

# COMPETING VISIONS



# CONFERENCE 2001

Welcome to the 7th National Social Policy Conference sponsored by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales.

Over the years this biennial national conference has become a key event on the social policy calendar, providing a regular national forum for academia, government and non-governmental social policy agencies to meet and exchange research findings and ideas about the issues facing the nation, its policy makers and policy practitioners. Its interdisciplinary character and the broad range of topics discussed have encouraged informed, critical dialogue about the strengths, weaknesses and directions of social policy in Australia. We hope that this year's conference will continue the tradition.

This is the first conference held since the SPRC was restructured at the end of 2000, when its core funding from the Commonwealth Government ended and its original charter lapsed. The SPRC is now a University Centre with a more diverse funding base, but its aims still include fostering interdisciplinary debate on social policy. The decision to continue organising the National Social Policy Conference was a deliberate one aimed at achieving continuity and development in this debate outside the vicissitudes of organisational funding.

The change in our funding base has, however, meant that the conference has had to be run on a full cost recovery basis. This has, unfortunately, meant a steep increase in the price of registration. We will be monitoring attendance carefully to see whether this increase has had an impact on participation in the conference by any particular sector of our constituency.

The Keynote and Plenary Addresses take up the conference theme of *Welfare, Citizenship and the State* in both theoretical and practical terms. Anne Yeatman considers how ideas of social citizenship that underlie contemporary welfare states can be reconciled with principles of freedom and individual self-determination. Don Weatherburn takes a new look at the old debate about the economic and social roots of crime. Our international guest speaker, David Ellwood, will discuss the vision that drove the recent US welfare reform program and the potential problems that lie ahead for it.

The conference program also includes six Forum sessions, which aim to generate lively debate among conference participants. The Forums each discuss an area of current policy controversy on which we encourage you to join in with comments and opinions from the floor. This year the Forum program begins with a debate with spokespeople from the three main political parties about policies to address the growing inequalities in Australian society. We are also particularly pleased this year to include a Forum on the important questions of autonomy and dependency in Indigenous communities, which will tie in with a strand of contributed papers on the same topic.

Contributed papers make up the main part of the conference and this year we had a particularly high response to our call for abstracts. As a result of views coming through strongly from the evaluation of the 1999 conference that there were too many streams and papers, we had decided this time to limit the numbers of sessions. This has meant that we have had to turn down an unusually large number of papers - many of which would undoubtedly be of high quality - and, inevitably, disappoint their authors. There are now 31 individual sessions, scheduled in six parallel streams. This year we have also introduced Poster sessions as one way of allowing for some extra contributions which could not be fitted into the main contributed paper streams.

One of the most important parts of any conference is the opportunity to meet colleagues and friends, old and new, informally. As usual we have made a special effort to make the social side of the conference - morning and afternoon teas, lunches, the Wednesday evening reception and the conference dinner - comfortable and congenial.

This year the practical business of laying on the conference has been ably undertaken by the Hotel Network, while staff of the SPRC have organised the intellectual content. All those involved deserve our thanks for the time, effort and good will they have put in to ensure that we can all get the best out of the next three days.

We hope that you will find the 2001 National Social Policy Conference stimulating and enjoyable.

PROFESSOR PETER SAUNDERS

The year when Australia is celebrating its centenary of federation is an appropriate time for public debate about what kind of a country has developed over those 100 years and where it is heading now. This debate extends into the social policy arena through current controversies surrounding issues such as welfare reform.

Underlying these controversies are competing visions of Australian identity and society. These competing visions are not just reflected in party political divisions - although 2001 is an election year and they will properly figure in electoral debate. Rather, they reflect a series of apparent fault lines in society, between the wealthy and those socially excluded, between cities and regions, between public and private in schooling and tertiary education, between victims of crime and disadvantaged perpetrators, between environmental protection and the demands of economic and population growth, between taxpayers and income support recipients, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

The appearance of these social fault lines in a society with a historical self-image of unity and egalitarianism is leading to some soul-searching and a lively debate about future directions. Yet certain strategies seem to have achieved the status of common currency on both sides of the political divide without much detailed discussion. In particular, ideas of strengthening community capacity, participation, early intervention, partnership and social entrepreneurship are largely seen as politically uncontroversial but have yet to be subject to much serious analysis or scrutiny.

Mutual obligation, competition and the role of NGOs in public service delivery have been more controversial, but have yet to generate much empirical evidence on their outcomes. The conference theme of Competing Visions allows us to encourage debate amongst contending



## TELEPHONES

Public phones are available in the foyer of the Auditorium, the AGSM building behind the Auditorium building, the Arcade beneath the Pavilion, the Library, outside the Mathews Theatres, and the Building cafeteria.

## MOBILE PHONES

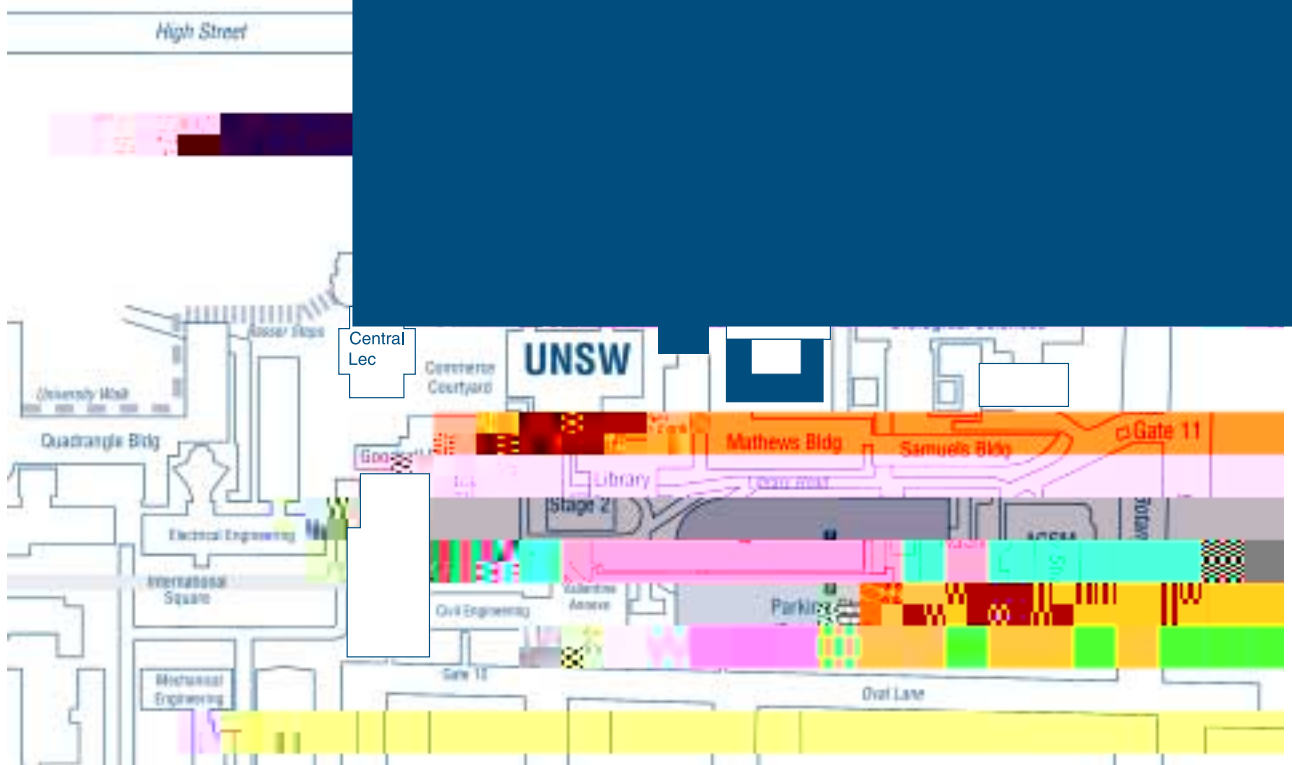
If you have a mobile phone, please ensure it is switched off while you are attending conferences.

## PHOTOCOPYING

There are no facilities available for copying documents during the conference itself. Photocopying facilities are available at the Library nearby.

## CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Please help us to make the next National Conference even better by completing the Evaluation Sheet provided in your conference bag. Please drop the completed sheet in the box at the Registration desk before you leave.









**WEDNESDAY 4 JULY, 5.00 - 6.30PM**

CLANCY AUDITORIUM

**Special Political Forum – How do your Party’s social policies and programs propose to address the growing inequalities in Australian society?**

Chair Professor Peter Saunders, SPRC

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE AMANDA VANSTONE  
Minister For Family and Community Services

WAYNE SWAN MP  
Opposition Spokesperson on Family and Community Services

SENATOR ANDREW BARTLETT  
The Australian Democrats

**THURSDAY 5 JULY 1.30-3.00PM**

CLANCY AUDITORIUM

**From Neurones to Neighbourhoods  
The New Debate on Early Intervention and Child Development**

Organiser Michael Bittman, SPRC  
Chair Karen Fisher, SPRC

CARMEL NILAND  
Director-General, NSW Department of Community Services

BETTINA ARNDT  
Journalist

DR VICTOR NOSSAR  
School of Paediatrics, UNSW

DR ROBYN DOLBY  
Research Psychologist

**Social Entrepreneurialism and the New Role of NGOs**

MATHEWS A

Organiser and chair Dr Rose Melville,  
University of Wollongong

DR ROB SYMONS  
Research Director, The Smith Family

VERN HUGHES,  
Executive Director, Social Entrepreneurs Network

DR CATHERINE MACDONALD  
University of Queensland

PROFESSOR JULIAN DISNEY  
Director, Social Justice Project, UNSW

**The Spatial Distribution of Inequality:  
How To Address Regional Grievances?**

MATHEWS B

Organiser and chair Professor Peter Saunders, SPRC

PROFESSOR RUTH FINCHER  
Melbourne University

DR BOB BIRRELL  
Monash University

WENDY FIELD  
Department of Family and Community Services, NSW State Office

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MARGARET ALSTON  
Director, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University

**FRIDAY 6 JULY, 1.30 – 3.00PM**

CLANCY AUDITORIUM

**Welfare Poison or Welfare Autonomy?  
Rethinking Indigenous Social Policy**

Organiser and chair Professor Jon Altman,  
Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU

PATRICIA TURNER, AM  
Executive Director, Indigenous Services, Centrelink, Canberra

DARREN J GODWELL MHK  
Chief Executive Officer, Lumbu Indigenous Community Foundation, Sydney

SENATOR ADEN RIDGEWAY  
Deputy Leader, Australian Democrats

DR WILLIAM JONAS, AM  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Social Justice Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

**Friend or Foe? The Participation Concept in Welfare Reform**

MATHEWS B

Organiser and chair Professor Julian Disney,  
School of Law, UNSW

DR PETER SHERGOLD  
Secretary, Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business

PROFESSOR BETTINA CASS  
Dean of Arts, University of Sydney

DR MARIE LEECH  
Research Director, Mission Australia

SHA CORDINGLEY  
CEO, Volunteering Australia



Open

POLICY THEORY

MATHEWS A

Chair: Sheila Shaver, Social Policy Research Centre

Yes Virginia! There Are Alternatives Social Policy  
and The Hawke-Keating Government 1983-96:

First Report on an Arc Discovery Project

Rob Watts, Judith Bessant, Tony Dalton and Paul Smyth

RMIT University (Abstract page A30)

Fashion, Fiction, Fertile Inquiry? Struggling with the  
Postmodern Challenge and Social Policy Analysis

Greg Marston

University of Queensland (Abstract page A18)

Limiting the Social Role of the State : The Catholic Social Principle  
of Subsidiarity in Three Different Countries

Paul Smyth

University of Queensland (Abstract page A27)

Indigenous Social Policy (Rob Watts, Judith Bessant page A18)



## Social and Economic Inequalities



## Indigenous Social Policy

### NEW APPROACHES FOR INDIGENOUS SOCIAL POLICY

MATHEWS A

Chair: TBA

Indigenous Welfare: Individual rights or collective responsibility?

An Analysis of Noel Pearson's Critique

of Welfare and Indigenous Communities

Vicki Grieves

Department of Aboriginal Studies, University of Newcastle

(Abstract page A11)

POSTER PAPERS

PAVILIONS

Organiser: David Abello, Social Policy Research Centre

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DAVID ABELLO AND HELEN MACDONALD

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## Assessing the Impact of the Job Network on Community-Based Agencies

THURSDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS 312

The initial findings from a study of the impact of competition on community-based employment agencies and job seekers shows mixed results for participants. The joint study has been undertaken by the Social Policy Research Centre in partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and JOB futures, a national network of community-based employment service agencies. It draws on analysis of in-depth interviews and consultation with agency Board members, managers and staff from 10 employment agencies in New South Wales and Victoria during the first contract period of the Job Network, as well as focus group discussions with more than 100 job seekers.

Among the questions considered in the research were:

- How are community-based agencies responding to providing employment services in a competitive, market-driven environment?
- To what extent are agencies moving away from holistic approaches to meeting job seeker needs in order to respond to specific employer requirements?

This paper will provide an overview of the findings from



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## Health, Beneficiaries and Welfare to Work: Competing Visions of Employability

FRIDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS B

In recent years, both Australia and New Zealand governments have reformed their social programmes to emphasise the importance of employment earnings for family support rather than entitlements to government benefits. Some of the constraints that make it difficult for beneficiaries to find and keep a paid job are becoming evident. Researchers have focused on such factors as lack of affordable childcare for lone mothers, pay that is too low to support a family, transportation costs, and tax abatement rates. In comparison, however, little is known in both policy and research fields about the importance of health-related issues as constraints. A strong correlation has been found between low income and poor health but few studies have investigated the health status of beneficiaries and their dependants, or how health issues affect their daily lives or their employability.

This paper, partly based on data derived from a current project funded by the New Zealand Health Research Council, examines the self-reported health status (using the international standard SF36) of sole mothers on the Domestic Purposes Benefit and their perceptions of how health constrains or facilitates their ability to engage in paid work. These data are then compared with welfare to work discourse as well as the perceptions of case managers, advocacy groups and policy makers. We conclude by conceptualising the relationship between health and employability.

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JANEEN BAXTER

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## Changes in the Gender Division of Household Labour in Australia

THURSDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS A

Recent research in Australia and overseas has suggested that we are witnessing a convergence of men's and women's time on domestic labour activities. But there seems to be some disagreement about whether this is due to women reducing their time on housework or men increasing their time on housework. At the same time, we have no research



the Centrelink and FaCS partnership (which is in its fourth year), specific programs that are bringing partnerships to the community such as the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, the Reconnect Program Development Reference Group; and the formation of two new consumer Federations. In addition, welfare reform is gaining momentum with the release of the McClure Report and the Government's response. This new direction includes a whole of government approach, which will be imperative to achieving success. It will not only be partnerships with the community and private sectors but also collaboration between a number of departments.

As part of the partnership approach, FaCS' role is changing to include an emphasis on influencing key players and participants in the community. The solutions are out there, but they need to come from the ground up, be nurtured and developed - not simply dictated by department.

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\*ACIRRT, University of Sydney and \*\*The Smith Family  
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## Factors Influencing the Educational Performance of Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

FRIDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS 312

The sociological research that investigates the relationship between family socioeconomic status (SES) and the

DAVID DE CARVALHO

The Social Contract Re-negotiated: Protecting  
Public Law Values in the Age of Contracting

WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 3:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS A

In the United States, the Bush administration has established the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives, looking to extend the involvement of religious organisations in the delivery of government-funded social

SCOTT EWING, DAVID HAYWARD,  
JULIAN THOMAS AND LIZA HOPKINS

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The New Social Policy and the Digital Age: A  
Case Study of a Wired High Rise Public Housing  
Estate

KAREN FISHER

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## Limitations of a Cost Savings Framework for Funding Preventive Care

FRIDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS 310

This paper discusses the apparent inappropriateness using prospective cost benefit analysis to justify funding preventive human service delivery programs, while expecting evaluations to show that such programs can be sustained through the financial savings they generate. It aims to illustrate an inappropriate interpretation of



## MARDI FLICK AND TONY EARDLEY

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### Young People, Drugs and Criminal Justice: Implementation of the NSW Youth Drug Court Pilot Program

FRIDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS 312

In Australia, there has been increasing interest in programs that divert offenders from the criminal justice system. The NSW Youth Drug Court pilot program arose from recommendations of the Drug Summit and began operation in August 2000. The Youth Drug Court program aims to reduce the level of criminal activity and other problematic behaviours associated with the misuse of drugs and alcohol. It combines intensive judicial supervision and case management for young offenders charged with serious criminal offences. Participants are provided with comprehensive assessment, support and cross-Departmental services from Juvenile Justice, Health, Community Services, and Education and Training.

A UNSW Consortium led by the Social Policy Research Centre is evaluating the YDC pilot program. This paper reports on the development of the YDC model as a therapeutic and criminal justice intervention, and on its relationship to other diversionary programs in NSW and broader social policy objectives around juvenile justice. The paper discusses issues arising in the early operations of the Youth Drug Court, drawn from a review of the implementation of the pilot program.

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## BRENDAN GLEESON AND CHRIS CARMICHAEL

(Presented by Bill Randolph)

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### Responding to Regional Disadvantage: What Can Be Learned From Overseas Experience?

WEDNESDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS 310

In Australia, recent national debates about problems of regional disadvantage have sometimes echoed with calls for a shift in public policy emphasis from cities to regions. While there exists a groundswell of new support for regional assistance policies in Australia, the current debates make little reference to overseas policy experiences, which constitute a potentially rich resource for learning. This paper investigates and evaluates the housing-related regional assistance measures in the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States and draws implications for Australian policy-makers.

## STEVE GOLDSMITH

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### Training, Consultation & Information: Building Capacity in Dual Diagnosis

WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 3:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS 312

Future demand for social services will be largely determined by changing patterns of social need and well being. Numerous indicators of rates of disability, and of factors underlying the receipt of social service benefits point to psychiatric disability and abuse of alcohol or other drugs being significant causes of a need for social service intervention. Further, the extensive incidence of comorbidity of these disabilities (dual diagnosis) presents major challenges, not only to the mental health and drug treatment service sectors, but to community services generally. This paper presents a model for sustainable community service developed by the Dual Diagnosis Resource Centre. The model has the capacity to allow for differences in budget allocations and characteristics of service providers, in designing coordinated responses to clients with dual diagnosis that effectively address their social problems.

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## MATTHEW GRAY AND JACQUELINE TUDBALL

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### A Reassessment of the Availability of Family Friendly Work Practices: AnalyMaPractni9tice prov7r1

The paper raises questions about the likelihood of sole parents moving into the work force finding employment that has family friendly work practices - an issue which is likely to be of great importance to this group.

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## SUE GREEN

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### Indigenous Welfare Reform: Something New or More of the Same?

In recent times there has been much discussion regarding the role that welfare plays in the socio-economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians. Various groups from government, to welfare organisations and community groups both within the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal sectors are raising concerns regarding the impact of welfare payments and services on Aboriginal people and communities. Hence we are asking questions such as “Welfare ‘Poison’ or Welfare Autonomy?”.

This paper will examine the links between early colonial discussions and present-day debates and ideologies regarding welfare and welfare recipients. The connections between the 19th Century ‘New Poor Laws’ and the policies and practices of segregation will be highlighted. The current rhetoric underpinning ‘mutual obligation’ and employment programs for Aboriginal communities will be included in the paper.

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## VICKI GRIEVES

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### Indigenous Welfare: Individual rights or collective responsibility? An Analysis of Noel Pearson’s Critique of Welfare and Indigenous Communities

FRIDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS A

Noel Pearson's proposed plan for the Cape York Aboriginal communities "Our Right to take Responsibility" is a timely and heartfelt plea for change in the relationship between the people in these communities and the state. He has opened debate in an area that is badly in need of reform by identifying passive welfare to Aboriginal people as the root cause of social dislocation. This paper explores his understanding of the nature of welfare and Indigenous people as a starting point for discussion of the basis of the relationship between Indigenous people and the state. In doing this I suggest that the solutions to the problems within Aboriginal communities that Pearson outlines will

only be found within the communities themselves. Perhaps most surprisingly Noel Pearson can be seen to be arguing from within the colonial paradigm. The release of this document as a media event, rather than an Aboriginal social policy or even Aboriginal community event seems to underline this. He shows a scant regard for the reality and viability of Aboriginal culture and society and the possibility of a modernity that is intrinsically Aboriginal in nature. Similarly he down plays the impact of a colonial history on problems such as racism and substance misuse and sees economic development as the sole ingredient required for change. This paper argues that welfare is a minor player in the reality of the ongoing colonisation of Indigenous Australians.

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## MARK HENLEY

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### Triple Bottom Line and Community Services

POSTER PAPER SESSION, PAVILIONS

The “McClure” report recommends that the government and Community Service Organisations move to “triple bottom line” accountability and reporting arrangements. This paper argues that the implications of this recommendation are significant, if applied, with considerable potential to reinforce the paradigm shift that is currently under way. This paradigm shift is based on a rejection of Public Choice theory and the associated commitment of policy makers to the Rational Expectations School of economic and public policy thought.

Consideration is briefly given to the priorities for measurement in the “social” domain of the triple bottom line, with reference to emerging social and ethical auditing experiences and practice.

The major focus of the paper is consideration of the three interfaces implicit in triple bottom line accountability, with the following conclusions being drawn.

- The Social / Economic interface is the territory being actively mapped by the “Social Entrepreneur” movement.
- The Economic / Environment interface has been driven by large scale environmental disasters over the past decade, along with earth summits. Whilst still “early days”, there are positive signs.
- The Environment / Social interface is the least developed aspect of the triple bottom line, despite considerable common ground.
- The Environment / Social interface is of crucial importance to Social policy, in large part because of the high correlation between income and ecological disadvantage for many communities.

PAUL HENMAN

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## Australian Welfare Reform: Deconstructing Welfare Dependency

WEDNESDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS 309

Minister Newman explained that increasing welfare dependency was the reason why Australia's welfare system needed reform. The McClure report said that the reason was that the welfare system was no longer appropriate for the changed social and economic realities. Through an analysis of

recipient statistics, this paper identifies that the growth in the number of recipients are due to structural changes in Australia's economy and society. The analysis then provides the basis for an assessment of the changes recommended by McClure and suggests an alternative approach to responding to poverty and disadvantage in contemporary Australia.

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JANE HIGGINS

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## Young People, Transitions and Labour Market Power: Coping with Complexity

WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 3:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS B

Wyn and Dwyer have argued recently for an approach to youth policy that takes account of the ways in which young people manage a multiplicity of 'transitions' involving considerable overlap between education and employment, rather than negotiating the linear pathway from education to work on which transitions policies have hitherto been based. In New Zealand, this latter approach has been reinforced by fifteen years of neo-liberal reform in both education and the labour market, together with a flourishing 'knowledge economy' discourse. Both have drawn on human capital theory to foster policy that posits 'transition' in terms of a straightforward relationship between qualifications and employment. This paper argues that, rather than focusing narrowly on qualifications in conceptualising transition, policy makers should consider the wider notion of the labour market power that young people possess. In New Zealand, this means considering a deindustrialising context (not identical to a 'knowledge economy') in which both high and low waged economies operate, and through which young people manage

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'dialogue' strategy that will feed into a public awareness campaign based on a social marketing approach. This strategy will mediate the findings of the first phase with the social marketing project. The aim of all these pieces of work is to ensure that poverty in Australia becomes an issue of national concern and action is taken at a national level to eradicate it.

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ALIREZA KALDI

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## The Position of Women as head of the Family : The Case of Iran

POSTER PAPER SESSION, PAVILIONS

From ancient times until now, women have had fundamental roles in the family. Women's roles in managing home economies, child rearing, looking after members of the family, especially husbands, have been mentioned throughout time. Cooperation of women in home economies has existed through history and has been seen in different ways in rural and urban communities. Although changes in the occupation of women, from traditional to modern forms, have effected the balance of power and decision making in family affairs, women are still the main victims among the social groups.

Women with children and without husbands, for whatever reason, are likely to be vulnerable to economic, social and cultural problems and obstacles. There needs to be a recognition of women as heads of the family in Iran, and their basic needs and social services should be provided for. Understanding of their problems is necessary in order to address them. The purpose of this study is to present a comprehensive picture of the problems and financial hardships faced by women as heads of families in Iranian society.

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SIMON KELLY, RICHARD PERCIVAL AND  
ANN HARDING

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## Women and Superannuation in the 21st Century: Poverty or Plenty?

WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 3:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS D

The ageing of the population and its consequen

translated into the complex and sometimes contentious area of local governance?

Citizens panels are one method for Council to take into account the considered views of its citizens when making important decisions. They are a new tool for local government in Australia and have not been widely used. As part of the exploration of deliberative democracy, Council has made a decision to trial their use, using a variety of methodologies that will be evaluated at the end of the trial.

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PETER KHOURY

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### Indigenous Community Organisations and the Discourse of Managerialism

THURSDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS B

This paper explores the impact of managerialist procedures, as practised by funding bodies and government bureaucracies, on Indigenous community organisations such as Aboriginal Medical Services, Aboriginal Legal Services and other Indigenous community formed and operated organisations.

The discourse of managerialism is embodied in a set of technocratic procedures such as performance measurement, quantitative indexes of efficiency and effectiveness, and performance for results. These principles are derived from the corporate financial sector and imposed on what are essentially grass roots, non-bureaucratic, voluntary, social justice organisations. The paper also highlights the competing demands on Indigenous community organisations to respond simultaneously to the pressing needs of their local communities as well as the restricted performance and funding criteria imposed by a supervising bureaucracy.

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PAMELA KINNEAR

The Australia Institute

### Mutual Obligation: A Reasonable Policy?

THURSDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS 312

Despite disputes about how the idea should be implemented in policy terms, the concept of 'mutual obligation' has gained a 'motherhood' status and is now accepted largely uncritically as a reasonable basis for social security policy. Support has been voiced by Government, Opposition, the general public, the private sector - in particular the banks - and, to some extent, the community sector.

However, this paper argues that that the principle of mutual obligation is based on a loose and inaccurate appeal to foundational principles of liberal democracy as well a number of popular misconceptions about the nature of unemployment in Australia. This paper assesses a variety of propositions coming from within the Australian 'welfare reform' debate according to this critique.

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SUSAN LACKNER

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### The Unheard Injustice: Young People and Centrelink Breaches - Information Denied.

WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 3:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS B

Since the implementation of mutual obligation requirements, Centrelink breaches for unemployed people have increased by 250% over the past three years (ACOSS, 2000 pp1). Young people 18 to 24 years are the group most effected by Centrelink breaches, with 53% of all breaches occurring in this age range. While Centrelink breaches have increased dramatically, so have appeals with nearly 35% of all breaches implemented by Centrelink for 1999-2000 revoked through an appeals process. Young people however do not make these appeals even though they constitute over half of all breaches (ACOSS, pp7). It has been extremely difficult to obtain data relating to young people and breaches as Centrelink has refused my requests, including an FOI request stating the information is 'politically sensitive'. In a society celebrating its centenary of federation, it may be worth asking not only, where welfare policies such as mutual obligation are heading, but also why access to information related to welfare policies is denied.







An analysis from a cultural perspective highlights the problems of articulation with which Aboriginal people must deal in their relations with the state and indicates that, while there is no going back, there is no clear way forward either.

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SARAH MADDISON

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**Uneasy Bedfellows: What Role Now for Social Movements in the Policy Process?**

THURSDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS B

FRIEDA MASON, DIANE GIBSON AND  
PETER BRAUN

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## Ageing in Place: Has Policy Implementation Been Effective?

THURSDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS D

October 1st 1997 saw the introduction of a number of significant changes to the residential aged care system in Australia. A central structural change was the shift from a two tier residential care system – hostels and nursing homes - into a single residential care system. One of the main implications of the merging of the two tiers of residential care is that residents of low care facilities (formerly hostels) now have the opportunity to age-in-place if their dependency levels increases. Indeed, ageing-in-place is one of the specified objectives of the Aged Care Act. The policy was presented as having both individual and system level advantages. At the individual level, ageing-in-place removes the personal disruption associated with having to move from a hostel to a nursing home as dependency levels increase. At the system level, the shift to a one tier system removed anomalies in the re-imburement system between hostels and nursing homes. This paper examines the impact of this policy on residents in low care facilities, focussing on factors such as changes in resident dependency profiles, length of stay and patterns of discharge.

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activities. Broadly there are two possible ways of marrying these apparently divergent pieces of information. One is to decide that one method is superior to the other. The second method is to accept the findings produced by each method and seek ways of reconciling apparent contradictions. This paper seeks to explain why respondents produce these apparently contradictory descriptions of their activities. Using a combination of focus groups and secondary data analysis, the paper explores more subtle forms of the time signature of caring, which help to identify those carers who do not self-identify as carers.

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#### COLIN PENTER AND BINDI OTHER-GEE

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#### Unholy Alliance or Force for Social Good? The Prominence of Faith Based Discourses and the Growth of Church and Faith Based Organisations in Social Policy and Service Provision.

WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 3:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS A

In this paper we want to explore the growing prominence and power accorded to faith and church based organisations, and religious and faith based “discourses” in social policy debates and the provision of social welfare, education, community and human services. In particular, we will consider the implications of this trend for society and for the provision of services to a diverse community.

Consistent with the conference theme, we believe that the increasing prominence and power of church and faith based agencies points to a number of significant “fault lines”. In our view, it reflects a fundamental transition in the role of the so-called “independent sector” and of relationships within and across the industry. It also reflects a trend towards the recruitment of the independent sector as a “defacto” agent of the state. Whilst this is partly a consequence of government’s increasing reliance on market driven approaches to service provision, it does point to deeper social transitions.

In our view fundamental transitions are occurring in the relationship between church, the place of faith, and the role of government and the state. Whilst this occurs within a language of tolerance, social justice and concern for the disadvantaged it reflects the prominence accorded religious and faith “discourses” in public and social policy debates and political life in Australia.

As governments increasingly rely on market driven approaches to the provision of social welfare, community and human services why is it we ask, that many church based organisations have embraced these market driven approaches with considerable fervour and commitment? And what is the impact of the growing role and dominance

of faith based discourses and large church and faith based organisations in the independent, third sector? And why is it that church and faith based agencies are silent on some issues that most directly affect disadvantaged families such as increased public funding of private church schools? And why are governments privileging church based and faith based agencies in ways that are not available to other agencies. ? As long-standing and experienced practitioners in the third sector we are troubled by these trends. And we also concerned about the limited critical and public debate of these issues. We also view with concern the recruitment of the independent third sector into this agenda.

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#### Older Men - Who Gets New Jobs?

WEDNESDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS D

The low employment levels of men aged 50 and over seem to be partly due to early retirement and partly due to difficulties in finding new work for those who lose jobs. This paper uses the results of a survey of over 5000 men and women aged 45 to 69 to analyse the factors that might be associated with becoming re-employed for older men who lose or leave jobs. From the group of men who lost/left jobs less than ten years ago, it compares those who are now re-employed with those who are not.

The factors examines include age, attitudes to work, reasons for leaving their former job, job search activity and assistance, education and training, time between leaving one job and becoming re-employed, financial position, family circumstances and health.

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#### Exploring Indicators of Financial Stress

THURSDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS C

Not everyone on low incomes would be deemed to be financially stressed, while some people on higher incomes show signs of financial stress. This paper explores the relationships between income levels and indicators of financial stress as reported in the 1998-99 household expenditure survey. Financial stress is identified in various ways including asking households whether they usually spent more than they saved, whether they went without basics such as meals or home heating, whether they did not pay basic bills, and whether they could not afford certain activities. The paper first examines which indicators seem the most useful. It then compares low income households



knowledge gained early in the research process led to the development of a research framework which spanned trends in both legal and social issues. Some of the major features were:

- a 'pro-contact' culture has emerged in family law practice since approximately 1996;
- domestic violence and child abuse are inter-related and often occur in the same families - although the research findings suggest that domestic violence is more commonly reported;
- child protection is no longer the exclusive province of the state welfare authorities and is often now exercised Family Court;
- it is difficult to establish child sexual abuse - whether to commence a police investigation, to trigger a child protection response or to 'prove' the allegations to the satisfaction of a Court;
- where there has been abuse of women and children during a relationship, this is likely to be continued, often in a different way, after separation; and
- the real impact of domestic violence on women is not reflected in official decision-making about families affected by violence.

The report identifies and categorises four agencies which play a role in child protection; Families, Youth and Community Care Queensland, the Queensland Police Service, Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) and the Family Court. The former two described as 'investigatory' agencies with the power to gather evidence, take direct protective steps and prosecute (or be involved in the protection) offences. The latter two are described as the major 'family law system' agencies which are dependent upon evidence gathered by the investigatory agencies, the parties themselves or child representatives.

The report also examines experiences of focus group participants and practitioners with the investigatory agencies and then analyses the family law system in more detail. The research exposed significant concerns the application of the 'merits' test by Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ). It also demonstrates a number of apparent features of LAQ conferences which appears to have negative consequences for women survivors of domestic violence and their children. These include:

- the coercive nature of conferences;
- the permeation of the pro-contact culture into approach of key players;
- that little or no evidence is often available before intital conferences are conducted;
- the lack of relevance accorded domestic violence;

- the 'best interest of children' are not necessarily a paramount consideration; and
- unworkable and unsafe arrangements for children sometimes result.

Recommendations are made regarding LAQ processes and guidelines, the conduct of conferences and an evaluation methodology to assess the durability and appropriateness of 'consent' orders reached through the conferencing process.

The research findings pointed to the critical role played by child representatives and family report writers and identified the increasing reliance on these professionals as fewer parties have legal representation. Where those persons do not have a deep understanding of domestic violence, their contribution can be damaging for women and children. The extraordinary hurdles faced by many self-representing litigants is also examined, with emphasis on the specific challenges raised where there has been domestic violence. Recommendations for assisting self-representing litigants are made and there is a innovative recommendation regarding managing situations where a person faces cross-examination by a former partner whom it is alleged was abusive.

The findings of this research are important because they exposed a significant number of situations in which the legal/welfare system failed to protect children from on-going harm. Although the focus group participants were a limited, self-selected sample, they had real stories of both the violence and abuse they were exposed to and the welfare and legal processes they had encountered. Their stories were echoed in the information received from the practitioner surveys and the clinical experience of the reference group members.

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ELI RISTEVSKI

consumers and resources. Organisations consist of staff with professional qualifications and skills. Similarly, volunteer roles have developed into professional positions where volunteers work in positions of responsibility and autonomy, require education and training, and are often involved in areas of service delivery. This has led to a





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## Social Enterprise: Partnership for Sustainable Change

THURSDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS 310

Diverse experiences of social enterprise in Australia are providing innovative opportunities to harness capacities from all sectors - government, service providers, direct users and the community — to achieve positive social outcomes. In addition, a growing number of social entrepreneurs in Australia are willing to take significant risks to bring about societal change. In all cases risk management is a strategic necessity for the success of their enterprises. Building on the positions put forward in two previous workshop papers - Social Enterprise: An Opportunity to Harness Capacities, and Social Enterprise: Risks and Sustainability - this paper will address social enterprises as strategies for engaging community resources for sustainable change. In this context, the negotiation of indicators of change in communities and agreement on the indirect and cumulative signs of sustainable progress become critical components for effective risk management as well as for sustainable change. How do we arrive at agreement on change outcomes? How can we be assured that change can be sustained? The paper will look at how The Smith Family is addressing these questions as part of a risk management strategy for piloting a community based intervention targetted at indigenous high school students in WA.

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## Investigating Information Poverty and its Implications for Community Development

THURSDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS C

The social implications of disparate access to information in communities are poorly understood, and the relationship between information poverty and other forms of social disadvantage is also unclear.

We attempted to determine dimensions of information poverty in extended interviews with 20 low socio-economic status (SES) persons in Auckland, New Zealand, in a test of Elfreda Chatman's six-proposition model. We found that the dimensions of information poverty take different shapes depending on the community in which they appear. We argue that information richness is an easier concept to define than information poverty, because definitions of the former usually focus on characteristics of the individual rather than the characteristics of community. In contrast,

information poverty is to us more a description of an "individual in community" than of an individual alone. Our research supported US findings that information poor people engaged in self-protective behaviour by avoiding exposing their true problems and that they practised selective introduction of new knowledge. Others of our findings were at odds with recent US research in that the New Zealand respondents did not perceive themselves as devoid of social support; class distinction and privileged access to information were less salient; and secrecy and deception largely did not feature in respondents' behaviour. We explore some social policy implications of these findings.

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## From Passive Welfare Dependence to Mutual Obligation and Participation?: Competing Visions of Indigenous Welfare Reform

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## Parental Welfare Use and Children Outcomes: Is There Evidence for a Welfare Culture Model?

THURSDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS C

This paper uses a meta-analysis of the literature (particularly from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and New Zealand), on a range of child outcomes (including education, future labour market outcomes, and future welfare use) to shed some light on the question of whether, and how, parental welfare use affects child outcomes. In so doing, it aims to add to the debate, common in many Western nations in the process of (re)considering the role of the welfare state, about 'cycles of dependency

the results from the first applications of this segmentation. The segments will be discussed in terms of the relationship between segment and perceptions of service quality, types of assistance received and outcomes. Discussion will also focus on future applications of the model in targeting assistance and early identification of relative disadvantage.

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## Changing Conceptions of Informal Care in Australia

WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 3:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS D

Informal care has always been a feature of family and social life, however it gained attention in social policy from the 1970s and 80s, influenced by the feminist critique as well as growing government recognition of the social and economic benefits of supporting community-based care. State support for community care and carers has grown in size and complexity since that period. At the same time, the way that government and others conceive caring has evolved. Carers are no longer seen as 'invisible' or 'burdened' but as having legitimate support needs of their own. More recently, new conceptions of caring have emerged which position government and family as 'partners' in care. This paper argues that government supports for community care and conceptions of that care have been influenced in parallel ways by the forces of advocacy and research as well as economic and ideological imperatives. It critically evaluates these new and emerging conceptions, with a particular focus on the implications of the frameworks of mutual obligation and community capacity building for informal care.

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From a comparative perspective the Australian system is rather expensive, averaging two percent of wages for most years in the 1980s and 1990s. The most important factor in Australia's high costs is the high share of the unemployed who are compensated. Despite use of a means test to limit eligibility, the ratio of UA beneficiaries to unemployment (from the labor force survey) has been 0.75 or higher in every year since 1979.

The puzzle of high recipiency will be examined in Part III. This will briefly summarize analyses of labor market disincentive effects, both in UA systems such as Australia's and in UI systems. The evolution of means testing in Australia will be traced.

Part IV will assess four broad policy initiatives. 1) The current approach to mutual obligation will be discussed. 2) The change to individualization of the mid 1990s will be described and assessed. 3) The potential usefulness of an Earned Income Tax Credit will be discussed. 4) The use of "profiling" to target reemployment services will be described. The latter two initiatives have been in force in the United States for some years. Based on this analysis some final comments about useful directions for future policy will be offered.

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ARIADNE VROMEN

analysts and policy makers not only in the health and housing areas but also in the general welfare and support area. This paper examines the relationship between various indicators of health status and housing tenure and overcrowding in Australia using data from the ABS 1995 National Health Survey. The implications of the key results for the development of housing and urban policy will also be discussed.

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## Beyond Impoverished Visions of the Labour Market

THURSDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS A

A conventional wisdom is emerging amongst some economists that Australia can only 'solve' its unemployment problem if it creates more low paid jobs. This chapter argues that such a vision of the future is impoverished for two reasons. At the heart of the vision is the desire to create a large low wage sector in Australia. This is regarded as a sign of a 'flexible' labour market. We argue that this is not only undesirable, but it is unnecessary. Secondly, the economics behind this vision is impoverished analytically.

The paper has three sections. Section 1 examines the labour market dynamics which are creating inequality. We highlight the connections between market based competition, unemployment, non-standard work and low paid jobs. Section 2 examines the nature of inequality in the labour market in contemporary Australia. We analyse how inequalities arising from the labour market affect the distribution of income across households and we argue

where 'reality

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## Workplace Change in Local Government: the Impact of Competition Policy and the New Public Management on Service Delivery to Communities

FRIDAY 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM SESSION, MATHEWS 310

This study offers empirical evidence on the impact of competition policy and workplace change on service delivery by South Australian local councils. The SA Government has shifted many of its responsibilities for community services to local government. Local councils are expected to fund community services by amalgamation, contracting out, and embracing New Public Management (NPM). The study reviews the literature, and evaluates interviews, focus groups and a survey of 649 employees in seven local councils. New international literature suggests job insecurity arising from competition policy and the NPM is associated with poor health and distrust of management. 'Flexible' workplaces advocated by NPM serve communities poorly. Productivity falls, labour turnover is high and administrative costs increase. This study found job insecurity has risen for SA council employees since 'reforms' began. 56% of council workers surveyed reported working additional hours of unpaid labour. Stress levels were rising. Contracting out had brought poorer quality outcomes, higher costs and extra use of council equipment. Cut backs in outdoor staff numbers were reducing service to the communities. NPM work programs based on receiving complaints and requests from residents were creating re-active council services. This study recommends dispensing with NPM for a new, critical model of service delivery, which asks 'how can local government best serve the community'?

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## Housing Implications of Social, Spatial and Structural Change

WEDNESDAY 3:30 PM TO 5:00 PM SESSION, MATHEWS 310

Over the last few decades Australia, like a number of other countries, has experienced a significant polarisation of household incomes as a result of social, demographic and economic changes. This paper provides an empirical assessment of the impact of these changes on housing choices and housing outcomes. In particular, it focuses on the change in tenure structure for different households and on the spatial and economic factors affecting these outcomes. The interaction of economic, socio-demographic and geographic factors is likely to become increasingly important as moves towards labour market flexibility increase the importance of spatial mobility and as the economic uncertainty associated with such flexibility decreases the willingness or ability of households to make long term economic commitments.

Whilst Australia has enjoyed a high and stable home ownership rate for four decades years or more, recent research has identified a number of signals which introduce a sense of disquiet. The most aggregated of these signals is the steady decline in the overall home purchase rate which, for the present at least, has been largely offset by an increase in outright ownership rates. Further signals arise from more disaggregated analyses undertaken either in relation to socio-economic and demographic characteristics of households or in relation to the spatial outcomes of change. Socio-demographic analyses highlight a dramatic decline in home purchase rate\* -0.00073 T9rle.disitp01 Tc0.023 e7the st6(a)-0.me p

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