5.
- 25 On the delegitimising of expert knowledges see Greenfield and Williams, *op cit*: 40.
- 26 John Howard (1995) 'The Role of Government: A Modern Liberal Approach', The Menzies Research Centre National Lecture Series, 6 June.
- 27 Carol Johnson (2000). *Governing Change: Keating to Howard*, University of Queensland Press.
- 28 Gerard Henderson (2001) 'Welcome to the new elite: anyone can join', *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 November.

## **Psychology: some current research**

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### **Adaptability and Applied Decision-Making**

***Beryl Hesketh***

**M**y research has been driven by a commitment to integrate pure and applied psychology through a process of applying fundamental psychological principles to a range of practical problems. Most recently I have become interested in adaptability, and we have a current project that is examining ways of training fire fighters to cope with the unexpected. My early work was dominated by an interest in systematically studying the multitude of factors that influence career choice and development and I found myself drawn to the theoretical and research orientation of a strong group of vocational psychologists in the USA. The Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment<sup>1</sup> has provided a useful framework for research and writing on person-environment fit, and selection and training for adaptive performance. Much of my research has had a methodological and measurement focus.

#### **Training for adaptive performance**

Adaptability has been a major theme in my research. Andrew Neal<sup>2</sup> and I are currently studying the best ways of using principles, 'rules of thumb' and examples in fire-fighting to develop adaptive decision-making<sup>3</sup>. In the context of fire fighting, complex decisions need to be made quickly under highly stressful and unpredictable situations. Innovative approaches to training are important because many new recruits have only limited opportunities to gain experience in real fire situations, and there is a large volunteer component in rural bush fire services. Experts are usually able to perform well in complex contexts because of an extensive body of prior experiences upon which they can draw. Traditional approaches to training relied on years of experience for this accumulated wisdom. Of course, our indigenous people have perfected methods of passing on information about fire behaviour, its prediction and management across the generations. Our research is looking at how we can use systematic and empirically-based training approaches to make up for limited real fire learning opportunities available to recruits these days. We hope to provide an alternative way of developing expertise in the necessary skills.

We are also using the research to test fundamental theoretical ideas about the ways in which rules and examples influence decisions. Our earlier studies have shown how to use examples in combination with principles of fire behaviour and rules of thumb in order to avoid inappropriate generalisations.

Fire fighters in our research often mistakenly assumed that prior examples of the fire ground were relevant to a new fire ground situation because of superficial visual similarity despite the nature of the underlying problem requiring a different response. Currently we are examining whether errors can be used in training to overcome inappropriate generalisations of this sort, and to highlight why adaptability is needed. The research builds on the earlier successful studies<sup>4</sup> where we were able to show that errors produced better adaptability in a driving simulator. In relation to the Fire project, we are using carefully crafted Powerpoint presentations with pictures, diagrams, text and voice over depicting 'war stories' or case examples of previous fire-ground situations. One set of training stimuli involves presenting these case

stories with the fire officer in charge recounting how an error had been made in relation to the decisions taken in fighting the fire. Another set provide the same case stories, but this time the fire officer in charge recounts error free decision-making. The preliminary findings have shown that performances on adaptive transfer tests are better for those exposed to error-based training.

The approach has also highlighted the importance of capturing experiences and packaging them for future training. We hope that in future thought will be given to purchasing and using virtual reality simulators, but currently the low cost Powerpoint approach provides an excellent basis for capturing 'war stories' and documenting these.

### **Selecting for adaptive expertise**

We have also taken a selection perspective in relation to adaptability. We<sup>5</sup> have examined ways in which research informed selection decisions could be made that ensure staff employed are adaptable. This has involved clarifying what we mean by adaptive behaviour, with Barbara Griffin's data suggesting that it can be divided into proactive, reactive and tolerant components. We have developed measures that cover these domains of performance, as well as task performance (getting the tasks done) and contextual performance (being a good citizen at work).

Elizabeth Allworth was able to show that different factors predict adaptive performance from those that predict task performance and contextual performance. As in many situations, we found that past behaviour was a very good predictor of future performance, and much of the work involved developing reliable measures that provided information about past examples of coping with change, experiencing change, and being required to work in areas with ongoing change.

### **Career-related decision making**

During the early 1990s we developed the fuzzy graphic rating scale as a way of measuring zones of preference on standard semantic differential scales. Instead of giving a single rating on the typical 7- or 9- point rating scale, participants are able to provide asymmetrical latitudes of preference or endorsement around a most preferred point. This procedure, assessing zones of preference, made it possible to test Gottfredson's theory.<sup>6</sup> This theory suggested that preferences were sex-typed from the age of 5 or 6, with prestige and interests only influencing preferences at a later age when young people are able to think more abstractly. It also suggested that the early influence of sex-typing on preferences meant a resistance to change on these dimensions. The fuzzy graphic rating scale provided an opportunity to test this model, and to outline an alternative and less pessimistic account of compromise based on the compound nature of interests that incorporate aspects of sex-typing and prestige<sup>7</sup>. More recently we have used the approach to develop distributional measures of performance where peak, typical and worst performance can be measured on one scale.

This has been useful in giving feedback to employees since it is possible to not only discuss with them typical behaviour, but also to point out the level of performance they can attain at the same time as discussing weak points. Traditional performance measures assume that a single number can capture the variability of performance over a long period, which is simply not true.

My research in the careers area included testing the Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment and drawing attention to a methodological issue in measuring fit.<sup>8</sup>

Assuming that one has separate measures of the person and of the environment on a common set of attributes, traditionally the sum of the differences between the person and the environment on each attribute (or difference squared, or absolute difference scores) was used as an index of fit, with this index being correlated with satisfaction, performance, well-being, stress or other outcome measures. An alternative approach involves asking individuals directly about the degree of fit between themselves and the environment on a set of attributes, and then relating this fit judgement to outcome measures. Both of these approaches obscure any direct relationship between the individual components (in the area of my interest, the person or the environment) and the outcome measures. Specifically, my own research, and that of others now using a response surface approach, has shown that there are many different types of 'fit' relationships, and that sometimes, it is not 'fit' that matters, but simply the nature of the environment, or personality factors.

For example, high quality supervision in a work environment always produces good outcomes, irrespective of the individual's need for this. Similarly, some individuals have personalities where they tend to be satisfied irrespective of the environment. Of course, 'fit' does remain important, such as when an individual is only satisfied with a job that requires a lot of travel if they like travel. However, on many dimensions the amount of variance that 'fit' explains after controlling for the direct effects is somewhat less than might have been thought previously. Current approaches to P-E Fit research require very carefully theorising and the development of mini theories about the nature of the fit relationships for different attributes, such as variety, challenge, and supervision, in a three dimensional space.

#### **Time discounting and decision making**

About seven years ago I started a program of research on time-discounting in career decision-making. The term 'time (or delay) discounting' is used to refer to the way in which the perceived value of positive or negative outcomes reduces as a function of perceived delay. Although it is not surprising that delay reduces the perceived value of a reward or money, the pattern of the discounting is surprising. The role of time in choice has been studied with children in the area of delayed gratification research, on the foraging behaviour of animals, and, more recently, as part of adult decision-making research.

As it turns out, human decisions, and those of other species, such as in foraging behaviour choices, tend not to follow the rational assumption underlying many economic models. When asked to choose between items of different value and different delay, preferences do not remain constant as the delay of both items increases. If asked to choose between a smaller sooner reward (say \$10 tomorrow) and a larger later reward (say \$20 next week), research suggests that one would take the \$10 tomorrow. However if the choice were between \$10 in 10 week's time or \$20 in 11 week's time, then it would appear that self control is maintained, and people 'hold out' for the \$20. This involves a preference reversal, which traditional economic models do not support. Specifically, it appears that the way humans discount value is better described by hyperbolic than exponential functions, and that preferences do reverse. Humans tend to choose an immediate smaller reward over a more delayed later reward unless both the rewards have an additional delay included, in which case we are more likely to 'feign' self-control, choosing the larger reward with the longer delay.

The tendency to favour an immediate reward over a delayed reward underlies many of the problems we face, such as saving for retirement, failure to conserve our environment, failure to adequately undertake preventative maintenance, and a possible tendency to take an immediately available job rather than waiting for something more appropriate. Time discounting research can also be related to my research on career choice and training. Many career related decisions involve choosing between options with outcomes following a variety of delays. Examples include individuals who invest in extensive study or training when the benefits of a preferred job or type of work will only accrue much later; decisions to delay a career move with immediate value in order to achieve stability in a longer term relationship; and choice between jobs to be taken up at different times.

My research demonstrated that career decision-makers do reverse preferences, and that their discount functions were better described by hyperbolic rather than exponential forms. This research also contributed an understanding of the factors that influenced the extent of discounting such as filled intervals, anxiety, age and experience. For example, a filled interval gave rise to the perception of less time delay, and hence less discounting. Currently I am applying these ideas to activity and financial planning in retirement.<sup>9</sup>

A more general way of understanding factors that influence time discounting is to gain an understanding of the factors that influence the perception of time. We argued that a filled interval may provide a basis for seeing choices as linked, and hence reduce the extent to which value is discounted with delay. Anxiety is also important as participants who were more anxious about not having a job tended to want to take an option with a lower probability of enjoyment, even with a short delay. Anxious people like to reduce uncertainty. We also found general support for the predicted higher capacity to defer gratification among older respondents except when time delays were very long (when longevity issues no doubt played a part). We found the predicted asymmetry in positive and negative discounting in career-related scenarios involving choices about university union fees and scholarships. Participants' discount percentages ranged from 21.2 per cent for the scholarship and 14.4 per cent for the fee at six months delay, to 58.6 per cent for the scholarship and 23.0 per cent for the fee at 48 months delay. The difference between the scholarship and fee discounting was much greater after a long delay.

In another series of studies I compared experts and novices. In relation to their own jobs, novices and experts differ little. However, when comparing novices and experts in terms of their perception of the likely decisions made by an average graduate, the experts viewed the graduates' decisions as likely to be less wise (preferring an immediate but less appropriate job). Experts' 'wisdom' in the recommendations they gave for an average graduate's choices did not generalise to personal decisions. This finding is one worthy of further study in a broader range of fields. People may be able to help others be wise, but are not likely to apply that wisdom to their own circumstances.

Arising out of the research on time discounting where human discounting occurs with perceived, not real time, I have become interested in the factors that influence the perception of time. Building on the preliminary work<sup>10</sup> I am examining time and speed perception on the driving simulator under varying external (environmental) and internal (drug) states.

As a result of the exposure I have received to developments in science and information technology in my role as Dean of Science, I have started speculating about the ways in which these developments might influence areas such as selection and training. In relation to the former, I believe that we need to be alert to the possibilities of genetic screening, with all the political and ethical implications associated with this. As the fields of supercomputing, visualisation and the development of virtual worlds become more mature, opportunities will become available to use these technologies much more routinely for research on training and complex human decision making. My hope is that social scientists will be active in commenting on, and where appropriate, participating in such developments when they do occur.



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- <sup>1</sup> Dawis, RV & Lofquist, LJ (1984). *A Psychological Theory of Work Adjustment*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
  - <sup>2</sup> University of Queensland.
  - <sup>3</sup> With Wendy Joung, Susan Crawford and colleagues from the New South Wales Fire Brigades.
  - <sup>4</sup> Undertaken with Karolina Ivancic.
  - <sup>5</sup> With Elizabeth Allworth, an ex PhD student, and Barbara Griffen, currently completing her PhD.
  - <sup>6</sup> With Robert Pryor. See Gottfredson, LS (1981). 'Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations'. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 28, 6: 545-579.
  - <sup>7</sup> With Susan Elmslie.
  - <sup>8</sup> My attention was drawn to the problem by the writings of Edwards (1991) on a variety of constructs in psychology that made use of composite indices and difference scores. See Edwards, JR (1991). 'Person-job fit: A conceptual integration, literature review and methodological critique', in C Cooper & I Robertson. *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
  - <sup>9</sup> With John Bidewell.
  - <sup>10</sup> With Stuart Godley, Graham Starmer and Wendy Joung.

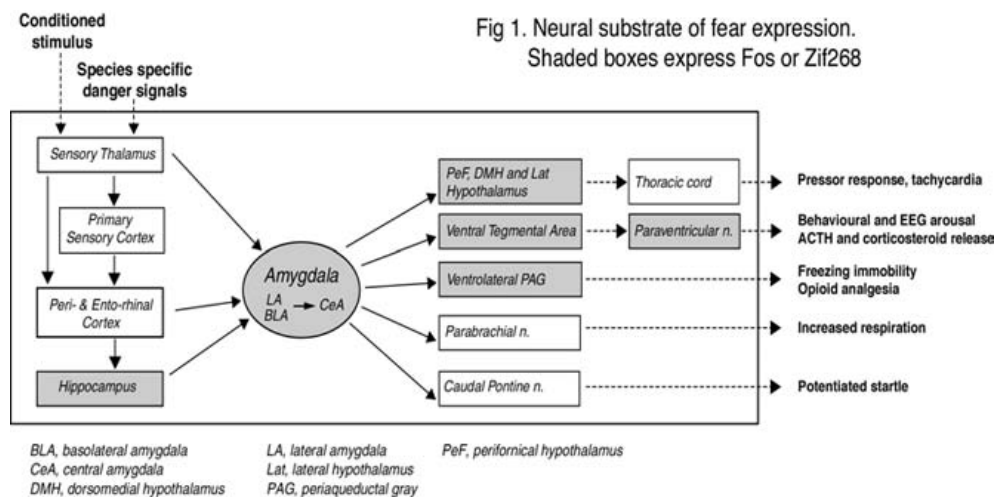


## Towards an Understanding of Fear

*Fred Westbrook*

The past twenty years or so have witnessed a major research effort aimed at understanding fear and treating its disorders. Part of this effort has involved the development of various animal models in order to subject the emotion of fear to experimental analysis and identify its neural substrates. These models differ in several respects but share two assumptions. The first is that fear is the product of activity in a defensive motivational system that has been conserved in mammals under the selection pressures imposed by environmental sources of danger. The second assumption is that disorders of fear reflect the inappropriate activation of this normally adaptive motivational system. The most extensively used model for the experimental analysis of fear is Pavlovian conditioning. This involves exposing laboratory subjects (typically rats or mice) to a neutral stimulus (eg, a noise) or place (eg, a distinctive chamber) that signals impending aversive stimulation (eg, a startle stimulus). The subjects readily learn about this relation between the noise or chamber [the conditioned stimulus (CS)] and the aversive stimulus (the unconditioned stimulus (US)). They exhibit this learning when re-exposed to the CS in fear-like reactions that include arousal and vigilance, analgesia, immobility, increased heart rate and blood pressure.

Significant progress has been made in identifying the neural mechanisms of Pavlovian conditioned fear (Fig 1).



These mechanisms are commonly viewed as a network that extends from the limbic forebrain to the spinal cord and includes as a critical component the amygdala. This complex functions not only to assign emotional significance to environmental information but also to coordinate somatomotor and autonomic reactions to that information. Evidence suggests that the central nucleus of the amygdala is a final

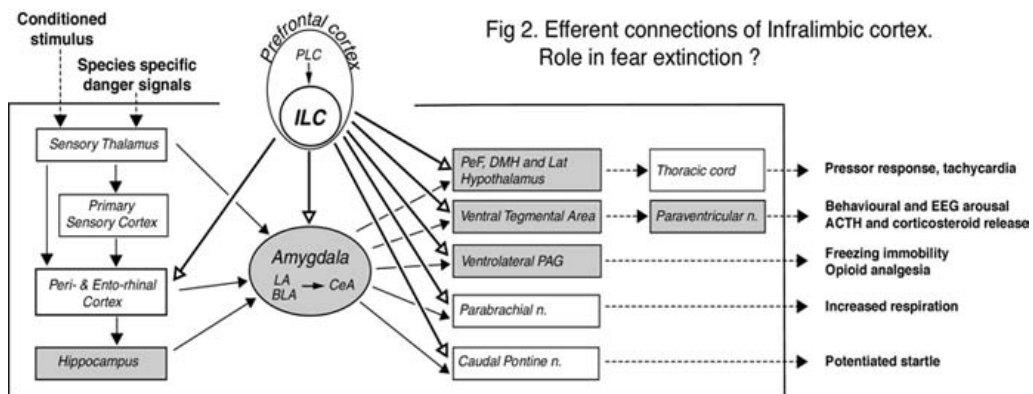
common pathway for the regulation of the various components of the fear response via its efferent projections to diencephalic and brain stem areas. Information reaches neurons in the central nucleus via projections from the lateral and basolateral nuclei of the amygdala. These nuclei receive and process information about the CS and US and constitute a site of plasticity for this learned association. This plasticity may involve NMDA-receptor mediated long-term potentiation with the attendant implication that intracellular protein kinases, de novo protein synthesis, and induction of early genes (IEGs) constitute elements of the molecular cascade necessary for consolidation of fear memories.

Many disorders [Acute Stress Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), social and specific phobias, as well as fears induced by various medical procedures] originate in painful, aversive, or traumatic experiences that condition fear reactions to associated people, objects, stimuli, and places. The critical problem for clinicians is to understand how fears can be reduced or eliminated. The simplest experimental technique to reduce fear reactions is to repeatedly expose the subject to a dangerous CS in the absence of the associated aversive US. The consequence of such exposures is a progressive decline in the intensity or frequency of fear reactions until, eventually, the CS fails to elicit any fear reactions. This loss, or extinction, of fear reactions was attributed to the erasure of the original CS-US association by CS alone presentations. Historically, the most influential account of the rules for Pavlovian conditioning is the error-correction model<sup>1</sup> which makes explicit that organisms adjust associations to bring them into line with the current relations that exist among events in their world. Effectively, the model captures the intuition that learning is initiated by surprise. The model identifies learning with a single construct, associative strength ( $V$ ), and holds that changes ( $\Delta$ ) in  $V = \alpha\beta(\lambda - \Sigma V)$ , where  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are rate parameters associated with the target CS and US, respectively,  $\Sigma V$  is the summed  $V$ s of all CSs present on a given trial, and  $\lambda$  (which is positive on occasions when the US occurs and is zero on occasions when the US does not occur) is the asymptotic associative strength supported by the US. Thus, acquisition of a CS-US association is due to the positive discrepancy between  $\lambda$  and  $\Sigma V$ , and extinction of that association occurs because of the negative discrepancy between the current value of  $\lambda$  (zero) and  $\Sigma V$ .

Error-correction models that invoke a single construct, such as associative strength<sup>2</sup> or connection weight<sup>3</sup> to explain both acquisition and extinction assume that the latter erases the former, ie, that extinction involves unlearning the original learned association. However, several lines of evidence demonstrate that much, if not all, of the original CS-US association survives extinction. First, extinction is transient. If a long interval of time is interpolated between the end of successful extinction training and test presentations of the CS, fear reactions spontaneously recover. Second, extinction is context specific. If fear of a CS is established and then extinguished in one place, fear is renewed if the subjects are tested in a second place. Likewise, if fear is established in drug-free subjects and then extinguished under the influence of a drug (eg, a benzodiazepine), fear is renewed if the subjects are tested in the absence of the drug. Finally, fear to an extinguished CS is reinstated by re-exposure to the US in the absence of any further training of the CS-US association. Thus, extinction does not erase fear memories; rather it produces new learning that suppresses these memories. An important problem, therefore, is to understand the neural mechanisms for this new learning and its suppression of fear memories. Understanding these mechanisms will contribute towards treatment of disorders that

are characterised by an inability to suppress memories, such as PTSD where the patient suffers from intrusive, persistent, and unwanted trauma memories.

The aim of one line of current work<sup>4</sup> is to identify the neuroanatomical substrate for the extinction of Pavlovian conditioned fear reactions. Because extinction does not represent the erasure of the original fear memory, some structure(s) must be recruited by CS alone presentations that suppress activity in the fear pathways. The hypothesis tested is that the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) constitutes just that structure (Fig 2). Specifically, we propose that the prelimbic cortex (PLC) encodes the new information in extinction, namely, the absence of the US across CS alone presentations. This information is then transmitted to the infralimbic cortex (ILC) and implemented in the inhibition of fear reactions via the extensive efferent projections from the ILC to central autonomic and other nuclei controlling components of the fear response.



This hypothesis is based upon the well-documented involvement of the MPFC in the detection of novelty, attention, and inhibition of inappropriate emotional and behavioural responses to changed situations. There is also growing evidence for its involvement in extinction of conditioned fear. For instance, lesions of the MPFC have been reported to impair the extinction of conditioned fear while sparing its acquisition. In addition, recent electrophysiological studies have revealed a very high correlation between firing of cells in the ILC and extinction performance, such that rats exhibiting high rates of electrical activity in these cells also exhibit pronounced extinction of conditioned fear to an auditory CS. Furthermore, the ILC (and to a larger extent, the MPFC) has well-documented sympatho-inhibitory properties, and is known to exert an antagonistic effect on the cardiovascular components of the fear response. We plan to use a combination of behavioural, physiological, immunohistochemical, tract tracing and lesion approaches to study this proposal. We hope that the planned experiments will reveal the structure(s) in the brain that suppresses activity in the fear pathways as well as the site(s) in the pathways at which this suppression occurs.

A second line of current work studies how rats learn about places or contexts. As noted previously, rats readily learn to fear a context (a distinctive chamber) that signals impending aversive stimulation [a startle stimulus (US)]. The contents of this learning are commonly viewed in terms of the formation of excitatory associations between a representation of the context and an amygdala-based defensive

motivational system aroused by the aversive unconditioned stimulus. The consequence of these associations is that re-exposure to the context provokes the various reactions appropriate to arousal of the fear system. An implication of this view is that the levels of these conditional fear reactions will be influenced by the nature of the context representation that entered into excitatory associations with the fear system aroused by the aversive US. More specifically, fear reactions will be increased among rats shocked in a context whose various cues (its appearance, smell, texture, shape and so on) have been combined into a unitary representation in comparison to the performances of rats that have not developed such a representation.

There is considerable evidence for this proposal concerning the relation between context learning and context fear conditioning. For instance, the level of fear elicited by re-exposure to a context where an aversive US occurred is positively related to the time spent in the context before the occurrence of the US, and this function is shifted upward among rats pre-exposed to that context. In other words, rats that have already learned about the context as a result of pre-exposure develop more fear than rats that are trained to fear a novel context. In addition, rats that have learned about a context are better able to discriminate between that and a different context. These findings have been taken to mean that learning to fear a context involves two distinct sets of processes. The first records the spatial-temporal conjunctions among the several cues comprising the context and combines these into a unitary representation.<sup>5</sup> The second set of processes forms excitatory associations between the output of this configural system and the amygdala-based defensive motivational system. The formation of this unitary representation and its association with the fear system is necessary but not sufficient for that context to subsequently control fear reactions. An additional requirement is the consolidation of this association in long-term memory. First, Rudy<sup>6</sup> has shown that memories for a context are disrupted by various manipulations performed immediately after the frightening experience. Second, Fanselow<sup>7</sup> has shown that hippocampal lesions performed days after the original frightening experience also disrupt memories for a context.

The amnesic effects reported by these investigators are due to a disruption of the processes involved in consolidation of the configural representation of the context rather than of those that associate this representation with the fear motivation system. More specifically, these effects appear to be specific to a disruption of the processes involved in consolidation of the configural representation of a novel context. Rudy and colleagues reported that the amnesic effect of various manipulations was removed among rats that had already learned about the context as a result of pre-exposure. Likewise, Fanselow and colleagues reported that the retrograde amnesia for a frightening context among rats subjected to hippocampal lesions was abolished if rats had already learned about the context as a result of pre-exposure. There is evidence that the actions of endogenous opioid peptides play a causal role in many retrograde amnesic syndromes. For example, the retrograde amnesic effects of social isolation are prevented by administrations of a  $\mu$ -opioid receptor (MOR) antagonist and mimicked by a single injection of morphine. The amnesic effects produced by hippocampal stimulation, amygdala stimulation, and protein synthesis inhibitors are also prevented by MOR antagonism. Moreover, we have shown that the opioid peptides are important mediators of the effects of immune activation<sup>8</sup> and thus

may mediate the ability of that activation (eg, injection of the human-immunodeficiency virus-1 protein coat or LPS) to impair contextual learning.

More recently, we<sup>9</sup> have reported that a history of morphine injections spares fear conditioning to a noise CS but produces a temporal gradient of retrograde amnesia for contextual conditioned fear. This retrograde deficit was not alleviated by interpolation of a retention interval between injections of morphine and test and was accompanied by a failure of contextual discrimination. Both contextual conditioning and contextual discrimination could be reinstated by brief pre-exposures to the conditioning context prior to conditioning. These results are consistent with the notion that the context where conditioning occurs is subject to prolonged processing in memory after conditioning. The cellular processes involved in this amnesic effect of chronic morphine remain to be determined. The MOR is the primary receptor target for morphine. Binding of morphine to the MOR initiates multiple signal transduction events but one important pathway relates to cyclic AMP (cAMP) signalling. Activation of the MOR inhibits adenylyl cyclase and decreases intracellular cAMP. If the cAMP response-element binding protein (CREB) is important in long-term memory formation, chronic exposures to morphine may have produced retrograde amnesia because they repeatedly inhibited hippocampal cAMP activity. Alternatively, chronic exposures to morphine may have increased activation of NMDA receptors that, in turn, may have impaired glutamate homeostasis to produce apoptosis. Finally, morphine exposures also impair hippocampal long-term potentiation and neurogenesis, putative mechanisms for synaptic plasticity and neuronal growth.

Although these mechanisms are speculative, we believe that hippocampal MOR activation may be a useful preparation for linking anatomical, cellular, and molecular mechanisms for the consolidation of information in long-term memory.

*Professor Fred Westbrook is in the School of Psychology at the University of New South Wales.*

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed by Rescorla, RA & Wagner, AR (1972). 'A theory of Pavlovian conditioning: Variations in the effectiveness of reinforcement and nonreinforcement', in AH Black & WF Prokasy (eds). *Classical Conditioning II: Current Theory and Research*. NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Rescorla & Wagner, *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Rumelhart, DE, Hinton, GE & Williams, RJ (1986). 'Learning representations by back-propagating errors', *Nature*, 323, 6088: 533-536.

<sup>4</sup> With Pascal Carrive, and Rick Richardson at the University of New South Wales.

<sup>5</sup> Fanselow, MS (1990) 'Factors governing one-trial contextual conditioning'. *Animal Learning & Behavior*, 18, 3: 264-270; O'Reilly, RC & Rudy, JW (2001). 'Conjunctive representations in learning and memory: Principles of cortical and hippocampal function', *Psychological Review*, 108, 2: 311-345; and McLaren, IPL, Kaye, H & Mackintosh, NJ (1989). 'An associative theory of the representation of stimuli: Applications to perceptual learning and latent inhibition', in RGM Morris (ed). *Parallel Distributed Processing: Implications for Psychology and Neurobiology*. New York: Clarendon.

- <sup>6</sup> For example, Rudy, JW (1996). 'Postconditioning isolation disrupts contextual conditioning: An experimental analysis', *Behavioral Neuroscience*, 110, 2: 238-246.
- <sup>7</sup> Anagnostaras, SG, Maren, S & Fanselow, MS (1999) 'Temporarily graded retrograde amnesia of contextual fear after hippocampal damage in rats: Within-subjects examination'. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 19, 3: 1106-1114.
- <sup>8</sup> McNally, GP, Johnson, I & Westbrook, RF (2000). 'Opioid receptors mediate sickness-induced hyperalgesia in the rat', *Behavioral Neuroscience*, 114: 1183-1190.
- <sup>9</sup> McNally, GP, & Westbrook, RF (in press). 'Temporally-graded, context-specific retrograde amnesia and its alleviation by context pre-exposure: effects of post-conditioning exposures to morphine in the rat', *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*.

## RECENT ACADEMY PUBLICATIONS

### *Occasional Paper Series*

**Thinking Peace, Making Peace**  
**Annual Symposium 2000**

*Occasional Paper 1/2001*

**Australia Fair**

**Cunningham Lecture 2001** Hugh Stretton

*Occasional Paper 2/2001*

**A Hundred Years of Women's Politics**

Ed M Simms

*Occasional Paper 1/2002*

### *Arising from Academy Workshops*

**Speaking for the People: Representation in Australian Politics** Edited by Marian Sawer and Gianni Zappalà, Melbourne University Press, 2002.

**Working Futures: The Changing Nature of Work and Employment Relations in Australia** Edited by Ron Callus and Russell Lansbury, The Federation Press, 2002.

'Mutual Obligations Special Issue', guest edited by Deborah Brennan and Bettina Cass, *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 37, 3, 2002.

**2001: The Centenary Election** Edited by John Warhurst and Marian Simms, University of Queensland Press Australian Studies Series, 2002.

**Investing in our Children: Developing a Research Agenda** Edited by Margot Prior, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, 2002.

## Academy News

### Research Program

**New publications:** *Investing in Social Capital: Postgraduate Training in the Social Sciences in Australia* edited by Simon Marginson, has now been published in association with the University of Queensland Press and the Australia Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology. This is a critical discussion of postgraduate education in the social sciences and includes chapters on Anthropology, Economics, Psychology, Public Health, Management and Business, Education, Indigenous Studies and Australian Studies/Australian History.

*Community Sustainability in Rural Australia: A Question of Capital?* edited by Chris Cocklin and Margaret Alston has been jointly published by ASSA and the Centre for Rural Social Research at Charles Sturt University. This work is the result of research for six rural case studies arising from an investigation into rural sustainability: Narrogin (WA); Tarra/Yarram (Victoria); the Gilbert Valley (SA); Guyra (NSW); Tumbaramba (NSW); and Monto (QLD).

Two key issues which emerge from these case studies is 'the question of how useful the notion of the capital is in interrogating and assessing the sustainability of rural communities?' and 'What conclusions can be drawn about the sustainability of rural communities?' Copies can be obtained at the Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University [crsr@csu.edu.au](mailto:crsr@csu.edu.au).

### Building a Better Future for Our Children: ARC Special Project 2003

This year's ARC Special Project, which has been granted ARC funding of \$102,000 and external funding of \$36,000 from the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, is entitled *Building a Better Future for Our Children* and is being directed by Sue Richardson and Margot Prior. A research planning meeting was held at the Academy on 25 February to formalise contributors and to discuss a series of scheduled team workshops to be held in Melbourne on 5, 6 and 19 March.

The research focus will be on producing 'a study that assembles, integrates, evaluates and communicates what is known from a range of disciplines on the topic in question'. It is anticipated that a resulting publication will include 'a discussion of where future research is likely to have the highest payoff in terms of increasing our understanding of effective policy intervention'.

The project will produce the first synoptic, comprehensive account of what is known about the requirements for healthy and successful childhood, how the environment for children has been changing, and what responsibility the community at large should take for this environment.

A forum will be held later in 2003 in order to capture the views of the children who are the subject of this research: their views on their past, present and future; their experiences of growing up in families, communities and schools; their perception of their own and society's strengths and deficiencies; their vision of the supports and nurturing which they would choose, and their notions of a just, equitable, and healthy social world.

Key contributors in this project, in addition to Sue Richardson and Margot Prior, include: Professor Fiona Stanley AC, chair of the ASSA Project Committee; Professor Robert Goodin, Social and Political Theory and Philosophy Programs,

RSSS, ANU; Professor Alan Hayes, Australian Centre for Educational Studies, Macquarie University; Professor Ross Homel, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice, Griffith University; Associate Professor Jeanette Lawrence, Department of Psychology, University of Melbourne; Associate Professor Janet McCalman, Department of History & Philosophy of Science, University of Melbourne; Professor Sven Silburn, Curtin Centre for Developmental Health; Professor Johanna Wyn, Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne; and Professor Stephen Zubrick, Curtin Centre for Developmental Health.

#### **ARC Linkage-Learned Academies Special Projects 2004**

The Academy's Research Committee welcomes research proposals from Fellows for consideration for possible ARC funding in 2004. The first stage of this process is preparing Expressions of Interest for submission in May 2003.

ASSA has successfully bid for project funds over a number of years. Individual projects have attracted funds within a range of \$70,000 to \$134,000 depending on the scope of the project. Over the last six projects, individual project funding has averaged \$103,000 including funding for: *The Economic and Social Costs of Unemployment* (2000); *The Sustainability of Australian Rural Communities* (2001); *Rethinking Wellbeing: Policy and Program Issues in Disability, Disadvantage and Community Development* (2002); and *Building a Better Future for our Children* (2003). Funds available for Learned Academies Special Projects in 2004 amount to approximately **\$452,000**, shared by the 4 Academies.

The Academy now welcomes applications from Fellows for research projects eligible for funding in **2004**. ARC guidelines state that research projects are required to:

- Capitalise on the unique capabilities of the Academy;
- Assist programs of research undertaken by institutions; and
- Have results of broad benefit for research and scholarship in the social sciences.

For further information please contact John Robertson, Research Director [john.robertson@anu.edu.au](mailto:john.robertson@anu.edu.au). It would be appreciated if those working on research proposals could submit them by 25 March to enable them to be considered by the Academy's Research Committee.

#### **Workshop Program**

An exciting new program of workshops has been identified for funding support by the Academy for 2003 and 2004.

- In July Professors *Marian Sawer*, *Barry Hindess* and *John Dryzek* (Australian National University) will hold a workshop in Canberra on 'Us and Them: Elites in Australia'. Discussions will focus on anti-elitist discourse in contemporary Australia and its consequences for the quality of public life. It will also explore the social context in which anti-elitism has developed, the diversity of elites (economic, intellectual, political, sporting) and differences between the actual role of elites in public life and the role ascribed to them by anti-elitist discourse.
- The 'Working Mothers and Social Capital' workshop will bring together researchers working on the historical and contemporary patterns and dilemmas of motherhood



and paid work in Australia. *Professors Belinda Probert* (RMIT) and *Patricia Grimshaw* (University of Melbourne), will convene the workshop in Melbourne in early July.

- Flinders University of South Australia convenors, *Professors Mervyn Lewis* (School of International Business,) and *Riaz Hassan* (Department of Sociology) will convene a workshop in Adelaide on 'Perspectives on Islam'. Represented at this workshop will be scholars from economics, education, finance, law, politics, religious studies and sociology. Topics will include the scope of Islamic law, developments in Islamic economics, banking and finance, social thought and political thought as well as the ethnic and social diversity of Australian Muslims and their distinctive contribution to Australian multiculturalism.
- In Brisbane, *Professor Helen Bartlett* from the Australasian Centre on Ageing, the University of Queensland will convene a workshop on 'Evidence into Policy: What Works in Ageing?' This workshop will debate the key issues, questions and actions arising from recently published government agendas, strategies and policy frameworks for Australia's ageing population, and will seek to identify models for effective working at the research/policy interface.
- The Academy endorses its first workshop in the Northern Territory. 'The Potential Role of Social Capital in Alleviating Persistent Poverty' will be convened by *Professor Ian Falk*, Centre for Teaching and Learning in Diverse Educational Contexts, Northern Territory University. A range of scholars will meet to debate the current state of knowledge regarding social capital (its attributes related to capacity building) in relation to its impacts on, and potential for alleviating, poverty.
- *Professor Tom Campbell*, Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (CAPPE) at Charles Sturt University, Canberra will hold a workshop in December 2003 on 'Ethics and Auditing'. The workshop will be co-sponsored with the Australian National University's Centre for Audit and Assurance Risk and CAPPE. The workshop will examine the issues raised by recent accounting and auditing lapses through a study of the ethical, legal and accounting issues that arise in connection with auditing.

Further information about the Workshop Program and the *Workshop Guidelines* can be found at [www.assa.edu.au](http://www.assa.edu.au).

## International Program

### Netherlands Exchange

*Barry Hindess* has reported on his participation in this program:

In September 2002 I visited the University of Amsterdam in order to consult with Professor Peter van der Veer and his colleagues at the University's Centre for Religion and Society, one of the most highly regarded research centres in the Netherlands. The visit was in connection with a research project, 'Government, Social Science and the Concept of Society' which was partly funded by the Australian Research Council. This is a collaborative enterprise with Dr Christine Helliwell, an anthropologist at the Australian National University who accompanied me on the visit to Amsterdam, and Dr Bruce Buchan, an historian of political thought now based at Griffith University. The project aims to explore how a concept of 'society', originally

developed in connection with the government of Western populations has been adapted in the course of Western colonial expansion to the government and the study of non-Western peoples. One important focus of the project concerns the treatment of the indigenous peoples of Australia and the legacy of earlier understandings Aboriginal sociality in contemporary governmental and social scientific practice.

However, developments in Australia cannot be understood without reference to the broader contexts of British (and other European) imperial rule, most especially, in the British case, in North America and India. Our visit to the Netherlands enabled us to explore in some depth the parallels and the differences between British and Dutch colonialism, thereby locating the characteristics of British rule in a broader imperial perspective. It is here, in connection with British rule in India, that Professor van der Veer's own input proved to be especially valuable. He has made a major contribution to the history and the anthropology of India, most significantly for the purposes of our project in his impressive volume *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament* (edited jointly with Carol Breckenridge), much of which focuses precisely on the connections between colonial practices and later social scientific conceptualisation, and more recently in his important monograph *Imperial Encounters. Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, which addresses other aspects of the relationship between political thought and colonial rule.

While the primary purpose of the visit was to explore common research interests with Professor van der Veer, we were also able to consult informally with scholars at a number of other universities in the Netherlands and, most importantly, to engage with other scholars at the Centre itself, several of whom have made important contributions to the study both of Western understandings of society and of the links between the modern social sciences and the colonial past. Members of the Centre were exceptionally generous with their time and intellectual energy, and they provided invaluable feedback on a draft chapter which we presented as a seminar towards the end of our visit.

### **Australia-France Joint Research**

The Academy congratulates the recipients of the first grants awarded jointly by the French Government and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

*Mr Alain Liennard*, CIRAD (Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement), Montpellier visited Australia in January to collaborate with Dr Mark Horridge, Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University on an 'Approach of the sustainable development of New Caledonia by a computable general equilibrium model'.

*Dr Guy Lubeigt*, CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), Paris will visit Professor John Connell FASSA, School of Geosciences, University of Sydney in March to participate in the project on 'From Burma to Fiji: Perspectives on the Asia-Pacific "arc of instability"'.

*Professor David Andrich* FASSA, School of Education, Murdoch University will travel to France in April to collaborate with Dr Alain Leplege, Institut d'Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences et des Techniques, University of Paris on the topic 'Studies on the requirement of invariant comparisons for theoretical and applied fundamental measurement'.

*Dr Alain Froment*, L'Institute de recherché pour le developpement at Orléans will collaborate with Ms Jana Jones, Department of Ancient History at Macquarie University on 'Anthropological studies of human past populations derived from the structural analysis of keratinous products'.

*Professor Ann Curthoys* FASSA, Faculty of Arts, School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University will travel to France in early 2004 to collaborate with Dr Isabelle Merle, Universite de Provence in Marseilles. Their project title is 'Creating new worlds, reshaping indigenous worlds. A comparative study of settler societies in the South Pacific in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia'.

### **Australia-Britain Special Joint Project Funding**

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the British Academy have launched a new scheme for the support of joint projects between Australian and British scholars. One award (of up to £8,000) for a project which covers both humanities and social sciences disciplines, or two awards (of up to £4,000 per project) will be available each year, to cover travel and maintenance expenses.

*Level of award:* up to £4,000 / £2,000 for the Australian partner, and an equivalent sum from British Academy for the British partner.

*Eligibility:* The principal applicant on the Australian side should be normally resident in Australia. Other scholars associated with the project will normally be expected to be of postdoctoral status.

*Period of award:* up to twelve months. Possible extension of one year on reapplication.

*Closing date:* 30 September each year for projects to commence from April the following year.

For Application forms and Referees forms, please contact the Academy of the Social Sciences secretariat or visit its website [www.assa.edu.au](http://www.assa.edu.au).

### **Australia-China Exchange Program**

In May, *Dr Susan McGrath-Champ* from Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Sydney will travel to China to study the contribution of expatriate training programs to the success of Australian firms setting up in China and will visit the CASS International Business Research Centre and Nanjing University.

» *Professor Dr Dong Lisheng*, Assistant Director, Institute of Political Science, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences ([lsdong@public.bta.net.cn](mailto:lsdong@public.bta.net.cn)) visited Australia from 20 November - 18 December 2002, and has reported a fruitful exchange:

At the beginning of 2001, Australia celebrated the Centenary of Federation. The news only made my desire to visit the country more intense. A year earlier, I published a book on the central-local government relations in EU member states, the product of four years of research. While trying to build a framework for comparison, I had looked at all major developed countries in the field of intergovernmental relations. Surprisingly, I could find little on the Australian system. The limited available

literature on the relevant issues presents an incomplete picture and some judgements, such as the status of the states and the fiscal arrangements between different levels of government, contradict each other. Thanks to the exchange program between the Australian and Chinese Academies of Social Sciences, I was able to conduct research for two weeks in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. I am grateful to Dr Judy Johnston (University Technology Sydney), Dr Ross Curnow (University of Sydney) and Professor Owen Hughes (Monash University), under whose arrangements I interviewed a number of scholars, visited NSW Departments of Local Government and Treasury as well as the North Sydney Council and the Whitehorse Council in Melbourne. The result of the visit exceeds what I expected. Interviews and talks with government officials, local councillors, managers and scholars have clarified many uncertain points, broadened my overall understanding of the Australian intergovernmental relations in general and the structure and operation of local government in particular.

Scholars and officials warmly welcomed me. They were pleased to have a Chinese researcher interested in the intergovernmental relations of Australia. My hosts told me that despite their significance for Australian politics and public policy, in this country those studying federalism had relatively neglected intergovernmental relations. Constitutional lawyers and fiscal economists, with little interest or competence on intergovernmental relations, restricted their focus to the more formal aspects of federalism. Political scientists, for the most part, did not remedy their oversight in the postwar decades because of a fixation with national politics and policy-making. Against this paucity of research and literature, I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to exchange ideas with the informed and to gather a rich collection of materials on the topic. My original plan was to write a lengthy article; now I am confident that I have sufficient material for a book. As no such book is available in China to date, it will certainly be welcomed.

One of the questions that I wanted to clarify is the status of the states in Australia as I had been confused by the contradictory sources. Some claimed that the Australian states are among the most powerful intermediate governments in the world because of the breadth of their functions and their substantial role in service delivery. Therefore, those functions, such as education, police, major infrastructure, electricity, public transport and so on, commonly undertaken by local government elsewhere in the world are in Australia handled by the states and territories.

Others noted reduction in the competencies of the states in the past few decades. In the Australian constitution, the Commonwealth has constitutional power only in respect of a number of areas listed in the constitution. These do not include responsibilities for health, education, community services, natural resources, the environment, police, prisons, electricity, gas, etc. All of these matters rest with the states, at least theoretically. Indeed, the states have retained residual responsibility for everything that is not in the Commonwealth's list of competencies. But the constitution does have an obscure provision (Section 96) that gives the Commonwealth the power to make payments to the states. The High Court has given this provision a very wide interpretation. Since the 1970s, the Commonwealth has used 'tied grants', and 'conditional grants' as a way of exerting control over policy areas that are theoretically the sole responsibility of the states. As the Commonwealth now effectively controls the major indirect taxes and the major direct taxes, there is an acute vertical fiscal imbalance in Australia. The states rely on transfer payments

from the Commonwealth for about 40 per cent of their revenue. The Commonwealth raises as much as 81 per cent of total government revenue in Australia but is responsible for 56 per cent of total expenditure. The states by contrast raise only 16 per cent and spend 40 per cent.

In this way, it is clear to me, the Australian states are powerful in the sense of their wide range of responsibilities. And this is, in large part, a function of the centralisation at the sub-national level, which occurs at the expense of local government. At the same time, the states are weak in terms of generating their own financial resources. They depend too heavily on the federal transfer payments. While power over the indirect taxes was given to the Commonwealth exclusively in the constitution, power over the direct tax was given to the Commonwealth by the states during World War II and never given back.

To Australians at the time of confederation, it is claimed, the appeal of the federal system was that it enabled the creation of a new sphere of national government while preserving the established colonial systems of self-government including local government. However, as Roger Wilkins notes, the history of Australian federalism is the history of the gradual growth of central power. Australia has moved from being a *de jure* 'coordinate system' of federalism to being better described as a *de facto* 'cooperative system' of federalism. The central government now exercises authority and power over all areas of policy, albeit 'in partnership' or 'cooperation' with the states. That shift is not the result of constitutional change. Rather, it is a result of the way in which the constitution has been used and interpreted. Most importantly, it is the result of the financial dependence of the states on the Commonwealth.

While studying the intergovernmental relations of various countries, one of the issues to which I have paid particular attention is the financial equalization scheme. I have written about the Chilean, Danish and German systems. Still I am surprised at the degree of vertical financial imbalance in Australia. However, I am equally impressed by the fact that Australia is the most fiscally equalised of all federations. In this sense, the equalisation process and the Commonwealth Grants Commission are important parts of Australian federalism.

I realise that there are two equalisation schemes in Australia, one between states implemented federation-wide and the other within states among local councils. They are in turn designed to address two kinds of horizontal imbalance. Through the Commonwealth Grants Commission there has been a long tradition of fiscal equalisation between the states. Horizontal imbalance between states is still considered to be less in Australia than in other comparable federal states. The view of one American commentator is that Australian attempts 'to equalise public spending capacity across states are the most explicit and comprehensive in the world.' Without the Grants Commission to work out the relativities the poorer parts of the nation would find it very hard to deliver services. Hughes comments: 'While the largest states will complain, some horizontal equalisation seems quite fair and all parties generally accept Grants Commission findings.'

Horizontal equalisation among local councils is defined as being achieved if 'each council in a State is able to provide the average range, level and quality of services by reasonable effort, taking account of differences in the expenditure needed to provide average services.' Distribution of funds between the states is per capita, with state grants commissions then distributing grants on the basis of horizontal equalisation. The precise methodology varies from state to state, but must accord

with agreed national principles under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act, 1995.

As to the state-local government relationship, its quality and effectiveness tend to ebb and flow over time from state to state. Australian local government has often been described as a 'creation of the states'. It has always been confined to a relatively narrow range of functions on a world scale. This plus the fragmentation of the system - small in population and concentrated in urban areas - has worked against high autonomy.

During my short visit, I was also able to sort out some details that had baffled me. For example, government revenue and expenditure are sometimes presented based on their own sources and own outlays. The picture may be different if each level is considered separately. There is also a distinction between the federal specific purpose payments 'to' the states and specific purpose payments 'through' the states. The latter are those grants such as the ones to universities, effectively Commonwealth own-purpose payments, only passed through the states on the way to the universities.

I wish to thank all institutions and individuals that received me or generously shared their precious time with me. I hope this brief report suggests that their time was not wasted.

For further information about this scheme or any of the other Academy funded International Programs, please contact John Beaton at the Academy's Secretariat on 02 6249 1788 or [j.beaton@edu.au](mailto:j.beaton@edu.au).

**AASSREC (Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils)**

<http://www.assa.edu.au/International/member.htm>

ASSA will host the 15<sup>th</sup> Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC) conference from Monday 10-Friday 15 November 2003 in Canberra. Fay Gale, immediate Past President of the Academy is the current President of AASSREC and the convenor of the event, which is hosted in turn by member nations. This will mark Australia's second time as host; the first was the 5<sup>th</sup> Biennial ASSREC Conference in Sydney in 1983.

The eighteen member nations have been invited to send delegates to participate in workshops and meetings with their regional colleagues. The first day of proceedings will be the Academy Annual Symposium on 'Youth in Transition', a theme that has resonance for all nations in the globalising world. Among the aspects to be considered are transnationalism, urban migration, gender imbalances, educational opportunities, employment, housing and challenges for political institutions. Fellows of the Academy, ASSREC delegates and a panel of young people will contribute to the discussion.

**Professor Richard Snape**, Deputy Chair of the Productivity Commission, and Emeritus Professor of Economics at Monash University died on 4 October 2002.

*An Obituary* will appear in the *Annual Report*.



**Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia**  
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For confidential advice on making a donation or bequest, contact the Academy's President, Professor Leon Mann, or Honorary Treasurer, Professor Gavin Jones, through the Academy office.

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## FELLOWSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

*On the decadal occasion of their election to Fellowship in  
The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia  
the Academy is proud to acknowledge the following Fellows.*

**- 60 Years –**

**Emeritus Professor John Passmore AC**

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**- 20 Years –**

Emeritus Professor Gregory Dening  
Professor Gavin Jones  
Emeritus Professor George Singer

**- 10 Years –**

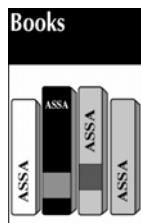
Associate Professor David Bradley  
Dr Bruce Chapman  
Professor Gordon Clark  
Professor Patricia Crawford  
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Professor John McDonald  
Emeritus Professor Beryl McKenzie  
Dr Geoff McNicoll  
Professor John Sweller  
Professor Xiaokai Yang

The Academy proudly recognises the appointment of

**Professor Fiona Stanley  
Australian of the Year 2003**



## Books



***Freedom Ride. A Freedom Rider Remembers.*** By Ann Curthoys. Allen & Unwin, 2002.

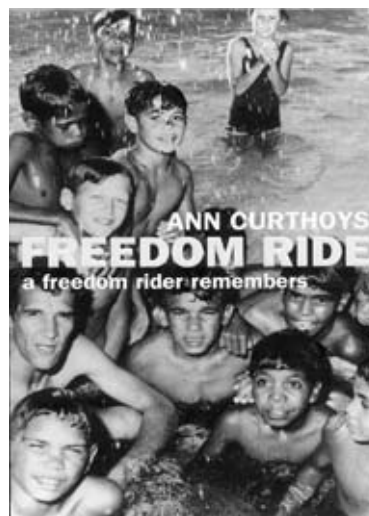
This is an interesting book: a mixture of autobiography, biography, sharp vignettes of political activism, oral history, local Aboriginal history, anthropology and national ethos and global consciousness through the eyes of an accomplished white historian. It is simultaneously intensely personal and as 'objective' as a fine scholar can achieve.

The structure reflects something of the suspense novel, with a list of Dramatis personae heralding the story: the 29 Sydney students on the bus that trekked around country NSW for two weeks in 1965, those they met in the towns, and others closely involved from the media, the clergy, politicians and bureaucrats. Chapter headings build from 'Let's have a freedom ride' borrowing from the US experience, through 'High noon at Walgett' and 'Stirring up trouble' and easing down into 'Impact' and 'Memory and Meaning' like a novel-reading group post mortem.

As the students travel through the ten targeted towns – Wellington, Gulargambone, Walgett, Moree, Boggabilla, Tabulam, Lismore, Bowraville, Kempsey and Taree - a brief background history of each area is outlined. While the students had attempted to inform themselves as best they could concerning conditions in the towns, Curthoys points out that none had any direct experience of daily life or circumstances for Aboriginal people in small town rural Australia. For the most part, these students were urban dwellers, a reality turned into accusation by many critics along the way. The impression given here is that there was not a lot of research material to draw on at that time, although the work of Academy Fellows like CD Rowley, Jeremy Beckett and Marie Reay are all mentioned, along with the work of others such as Heather Goodall.

The students developed a survey that was to be a starting point for contact and discussion with Aboriginal people. At this distance it is easy to see what a clumsy form this took, and to imagine its administration in the hands of the inexperienced interviewers, but the reality seems to have been that it not only was useful in connecting with local Aboriginal people, but gave a certain justification to the visits of the students in the eyes of some figures of authority. Students also decided on the form their activism would take: democratic majority decisions of the group held for all members, and non-violent passive resistance was to be the method of handling any confrontations with opposition. Given the appalling living conditions found in some of the Aboriginal settlements, and the shock the students felt in the face of that reality, not to mention the serious threats they faced in Moree (including being run off the road leaving town), it is rather remarkable that they maintained this kind of discipline.

To hold together the many strands of this story and retain a page-turning tension is one of the fine achievements of this history. However, in the last few chapters I was



disappointed, particularly in the discussion of 'Meaning and memory'. This scant 20 pages I hoped would take up some of the subtexts smouldering below the matter of fact – although exciting – telling of the story, a story told through the filters of time, of recollection, of nostalgia. One major element of this subtext is identified by the author in a brief half paragraph on her reactions to a later visit to Dareton on the Murray (along with, among others, another Academy Fellow, Bob Connell), when she writes: 'This Dareton visit was a defining experience for me. The shanty town dwellers had thought we were able to get something for them, and I felt that we had nothing to offer. I came home feeling that without Aboriginal activists to work with, our own activism could be nothing but the do-gooding of which SAFA [Student Action for Aborigines] had so often been accused'. Indeed. It is the dilemma always faced by those - however well-intentioned - who would speak for others. And who is the 'other'? It is evident that many of the students, besides Curthoys, found their participation in the Freedom Ride a 'defining' one. As the 'Epilogue: whatever happened to ....?' illustrates, subsequent individual life choices and directions by the bus riders and others involved (such as Academy Fellow Michael Kirby) were influenced by the events of 1965, in an ongoing concern for social justice. Sharing an age with them, and a subsequent political activism (although my epiphany was yet several years away in 1965), I have crossed paths or made friendships with some during the last thirty years; others are known to me by reputation or professional dealings. Some names are well known in politics, the judiciary, academia or other areas of the teaching profession.

The standout student is Charles Perkins, the only Aboriginal (until Gary Williams joined the bus in its later stages), and his story has been previously told, both in his autobiography *A Bastard Like Me* (1973), and in the biography written by Peter Read (1990). The growth of an Aboriginal leader and spokesman is clearly identified.

I was born in Bingara, not far from the site of the infamous Myall Creek massacre, lived for a time as a child at Greenhill, just outside Kempsey (where child deaths from diseases such as hookworm and roundworm were related to poor housing and amenities p 199). I, and my extended family, grew up in the country areas visited by the bus, with many of the attitudes identified by the Freedom Riders. It is disturbing to be reminded by this book of what that meant for Aboriginal people. But it is also encouraging to recognise the changes that have occurred in our national consciousness since that time.

This story is one that has been told in various forms, through the voices of journalism and in a film by Rachel Perkins and Ned Landers. This version, through the eyes of a participant, is a terrific addition to a seminal event in race relations in Australia, and should be required reading for all of us.

### **Peg Job**



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**C History, law, philosophy, political science.**

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**D Education, psychology, social medicine.**

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