enterprise (ˈentəprəs) n. 1. a project or undertaking, esp. one that requires boldness of effort. 2. participation in such projects; readiness to embark on new ventures; boldness and energy. 4. a company or firm.
Rock Around the Taxpayers' Clock: It's time for the music industry to stand on its own feet .... R.J. Stove

Why Training Isn't Working: Listen to the clients .... Ken Phillips

Domestic Violence Survey Sparks a Row: A biased survey will help only those with a narrow ideology to push .... John Coochey

Education without Enterprise: The Karpin Report's call for business values in schools underestimates union resistance .... Kevin Donnelly

Policy from the People: The Coalition could learn much from recent political developments in the US and Canada .... Philip Ayres

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Letters

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Moore Economics: Why the selling of the Federal Budget fell flat.

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Reviews:

The Killing of History, reviewed by Myles Breen
Heritage Farming in Australia, reviewed by Bert Kelly
The New Victorians, reviewed by Margaret Fitzherbert

IPA News: A new quarterly digest of information about regulation is launched.
Electoral Offence

ON reading 'Politicians Inc.' by Ian Farrow (IPA Review, Vol. 47/4, 1995) I was surprised at the points made about preferential voting and legislation which threatens disclosure of the facts.

On May 3, I spoke to a representative of the State Electoral Commission who confirmed that everything in your article was true, i.e. (1) you are able to make a valid vote without distributing preferences by marking a 'one' in the square opposite your candidate and a 'two' in every other square; (2) to publicize this during election time has been legislated as an offence punishable by up to six months in prison.

This was justified on the grounds that although the legislation allows you to vote this way it was not the intention of the legislation to allow it.

While accepting the representative's comment that the public service did not make the laws but was obliged to uphold them, I queried the intelligence of our politicians and the sanity of the system which permitted them to pass improperly worded laws that did not reflect their intent, then punished any voter who disclosed that fact.

I was told that if I wished to take the matter any further I would have to contact my local parliamentarian. I did so on 8 May 1995, repeating an outline of the above. He said he didn't know whether it was true, but would check and get back to me. At the time of writing this (11 May 1995), I have heard nothing further.

I am unwilling to risk imprisonment by repeating this information at election time, nor do I expect anyone else to take that risk, but I feel it is a matter which ought to be publicized as widely as possible before the next election.

Dov Ryzman, Melbourne, Vic.

Judicial Power

I refer to the article by Dr Colin Howard (IPA Review, Vol. 47/4, 1995). With 'no disrespect' to the good doctor, I submit that the protection of judicial independence is of greater importance than the short-term protection of the Executive from review by the third arm of government.

Dr Howard expresses the belief that it is valid and expedient to prevent review of government action in order to implement a contentious government policy. I believe he is mistaken. The Doctrine of the Separation of Powers is threatened when members of the public are denied legal recourse to challenge administrative decisions of the Executive. Stifling administrative law may not be a direct attack on judicial independence — it does not try to influence judges' decision-making ability — but it is a reduction in judicial power: it removes the ability of judges to consider the validity of executive decisions.

The Executive has unilaterally declared in advance that all of its decisions on the matter of the Grand Prix are valid. It has set a precedent which it can use in future policy decisions, whether they be to resume land for a national park or build a toxic-waste storage facility.

Furthermore, Dr Howard's suggestion that aggrieved citizens can vent their concerns in the next General Election seems to me to be an inadequate alternative for persons who may believe themselves to have been unfairly compensated by the Victorian Government.

The Grand Prix legislation and subsequent decisions will become only one issue amongst many in a future election. Any negative consequences of Grand Prix decisions will only directly impact on a small section of the community. The individuals aggrieved may lack the numbers to sway the vote in one electorate let alone decide the fact of a government.

Mark Lancha, Taringa, Qld.

Relativism's Record

IN your last issue (IPA Review, Vol. 47/4, 1995) both your editorial and your contributor Roger Sandall addressed in timely fashion the pitfalls of moral relativism, as exemplified by 20th-century vices from totalitarianism to post-modernism. It is extraordinary that relativism should now be seen as a liberator of women, indigenous peoples, the oppressed masses and the environment. Antinomians like Rousseau and Shelley treated women abominably. The relativism of social Darwinism hardly helped indigenous peoples — nor did the cultural relativism of their own tribe-centred ethics, which left them divided and vulnerable.

It is the 'rape manual' of Newtonian science that underlies the discipline of ecology — not antinomianism, which either saw nature as a justification for brutality (de Sade) and tyranny (the Nazis); or as absurd and alienating (Sartre); or as an idealized fantasy (the flower children). And totalitarianism notoriously profited from antinomianism — in Russia from the nihilists, in Germany from the seediness of the Weimar period, in Japan from the indigenous traditions of situation ethics and Zen irrationalism. It is also notorious that opposition to Hitler came not from Germany's bohemians, but from pastors like Bonhoeffer, Catholic Bishops, and Churchill across the Channel — none of whom were much given to 'polymorphous perversity'.

Antinomian disorders allowed dictators to seize power and to justify their resort to drastic remedies. Relativism removed the humbling sense of a higher standard outside the ferocious will of the power-maniac. It also enabled...
There is nothing new about moral relativism. It arose long ago in the Greek world, where philosophy had cast doubt on the colourful but wayward Homeric deities, without putting any agreed alternative in their place. The consequences sound eerily familiar — learning decaying into sophistry; civic life poisoned by venality and corruption; the old (as Plato complained) foolishly aping the young to remain fashionable; astrological hokum flooding in to fill the spiritual vacuum which human nature abhors. We cannot blame all Greece’s follies on moral relativism, but it doesn’t exactly seem to have helped. Greek thinkers like Socrates and Plato were much exercised by the issue.

The best response was the one given by Plato in his dialogue Theaetetus (161 d). His master Socrates is discussing the view that all is relative. If so (says Socrates), this must apply to the view of the relativist as well — so why should we heed such views?

Socrates and Plato had, in effect, deconstructed the deconstructors more than 2,000 years before the latter saw the light of day. No wonder deconstructionists hate dead European males. They knew too much.

David Elder, Grange, SA

Science Devalued

It is my melancholy duty to inform you that Cultural Constructions Inc. (p.48, IPA Review, 47/4, 1995) is not only alive and well in the arts. Political correctness has openly infected my own professional body, the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science (AIAS), of which I have been a lifelong member.

When it restricted its membership to persons with degrees in agriculture or other sciences AIAS experienced existence-threatening financial difficulties. When this is coupled with the undoubted fact that the practice of professional agriculture in all its manifestations also involves farmers, marketers, and communications as vital links in the chain of production which agricultural science serves, it is understandable that AIAS would seek to widen its membership base.

However, there are severe downsides to this action.

First, there has been a significant number of resignations of the brightest and best of agricultural scientists, as a brief examination of correspondence in the AIAS Journal of the preceding few years reveals.

Second, there is a resigned acceptance of the necessity to change the name of AIAS to something that excludes the word ‘science’, as so many members now have no scientific qualifications. The effect of this on the seriousness with which the opinions of AIAS are regarded among decision-makers can be imagined. Instead of being a body to whom interested parties could turn for disinterested advice, the AIAS inevitably becomes just another pressure group, and probably not a very effective one at that.

Third, the open abandonment of scientific principle is demonstrated in the statement of Objectives (or is it Mission Statement? — the proliferation of such phrases being a sure indicator of the presence of the disease) by AIAS declaring its commitment to ‘sustainable agriculture’.

I was a member of a committee of senior members of the profession who were given the task of preparing the policy document on this matter. The difficulty of the question and the seriousness with which the committee viewed the matter may be gauged by the fact that it took over a year before the committee produced its final report. The report concluded, in effect, that ‘sustainability’ is a meaningless concept in agriculture unless the farm is to be nothing more than a hunter-gatherer operation, which farms manifestly are not. Australian farms, by and large, could not produce at their present levels without, for example, the importation of the plant nutrient phosphorus. This is imported from places where phosphorus is present in superabundance. By definition therefore Australian farms are not ‘sustainable’ — they depend upon imported inputs.

Furthermore, a farm can be operated in such a way that all the soil erodes and bare rock is left. Obviously the bare rock is a very stable and sustainable system. It certainly would produce practically nothing — except perhaps increased water run-off which may well be a harvestable benefit for some downstream irrigator, for example — but its sustainability cannot be questioned. Moreover, if I may be permitted a syntactical barbarism, systems can be cyclically sustainable. Consider, for example, mammalian (including human) populations which ‘bounce along the Malthusian ceiling’ in alternating phases: death from overstocking is followed, when sufficient numbers have perished, by a build-up phase. For some reason the

Write to: The Editor, IPA Review, Ground Floor, 128 Jolimont Road, Jolimont Vic. 3002.
Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity and should be no more than 400 words.
advocates of 'sustainability' do not seem to like this very much, although it is indisputably a sustainable system.

So the committee reported that the concept should not be used, but instead a statement employed to the effect that AIAS was not in favour of land use practices that caused expensive-to-reverse land degradation such as gross soil erosion and soil salinity.

You can imagine the committee's feelings when the then Victorian Branch (there has been an administrative structural alteration since) of AIAS refused to accept the committee's report, and AIAS went along and included 'sustainability' in its 'aims'.

The reasons may be debated, but I blame the madness of the 'managerial' culture that permeated the Victorian Department of Agriculture (or whatever name the then-existent avatar had at the time) under the Kirner Government. Evidence for this lies in the existence of an 'Institute For Sustainable Agriculture' in the irrigation areas of Northern Victoria. No doubt principled scientific objection could not be expected from Departmental staff whose livelihood and research funding would have been threatened by pointing out to their political masters the wish-fulfilling voodooism implicit in the concept of 'sustainability', but at least AIAS could have done it.

What to do? Well, my choice is to stay with AIAS and continue to associate with the excellent branch-level field activities which continue unaffected by this second-rate philosophical posturing, which I hope will die of its own internal contradictions. I am sufficiently unimportant that my views can be ignored, but I am sure my subscription is welcome.

George Lines,
Fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science, Skipton, Victoria

Beersheba Day

LIKE Balaclava, Mons, Dunkirk and the fall of Singapore, Anzac Day commemorates a disaster. After April 25, 1915, there were no shortages of Australian stock horses (known as Walers) in Egypt with so many Lighthorsmen having been killed or wounded at Gallipoli.

If we wish to honour a more auspicious date, may I suggest October 31? On this day in 1917, about 800 Australian soldiers (including my late great-uncle), with the 4th and 12th Regiments of the 4th Light Horse Brigade, charged at the gallop across nearly five kilometres of open ground to the wells of Beersheba, against an entrenched enemy supported by artillery, machine-guns, rifles and two German warplanes.

In this close partnership, man and horse shared the same water bucket while riding to battle over 274 kilometres in four days in temperatures of 37.8 degrees Celsius. The doughty Walers became famous as the finest cavalry mount in the world. Although the versatile Australian stock horse is not as fast as the thoroughbred, it is capable of great feats of endurance.

The Australian Light Horse were mounted infantry equipped with Lee-Enfield .303 rifles and bayonets — not the usual cavalry sabre and lance.

It is a little known fact that between 1916 and 1918 the Light Horse and Camel Corps fought 36 battles between the Suez Canal and Damascus (some 640 kilometres) and won all of them. Beersheba (then in Palestine, now in Israel) was probably the most daring of these victories.

During the entire Middle-East campaigns, the Light Horse took over 40,000 Turks prisoners, while only 73 Australians (and not one officer) were captured.

Charles Edward Chauvel's (1897-1959) classic Forty Thousand Horsemen (1940) and The Light Horsemen (1987) are two outstanding movies about the Light Horse and Beersheba. There is also the 9,000-word equestrian epic The Wells of Beersheba (1933) written by Frank Dalby Davison (1893-1970).

History's last great successful wartime mounted charge ended with only 31 Australians killed and 36 wounded.

The Federal Government has declared this forthcoming Tuesday, October 31, Beersheba Day a National Day of Remembrance.

Jonathan Graham, Double Bay, NSW

Other Voices on Aboriginal Issues

In August 1991 sixty people from all major political parties, industry, business, universities and churches met in Melbourne to discuss the future prospects for Australia's indigenous peoples.

Organised by the Galatians Group Inc., the seminar was addressed by a diverse panel of speakers, including author and historian Professor Geoffrey Blaney, former Chief Justice the Rt Hon. Sir Harry Gibbs, former superintendent of the Finke River Mission Pastor Paul Albrecht and Federal Member for Kalgoorlie the Hon. Graeme Campbell.

The seminar papers are published under the title

The Churches: Native to Australia or Alien Intruders?

Price: $12.00 (inc. postage and handling)

Enquiries to: The Galatians Group, PO Box 226, Armadale Vic. 3143

The 1995 conference of the Galatians Group is planned for August 20 to 22 in Melbourne on the theme: Multicultural Australia? Ethnic Claims and Religious Values

Speakers include Professor Emeritus Jerzy Zubrzycki, Mr B.A. Santamaria, Professor Emeritus Charles Price, Mr Tony Abbott, Professor John Hirst.
MR Keating's road to a republic has a steep hill ahead. If the Prime Minister is to persuade people of the merits of his model, he must persuade them to put aside their distrust of politicians. His preference is for a president elected by both houses of the federal parliament. The Australian public seems equally adamant that the only form of republic which would be acceptable to them is one in which they and not politicians chose the head of state. They don't trust politicians to do the choosing.

If there is a change of government at the next election and John Howard's consensus-seeking constitutional conventions take place, it seems likely that a popularly-elected head of state (despite the serious problems it would pose — as Graham Lederman's article beginning on page 42 explains) will have to be included among the options put to the people in the referendum that Mr Howard has now assured us will occur. To exclude that option would be to exclude the one point which so far can command anything like a popular consensus.

Politics, most people believe, is a dirty, Machiavellian business. One feature of the monarchy which continues to be attractive is that it is 'above politics': above the conflict and divisiveness, above the partisanship, above the ruthless scramble for power, above the dubious deal-making. People don't want the head of state decided upon by some cross-factional deal which puts the interests of the political parties before those of the nation.

People's unwillingness to trust politicians to elect a president on their behalf is an instance of a wider distrust of politicians. In rankings of public confidence in institutions, politicians as a group (along with trade unionists, journalists and used-car salesmen) consistently rate poorly, although people often maintain a high regard for certain individual politicians.

OPPORTUNISM: The common view is that politicians don't prosper unless they are prepared to betray their principles and, as Graeme Richardson confirmed in his political autobiography, to lie. The Government's repeal of subsection 329(2) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act, which demanded 'truth in advertising' during electoral campaigns, would be seen by most people as simply bringing legislation in line with reality. Neither the extravagant, hackneyed rhetoric of election campaigns, nor the vituperation heard in parliament enhance the image of politicians.

Mr Howard's observation in his June 'Headland' speech that politicians undermine their credibility by promising too much is right, as is his view that the responsiveness of governments to noisy special-interest groups has added to the majority's mistrust of politics.

This is not to deny that decent and honourable politicians committed to the national interest exist on both sides of parliament. But the temptations and pressures to sacrifice principles to power are great in politics and the stakes are high. There is a danger that the poor opinion of politicians will spill over into cynicism about the political system itself, just as public disapproval of the conduct of the younger members of the royal family has contributed to the weakening of attachment to the monarchy. Fortunately there seems so far to be no significant disenchantment with parliamentary democracy in Australia, although the push for civics in schools is driven by a soundly-based concern that widespread ignorance of and indifference about the workings and basis of our democratic political system does not auger well for its future.

HEALTHY SCEPTICISM: Distrust of politicians has a healthy side to it: it helps immunize us against the cargo-cult promises of charismatic leaders; it discourages us from investing our hopes in political solutions to the many problems which don't have political solutions; it helps us laugh at the hyperbole, the pomposity and the self-aggrandizement to which some politicians are prone; and it keeps us on the look-out for corruption. Indeed, to the extent that our distrust of politicians and governments contributes to these things Australia needs more of it.

— Ken Baker
Indicators

- Average Medicare benefits claimed by a person living in a country electorate in 1993-94: $239
  Average claimed by a resident of an urban electorate: $324
  Source: David Hawker MP, based on figures in House of Reps Hansard, 28 March 1995.

- Man-hours donated annually by volunteers to community social welfare organizations in Australia: 95 million hours by 1.3 million people.

- Growth in male earnings in Australia from 1990 to 1994
  Lowest paid decile: 6.5%
  Middle decile: 8.9%
  Highest paid decile: 16%

- Change in number of Family immigrants to Australia between 1992-93 and 1993-94: 5% increase.
  Change in number of Skill immigrants over the same period: 42% decline.

- Federal funding in 1994 of environmental organizations for the purpose of examining aspects of the forest industry: $404,933
  Source: John Faulkner, Senate Hansard, 21 March 1995.

- Budget for advertising the Federal Government's Working Nation package: $14.2 million
  Percentage of participants in Jobstart who are employed three months after the subsidy ends: 59
  Percentage increase in Commonwealth Employment Service staff between 1989-90 and 1993-90: 58

- Increase between 1981 and 1991 in the number of people aged 20 to 34 years who live with their parents: 35%

- Suicide rate of 15-24 year olds (per 100,000 population):
  New Zealand 22.6
  Australia 16.7
  Sweden 14.2
  USA 13.3
  UK 7.0
  Japan 7.0
  Greece 3.2

- Countries with the highest credit risk:
  Iraq
  Russia
  Nigeria
  Venezuela
  Mexico
Further afield

Religion's Shrinking Role

T HE recently-released film Priest has stirred controversy because of its portrayal of a 'liberated' priest in conflict with an authoritarian Catholic Church.

In a forthcoming book, Hollywood's America, media analysts Stanley Rothman, David Rothman and Stephen Powers examine a random sample of the top American movies for each year from 1946 to 1990. They find a marked change over this period in the representation of religion. In the first decade after the War religion was depicted as "an institution upon which both heroic and ordinary characters relied for support. Religion held a special power over the lives of the faithful which enabled them to accomplish or to endure things that others could not." Between 1946 and 1955 19 per cent of all movie characters had religious identities and 81 per cent of these had benign images. Religious workers were portrayed favourably in 100 per cent of cases.

By the period 1976 to 1990 only four per cent of movie characters had religious identities and the proportion of these having positive images had declined to 56 per cent. Religious workers were presented favourably in only half the movies in which they appeared. In the earlier period religious workers succeeded in their main goals in 70 per cent of cases; by the later period this had fallen to just 17 per cent.


Adapting to Globalization

G OVERNMENTS are accustomed to setting the context within which markets operate. But increasingly, as a consequence of globalization, it is markets that set the limits within which governments govern. The power of the new globalized corporate elite, untried to any nation and for whom satellites and the digital revolution have abolished the tyranny of distance, is patronage: they invest in whichever country offers the best value-for-taxes, the highest productivity or the most civil society. They shop among governments which must compete for their trade.

Not everyone is happy about this. Indeed there are signs of a popular backlash in some countries as people look to governments to protect them from competition, change and cultural intrusion. American social analyst Christopher Lasch is critical of the new globalized elite's rootlessness, its detachment from the fate of any one nation: "Their ties to an international culture of work and leisure make many of them indifferent to the prospect of national decline." He prefers old-style aristocracy which at least had a sense of noblesse oblige.

What can democratic governments do? They could try to resist globalization by banning satellite dishes, blocking the information superhighway, reimposing exchange controls, raising trade barriers, cracking down on work permits and so on. But this response would require such widening and isolating action that for most it is an impractical option.

For democratic governments to suffer a relative loss of power is not the same as their communities being rendered powerless. Consumers and lobbyists influence markets just as they influence governments. Popular values help shape the behaviour of corporations and the nature of their products. Those values might include a preference for products made without tropical hardwoods, or untested on animals.

In adapting to globalization democratic governments will have to get both bigger and smaller: geographically bigger to run the regimes that nations cannot run — to ensure the safety of intellectual property and to regulate the fishing and polluting of the seas, for example; smaller to allow people to shape the character of their own communities — its policing, education, arts and social justice policies.


Not at Home

R EMOVING children from their biological parents is a decision that governments must sometimes make, but it should never be taken lightly. Australia-wide over 12,200 children are in out-of-home care. Rates of placement differ significantly among the States. The rates per thousand children are: 1.6 in the ACT; 2.2 in Victoria; 2.3 in the NT; 2.6 in Queensland; 2.7 in WA; 3.0 in NSW; 3.3 in SA; 3.9 in Tasmania. The distribution between family-based (foster) care and institutional/group care also differs markedly among the States. The proportion of out-of-home care which is family-based ranges from a high in SA of 96 per cent to a low in Victoria of 63 per cent. The trend nationally is towards family-based care.

The proportion of Aboriginal children separated from their parents is comparatively high. Aboriginal children constitute 2.7 per cent of Australia's child population, but 20 per cent of the children-in-care population.

Australia's overall rate of children-in-care appears to be low by international standards. America's is 7.7 per thousand and the rate in some European countries is even higher. In Denmark, for example, the rate is 10.5 and in Germany 9.4. Differences among countries in counting rules and the quality of data, however, mean that comparisons should be made with caution.

CAN THE ABC’S JJJ FM RADIO NETWORK AND AUSTRALIA’S OTHER FORMALIZED MUSIC INDUSTRY LOBBIES JUSTIFY TAKING OUR MONEY?

Rock around the taxpayers' Clock

R.J. STOVE

EVEN as we sit here there undoubtedly exists, mouldering in the innards of some Dawkins-created borstal, a PhD candidate hard at work on the doctoral thesis *Rock Music Imagery As A Factor In Mid-1990s State And Federal Politics*. Such a candidate will lack nothing in raw material. On the Monday morning after NSW’s recent election Warren, the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* cartoonist, emphasized the tally’s Rolling Stones connotations: he depicted both John Fahey and Bob Carr on stage as part of The Polling Drones, unisonously snarling *I Can’t Get No Satisfaction* (though perhaps for Mr Fahey, given his ecstatic on-camera levitation at the 1993 Olympics announcement, *Jumpin’ Jack Flash* would have been a more appropriate ditty).

Across the Murray River, Jeff Kennett and Whatsisname Brumby — according to *The Age* on 23 March — vied with each other in piquant allusions to Mick Jagger’s Golden Treasury of English Verse. Mr Brumby, who failed to score an invitation to Mr Kennett’s private party for the Stones, complained that “You can’t always get what you want, but I think the Premier always gets what he wants.” For his part, Mr Kennett (clearly displaying the most morbid sensitivity to charges of

R.J. Stove, a Sydney writer and broadcaster, is a frequent contributor to * IPA Review.*
excessive good taste) revealed that his all-time Stones favourite was Satisfa-
ction "because I can’t get any from the Opposition at the moment. I try to do
my best to keep the Parliament humming along. I often use the word
‘humping’ along.” Insisting — with as close an approximation to a straight
face as his physiognomy will allow — that the welcoming bash for Tyre-
Tread Lips et al “would further Victoria’s trade relationship with the United
Kingdom,” Mr Kennett managed to describe himself as “a rock and roll
type of Premier who can move with
the times.” Whether he considered
this a matter for bragging or an admis-
sion of culpability remains uncertain.

Were Mr Kennett’s behaviour an
isolated phenomenon it would not
deserve the printer’s ink that has here
been expended on it. But similar, and
in several respects worse, demonstra-
tions of intellectual slumming have
been afforded us by the improbable fig-
ure of Tim Fischer. In a gesture which
made one suspect (well, you know what
those drought-stricken rural NSW
summers are like) that failure to wear
his trusty hat outdoors had afflicted
him with sunstroke, Mr Fischer wel-
comed the launching on Australia Day
of 18 rural transmitters, which for the
first time gave a nationwide basis to the
ABC’s JJJ — formerly JJ — radio net-
work. Is the National Party so enslaved
to vote-catching that JJJ, which could
be relied upon to make any sincere
National want to vomit after only 10
minutes’ exposure to it, now seems
worthwhile? Where is the electoral
benefit to Mr Fischer in welcoming a
wider audience for a station which, on
the first day that Australia as a whole
could tune into it, saw fit to broadcast
the words “I want to f**k you like an
animal”?

A MATEURISM: The single most
obvious characteristic of JJJ’s out-
put, even when the obscenities are not
flying thick and fast in all directions, is
the — how shall we put it? — endear-
ing technical amateurism so often pre-
sent in its announcements. Years ago
Timothy Garton-Ash, interviewing
Midwest agrarians for a Spectator article
on American political attitudes, was
roundly told by a farmer’s wife that
“We’re hicks and we’re proud to be
hicks!” The woman’s husband immedi-
ately stepped in: “What my good lady
means is that we have a, uh, different
kind of sophistication.” Similarly,
there seems to be a widespread JJJ
belief that the omission of all ums, ahs
and stumbles from resident talking
heads’ discourse would fatally compro-
mise the “different kind of sophistica-
tion” which JJJ offers. Gaping holes of
silence repeatedly occur between the
end of a track and the back-announce-

Insisting that the welcomin bash for Tyre-Tread Lips et al
“would further Victoria’s trade relationship
with the UK,”
Mr Kennett managed to describe himself as
a “rock and roll type of Premier ...”
ment thereof. If you have adenoids, prepare to flaunt them now: this appears to be about the nearest that JJJ comes to providing speech instruction for on-air personnel. No attempt is made to discourage female disc-jockeys from the loathsome Australian habit of ending phrases with an upward glide: though it is odd to hear women who are obviously keen to brandish their feminist credentials manifesting a vocal tic which, more than any other, proclaims its sufferer's irredeemable bimbo status. Nor is the effect any more pleasing when JJJ's male disc-jockeys go in for it. Besides, there is not merely the style of talking heads' patter that has to be examined; there is, more crucially, the question of what these talking heads talk, in their occasionally amusing but predominantly inchoate way, about.

A caveat is necessary at this stage. Large claims have been made for the purely musical splendours afforded to a waiting world by JJJ and JJJ alone. The fact that these claims almost invariably come from JJJ itself is not automatically a reason to discount them. Writers like the present one — whose musical taste-buds were long ago annihilated by over-exposure to such poisons as Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Franck, Elgar and Puccini, to name but eight — will obviously find it uphill work to appreciate the deep spiritual awareness of JJJ-promoted Artistes like Deborah Conway, Offspring, and the Glowing Globals. So it is advisable, in a survey as brief as this, to concentrate upon non-musical factors: even if this emphasis involves devoting excessive attention to such feasts of authentic JJJ lyricism as

**Turn my head around** *(around, around, around)*
**Turn my head around** *(around, around, around)*
**Turn my head around** *(ooh, ooh, ooh)*
**Turn my head around** *(ooh, ooh, ooh)*
**Turn my head around** *(ooh, ooh, ooh)*

and the tender ballad *When I Was A Sperm I Had A Lot To Learn*. This latter triumph shows the poetic genius of a latter-day William MacGonagal: a MacGonagal who, unlike the 19-century one, has been able to enrich his muse by prolonged exposure to ... well, pro-

The Station's slogan for the Easter break was "The resurrection weekend: bringing the dead to life on JJJ."
ROCK AROUND THE TAXPAYERS’ CLOCK

back radio segments of scarcely credible dementia. One such segment consisted of a spiritual autobiography from an unbalanced-sounding female caller to whom Jim Morrison constituted the only reason for existence. Frenzied with joy at having become bosom friends with a fellow Morrison addict, the unfortunate lass finished her spiel by saying “Thanks, Jim, for finding me my cosmic mare.”

Another listener, calling herself Debbie, made what JJJ’s Catriona Rowntree described as “one of the most decadent calls we’ve ever received”: it turned out that she was ringing from her bathtub. Perhaps a Celine or a Nathanael West could do justice to the mentality which inspires people to make phone calls like this. Lesser scribes, sooner than attempt so hopeless a task, will throw the towel in. (Debbie’s request was for the old Hot Chocolate 1970s minor hit You Sexy Thing, which has now been revived for Dumb and Dumber’s soundtrack. Given the explicit nature of You Sexy Thing’s lyrics, it was disconcerting to hear Debbie dedicate the request to her father. One was reminded of the great scene in Ferris Bueller’s Day Off where the school principal, espying Ferris and his girlfriend canoodling after Ferris has attempted to pass her off as a member of his family, mutters “I see. It’s that sort of family.”)

Once Easter had finished, the normal bill of JJJ fare soon resumed, with such highlights as “Find my arsehole, brother” (this line from a “song” by an outfit called Bushes, with the suitably nudge-nudge-wink-wink title Everything’s In); “I will come in 60 seconds, when we f**k we hear beats” (this from Overcome — terribly witty name, what? — by a certain Tricky); and the following piercing insight into the human condition, or such elements of the human condition as can be found in Balmain:

She only comes when she’s on top
Dressed up in women’s clothes
Messed about in gender roles

This wondrous poesy, by someone called James, bears the name Laid. Note that all three of these instances occurred within half an hour’s listening. It says a lot about the general intellectual level that by comparison, a minimalist diatribe like Third Eye’s single Gaia — pretty much your standard heavy-breathing invocation to goddess worship and Things That Go Om In The Night — could seem almost attractive.

JJJ justifies its carry-on by referring to its role as a standard-bearer for local groups, providing help to acts that would otherwise waste their sweetness on the desert air: or that would be condemned to night after night of committing purgatorial assaults upon boozers’ eardrums in inner-city pubs. What with JJJ programming’s sheer repetitiveness (the same material is apt to turn up at whatever times of the day or night one listens), this assertion is increasingly hard to substantiate. One might as well be back with the nostalgia-dominated commercial stations, which at least do not give themselves airs about the extent and wisdom of their patronage: except that even the most nauseating commercial stations are, on the whole, reluctant to bandy the F-word around in prime time. Were JJJ’s bosses to start putting their own — as distinct from public — money where their mouths are, they would earn a
modicum of reluctant respect. But the money-mouth nexus is a concept so alien to the modern Australian mind in general, and to the modern socialist Australian mind in particular, as to be literally unthinkable: not repellent necessarily, just unthinkable. After all, we happen to be witnessing a more than usually determined drive for Federal funding by the local music industry, a drive which in late April (surprise surprise) took the form of a Canberra conference.

GOVERNMENT AS SAVIOUR: Midnight Oil's Peter Garrett, a long-established master of observations that combine conventional silly-clever rhetoric with his own fleering faux-naïveté, recently announced — to the regret of almost no-one who continues to possess operative auditory canals — that the Oils were going on an open-ended sabbatical. He was reported in The Daily Telegraph Mirror (27 April) as saying:

"the gut question facing today's music summit is whether we will have a real Australian music industry at all that young bands can aspire to be a part of, where

"... the industry is an antiquated system of largely superseded studios, costly must-use session musicians and inappropriate but expensive producers."

we have Australian recording studios, Australian film clip makers, Australian roadies, Australian equipment, all churning out [his words] music that's distinctive and has value. You don't have that unless governments are prepared to do everything within their power to assist."

Not to be outdone, Michael Gudinski, of the appropriately named Mushroom Records, treated The Australian (28 April) to his somewhat shaky syntax:

"Believe me, the Government is going to have to step in and (we'll) have to see some radical changes because, unfortunately, the radio industry has ... become so Americanized, it's become so big money that you can't expect commercial radio to do it all for you."

And you thought that étatisme on this unblushing scale was confined to North Korea!

In a heartening confirmation of Philip Larkin's epigram "Nothing is funnier than an upstaged revolutionary," various summit spokesmen were annoyed above all with JJJ for what they regarded as its inadequate zeal in broadcasting local content. These spokesmen proffered the idea that JJJ should be destroyed to make room for an alternative Australia-wide station: which in the fullness of time would, no doubt, be itself weighed in the local-content balance, be found wanting, and inspire calls for its destruction in favour of yet another Australia-wide station. So the wheel would turn once more.

What makes all this especially ludicrous is that — as David Brearley made clear in The Weekend Australian on 17-18 September last year — the explosion of home-studio recording hi-tech should have had exactly the same effect on Big Business and Big Government which home-office desktop-publishing technology should have had in the literary world:

"Young players are more empowered today than ever before. Never has it been so easy or so inexpen-
sive to access [sic] quality recording equipment without the stifling interference of music industry functionaries ..."

"As the new kid on the arts block, Michael Lee could not be expected to know all this. But he and his [then] NSW counterpart Peter Collins, who has generously provided $20,000 for this weekend's Rock Initiatives gabfest, should take a few home truths on board before throwing too much of our money at the music industry dinosaur ... the industry is an antiquated system of largely superseded studios, costly must-use session musicians and inappropriate but expensive producers."

The similarity between "the music industry dinosaur" and gigantic Australian book-publishers, with their notorious make-work schemes for ensuring the State-subsidized issue of illiterates' drivel, is all too evident in passages like that last sentence. It is not merely a matter of lacking courage to weed out the bloatedly inefficient; it is a matter of handing the bloatedly inefficient large rewards. (Significantly, JJJ's greatest popular success has been non-musical: the unpretentious low-tech duologues by Roy Slaven and H.G. Nelson that make up This Sporting Life, on Saturday afternoons. Equally significantly, Slaven and Nelson have survived their periodic transfers to commercial television without their native wit being impaired.)

More than ever, one wonders whether so-called free-market ideology has ever achieved or will ever achieve any of its stated aims. Australia is clearly not going to see any serious defiance of the music industry from any present or future Keating government; it must also discount the chances of defiance from the inhabitants of what Michael Barnard justly called "Her Majesty's Permanent Opposition." Meanwhile — as with the Titanic, though at least that vessel was privately funded — the bands play on.
MAY 1995 was a good month for the States, particularly for Victoria and Queensland.

Victoria started the month with its Autumn Economic Statement, which proved not only that States can take tough fiscal decisions, but that fiscal responsibility pays – socially and politically, as well as in budgetary terms.

The Statement shows that the Kennett Government has successfully brought the State’s finances back from the brink of a debt spiral. It has cut the overall budget deficit by 87 per cent, produced a large current account surplus, paid off large slabs of debt with the proceeds of asset sales, and reduced unfunded liabilities by over $3.5 billion, or nearly 20 per cent. These changes have already led to a reduction in debt levels and have set in train reductions in future years.

Significantly, the rescue was achieved in the right way. Despite cost increases associated with redundancy payments and the introduction of full funding for newly-accruing superannuation liabilities, the Kennett Government has cut recurrent spending by around five per cent in real terms and reduced the public-sector workforce by over 40,000 full-time positions, or by 21 per cent in three years.

Although taxes were increased significantly, making Victoria Australia’s highest-taxed State, in the main, businesses have been protected from the increases, thus minimizing the negative impact on the State’s competitiveness and its ability to create sustainable jobs. The Kennett Government, unlike its predecessors and the Commonwealth, has not cut capital spending.

The Statement made it clear that the Kennett Government is committed to further budgetary reform — that the journey has only just begun. Recurrent outlays are set to fall in real terms by 0.8 per cent per year over the next four years and budget sector liabilities are to decline steadily in real terms through the remainder of the decade. Most notably the Statement contained no pre-election sweeteners, rash promises, over-the-top economic forecasts or dubious accounting tricks.

The Statement also confirms the Kennett Government’s leadership in microeconomic reform. Its agenda for reform of government business enterprises, which is the most wide-ranging and thorough program of reform ever attempted by a State government, will continue. The Government demonstrated that in terms of deregulation and cutting business costs, it is actually willing to do what most other governments are only willing to talk about, including cutting red tape, simplifying building codes, deregulating agricultural industries, eliminating inappropriate occupational health and safety regulations, streamlining environmental regulations and curtailing worker-compensation costs.

Confirmation that the Victorians are on the right fiscal track immediately followed the Statement, when S&P-Australian Ratings upgraded the State’s credit rating.

The Victorian economy is growing and is expected to continue to grow above the national average. Business expectations, private investment, and average weekly earnings as well as most economic indicators show a similar picture. Most tellingly, the rate of emigration from Victoria has slowed markedly.

Predictions that the budget cuts would result in high sustained levels of unemployment have been proved wrong. Over the last year Victoria’s unemployment rate has fallen faster than any other State and is currently at the national average. The decline in unemployment — which is the most important social indicator — has been driven down by above-average employment growth in full-time, skilled jobs.

The most important and surprising outcome has been the
political success of the Kennett reforms. The received wisdom is that there are no votes in being fiscally responsible. The fact that the polls have consistently shown that the Kennett Government is likely to be re-elected with an unchanged or slightly reduced majority — in other words by a huge majority — belies this belief.

**COMPETITIVE QUEENSLAND:**
Later in the month, the Queensland Government brought down a budget that not only highlighted the benefits of sound fiscal management but brought to the nation's attention a benefit of federalism — competition between governments. The Queensland Budget will also increase the pressure for change in Federal-State fiscal relations.

The 1995 Queensland budget was a politician's dream. It announced large increases in spending — recurrent and capital — no new taxes, no tax increases, a number of headline-grabbing tax cuts and, best of all, a large budget surplus. The Budget figures are so good they are hard to believe, but believed they should be. Unlike the Commonwealth, Queensland does not resort to asset sales to balance its budget, nor has it 'cooked the books'. Its secret is years of sound fiscal management and a fast-growing economy.

**Successive Queensland governments have pursued a fiscal strategy based on a balanced budget, fully-funded superannuation, and the lowest taxes in the nation. This strategy is paying huge dividends. The Queensland public sector is now debt free. As a result the Queensland Government's interest bill is $1.5 billion per year lower than in other States. The Queensland Government has accumulated investments of over $10 billion by setting aside funds for accruing superannuation liabilities. These funds yield around $800 million in interest and dividends per year for use in the budget sector — other States are lucky to earn $100 million.**

On top of the revenue dividends, Queensland has achieved the lowest-cost public services in the nation — on average 18 per cent below the average of the other States. Its low taxes and other attractions have drawn in people, investment and jobs, producing the fastest growing economy in the nation and rapid growth in tax revenue.

In an attempt to lure business investment, the Goss Government announced a 50 per cent reduction in the stamp duties on share transactions. The Australian Stock Exchange has been pushing for the elimination of these levies for years, promising that it would relocate its employees to the State that responded favourably.

Once Queensland acted, the other States followed: Western Australia cut its stamp duties immediately; NSW and Victoria, which have the most to lose in terms of both tax revenue and business, cried foul, then did the same. Here was competitive federalism at its best, limiting the ability of governments to impose taxes, particularly on mobile business assets.

**OVERDUE OVERHAUL:** Queensland's Budget figures are so good they are hard to believe, but believed they should be.

Queensland's move on stamp duties is also likely to be the catalyst for long overdue reform of State-Federal relations. Untied grants from the Commonwealth to the States have long been allocated to the States under a policy called fiscal equalization, which is designed to allow all States to provide the same level and type of services irrespective of costs and earning capacity. This has resulted in the big States — NSW and Victoria — receiving a smaller share of grants than other States because of their lower costs and higher tax-raising capacity. Over the last decade the big States have become increasingly critical of this system.

Up until now, Queensland has defended fiscal equalization, but the incentive to do so is diminishing. The benefits flowing to Queensland under fiscal equalization have declined by 75 per cent over the last 10 years and now stand — depending on how they are measured — at $144 million. This sum is much less than the amount Queensland stands to gain — and NSW stands to lose — from the reduction in stamp duties. Its loss could easily be absorbed by Queensland without raising taxes or borrowing. In other words, Queensland can now do without fiscal equalization. Indeed if Queensland continues to grow more rapidly than its southern neighbours, as expected, then the benefits flowing to it from fiscal equalization will in any case evaporate within five years.

It seems highly likely that in the not-too-distant future the Queensland Government will drop its support for fiscal equalization and in so doing precipitate a major rewrite of State-Federal relations. It is likely that the arrangement which would evolve from such action would stimulate competition between the States and, therefore, be beneficial to Queensland.

Under fiscal equalization the incentive for States to compete for taxpayers is muted by the fact that the States are compensated for substandard revenue-raising ability. Why compete, when the same level of revenue can be gained through welfare? Any move away from fiscal equalization would diminish the welfare component of the grants system — as this is the main source of discontent of the big States. Any reform that increases interstate competition will favour Queensland because it is the most competitive State. Indeed, reform is likely to backfire on the big States. Queensland, along with Western Australia, will aggressively pursue the many firms whose headquarters are based in Sydney and Melbourne, but whose sustenance is derived from Australia's north and west.
Why training isn’t working

Training will not provide long-term jobs while its purchaser is a large government department.

KEN PHILLIPS

The best form of social welfare any nation can deliver to its people is sustainable work. When unemployment is high, the plethora of government-funded and charitable programs directed to the poor can at best only provide a patch-up service: the real need is for jobs.

As long as Australia’s high level of structural unemployment persists, any claim by the Government to be delivering social justice is a sham designed to hide the failure of employment-creation policies. The Federal Government’s Green Paper, Restoring Full Employment, optimistically saw unemployment at five per cent in 2001. Other commentators believe that 7.5 per cent is a more realistic figure, and even this is based on the assumption that there won’t be another major economic downturn before the turn of the century.

For policy-makers to resign themselves to such a high level of structural unemployment is morally indefensible. Any government faced with this situation has a duty to expose its policies to critical analysis and to remove institutional and structural barriers to employment creation.

This article focuses on one area of employment reform, work-related training. The total annual government expenditure on vocational education and training is around $2.5 billion. What results are being achieved?

SKILLS SHORTAGE: In the industrial estates of metropolitan Melbourne, there is a shortage of skilled tradespeople. Positions for skilled welders and sheetmetal workers go unfilled. People claiming to have welding expertise turn up for job interviews, but when tested on the factory floor with a blowtorch in hand, their abilities are below the required standards. The hourly rates on offer are above the award — in the order of $16 as a starting wage — and plenty of overtime is usually available, resulting in gross weekly pay of between $900 and $1,000. Yet positions go unfilled. As a consequence, companies are frequently unable to respond to demand and potential sales go unrealized. Companies targeting the export market are often the most pressed.

Surprisingly, the textile and clothing industry also suffers from a skills shortage. Most people think that this industry died following the removal of tariff protection. Yet new trends seem to be emerging, although admittedly at this stage the evidence for them is anecdotal. Dotted through the old industrial, but now trendy, suburbs of Melbourne are clothing factories that have survived the shrinking of the industry. They are lean and most often oriented towards niche markets. Many have a substantial trade in resewing cheap imported clothing which has landed in Australia but is unsaleable due to poor quality (buttons fall off and stitching comes undone). These clothing manufacturers operate on tight margins. The wages on offer are usually only at award rates, providing minimal inducement to prospective workers. Yet jobs are available. However, the skills of candidates are all too

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often of a standard below that needed in an industry under intense competitive pressure. Fabric cutters, who can command over-award wages, are simply not available.

Examples like this are numerous, occur in many industries and have flow-on effects. Unemployed people cannot obtain work due to their lack of skills and businesses cannot increase production to respond to the potential sales demand without finding skilled employees.

The national problem is to ensure a match between industry needs and skills training and to attract suitable people to the training. Is this being done and what use is being made of the $2.5 billion of taxpayers’ money spent on skills training each year?

Training: The largest proportion of training, including apprenticeship training, is done through the TAFE college system. Private training providers, both for-profit and non-profit, are expanding as a result of government inducement. The source of funds and method of allocation are through a multiplicity of State and Federal government bodies and departments. TAFE colleges receive direct institutional funding from the States; their funding in turn comes from Commonwealth grants. The Federal Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) allocates more than $360 million to vocational and industry training courses. This is in addition to the $1.7 billion of Federal money spent on paying unemployed people to attend retraining courses or paid as a subsidy on jobs. TAFE colleges and private training providers tender to DEET to deliver courses.

The best overview of how skills training is progressing in Australia is contained in the June 1994 report by Dr Vince Fitzgerald of the Allen Consulting Group, Successful Reform. The Fitzgerald Report is a review of the implementation of training reforms commissioned by the Australian National Training Authority, and it is none too complimentary. The Fitzgerald Report says:

"It is unclear, under the reforms, what the objectives of public funding of training are" (p. ii);
"Because the Commonwealth government is, in many instances, the sole purchaser (of training) this tends to drive the price down without adequate regard to quality" (p. 28); and
"...the National Training Reform Agenda is seen as for the benefit of government and unions" (p. 47).

The Report says that there is no overall national strategy and that training objectives are imprecise or obscure. Reforms are driven from the supply side, 'top down' — a centralist approach which produces a mistargeting of available training funds. It is a high-cost system and there is a lack of attention to the demand side. Information is lacking about what clients actually want. Inadequate knowledge about the small-business market, in particular, has deterred business commitment. There are administrative and organizational weaknesses at government level producing conceptual confusion, failure to integrate services and a focus on inputs instead of outputs. The system is overly bureaucratic, has no national mechanism for implementation and has no assessment process.

The Report says that the Australian Standards Framework, the national training curriculum guidelines, is overly prescriptive and insufficiently flexible. Industrial relations matters and training matters are closely intertwined and the system discourages labour flexibility. The Report claims that government regulations are restricting development.

This is not a pretty picture, but one which is confirmed at the delivery end of the training system. The operation of Labour Market Programs funded through DEET provides a good illustration.

Erratic Funding: Labour Market Programs offer job-oriented training courses to unemployed
WHY TRAINING ISN'T WORKING

people. While undertaking courses unemployed people are not registered as unemployed but receive an unemployment benefit equivalent. They must attend courses or have their benefits cut. According to Bureau of Statistics reports, about 700,000 unemployed people are not looking for work because they are taking part in education and training programs. TAFE and private training providers respond to DEET tenders for Labour Market Programs.

The problem for training providers, including TAFE, is that they have to respond to a funding tap which often is either full-on or full-off. Providers receive funds on a course-by-course basis which can last from four weeks to one year, but stability of funding beyond that period is rare. Providers have been known to build staff numbers up to 60 over a period while delivering courses and then to have funding cut in the space of one month so that only 10 staff may be needed. Funding for the same courses may be returned to the provider six months later but, by then, staff have been dismissed or moved to other work and new staff must be engaged. The quality of courses depends on the quality of teaching teams, but under these arrangements team building is nearly impossible.

When training providers tender for a course, a reply from DEET is often received critically close to the course's starting date. It is not unusual for providers to have less than two weeks to employ teaching staff and screen course participants. Many teachers have had the experience of arriving at a college for the first time, being given a sheet on the course contents and immediately being directed to a room where participants await pearls of wisdom. The first session becomes then a two-hour teaching bluff. Course participants have similar experiences. They are contracted by the CES and told they are eligible for a course and must participate or have their benefits stopped. The training providers have inadequate time to screen enrolments and the mismatching of participants' needs to courses is common.

MONOPOLY: DEET's reasoning for such arrangements appears to come from a desire to create a competitive environment between providers. Competition is a worthwhile goal, but in this instance it is prostituted by the existence of a single monopoly buyer of services, DEET. This is a problem highlighted in the Fitzgerald Report. By way of comparison, it is doubtful that trade practices regulators would allow one retail conglomerate to control 98 per cent of the retail market in Australia.

In dealing with a monopoly buyer of Labour Market Programs, the training providers lack the ability to develop niche markets, specialize or undertake the normal commercial and marketing activities available in a truly competitive marketplace. Because training providers are expected to compete in a monopoly buyer's market, their ability to respond to the needs of the unemployed or businesses is severely limited. In fact, training providers barely have time to consider factors other than the vagaries of DEET's thinking and policies, which remain a deep mystery to most. Talk to people in DEET and they tend to agree. They are frustrated at being trapped in an inefficient system.

A BETTER WAY: There are, however, solutions to the training problem and the most promising to date are contained in the Fitzgerald Report. One of Fitzgerald's major recommendations is that the concept of 'User Buys' be introduced into the funding of training. This involves the redirection of funding control away from the large centres — that is, DEET and other departments — to the users of training, namely the people being trained and the businesses needing trained people.

The Fitzgerald Report says:

"Under 'User Buys'... funds would be allocated, instead, directly to enterprises or groups of enterprises. This would permit them, and their apprentices or trainees jointly, to agree to purchase accredited training from any registered provider they considered best able to meet their needs" (p. 56).

The concept could work. It would give providers the freedom to customize training to the needs of both those being trained and enterprises. It would allow industry to set the direction of training and it would separate government policy from service delivery. It should introduce a simple administrative process and facilitate the monitoring of measurable outcomes. Government departments would be free to focus on their regulation and auditing responsibilities.

The Fitzgerald Reports states:

"To achieve the ultimate objective, what national training reform must aim at above all is the development of a vigorous market in which the richest and critical fabric of interactions is that directly between training providers and enterprises" (p. 14).

The unemployed deserve better than what they are currently receiving. Contrary to some popular views, the bulk of unemployed people want to work. They need training which is relevant to the needs of the businesses which can give them that work. Implementing the recommendations of the Fitzgerald Report would help this happen.
Domestic violence survey provokes a ROW

JOHN COOCHEY

A proposed survey of male violence against women in the home has divided opinion within the Federal Government's highly-regarded agency, the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

"[Domestic violence is] behaviour by the man, adopted to control his victim, which results in physical, sexual and/or psychological damage, forced social isolation or economic deprivation, or behaviour which leaves a woman living in fear"


"It is interesting to note that mothers are at least as likely as fathers to use even more serious forms of violence such as kicks, bites, punches and beatings. This is important because family violence is probably the only situation where women are as or more violent than men ...

[emphasis added] If men have a genetic predisposition to be violent, one would expect them to be more violent at home than their wives. Yet, an examination of violence between couples and violence by parents toward children reveals that women are as violent or more violent than are men ...

...While fathers who beat up their children do so on an average of once a year mothers who beat up their children do it more than once every other month."

Behind Closed Doors
Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, (US social researchers), 1980

"Why are you so worried about a little bit of wrong analysis?"

Senator Rosemary Crowley, Minister for Family Services, appearing on the documentary The Deadly Hurt in 1994.

A situation has developed within the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reminiscent of that episode of Yes Minister in which Sir Humphrey Appleby warns the Minister never to commission a study unless he is certain of the results. Internal ABS documents reveal great concern about a proposed survey initiated by the Federal Government's Office of the Status of Women (OSW).

It appears that the survey, originally titled the 'Violence Against Women Survey', owes its origins to The Deadly Hurt, a documentary by Melbourne-based producer Don Praham shown on SBS late last year. Parham questioned various tenets of faith promulgated by OSW, one of which was that 30 per cent of married women in Australia are at risk of domestic violence. This claim featured on an OSW poster a number of years ago and, although the Office claims that it no longer uses the figure, it still appears — for example, in a 1994 edition of Injury Issues, a medical journal put out by the NSW Department of Health. Those who saw The Deadly Hurt on SBS late last year will remember Senator Crowley's embarrassment when asked to give the source of that figure. Her response included the remarkable quote at the start of this article.

OSW is in fact still defending the figure of "one in three women at risk of domestic violence". In a reply to a letter to the Prime Minister the head of OSW, Kathleen Townsend, said that the figure was the best data available in 1987 when the poster was first published and "was specific to a campaign about domestic violence." She further stated that it came from a 1980 study done in the United States by Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, entitled Behind Closed Doors.

There are two problems with this defence. One is, how can a figure be specific to a given campaign? Surely it is either true or not. The second is that nowhere in Behind Closed Doors does it say that 30 per cent of women are victims of domestic violence. What it does say several times is that women are as likely to be the perpetrators of spouse bashing as they are to be the victims. For example, on page 36 it states that in a given year 12.6 per cent of women will be victims of family violence (very broadly defined) but that so will 11.6 per cent of men. When violence against children is taken into account then women are more likely to be perpetrators of domestic violence than are men. In short, the 30 per cent figure is a lie and one that OSW refuses to withdraw.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVEY PROVOKES A ROW

FLAWED MODEL: In need of a study to support its claims, OSW at first approached ABS to replicate a study by Juristat Canada which had been published in 1994. ABS officers had to point out that the proposed questions would lead the respondent and therefore bias the results. Also, half of the women classed as being assaulted in the Canadian study had been subject only to some degree of sexual harassment at some time in their lives and, to quote ABS, "this is not normally classed as assault in Australia." Current laws about rape in marriage notwithstanding, the Canadian survey was largely about married couples and it is still not a criminal offence in Australia to grab your spouse's rear when you are in bed together, although sometimes the response will of course be "Not tonight, darling." Yet it appears that under the Canadian study this is not only sexual harassment but assault.

There have been at least six studies done on domestic violence in Canada since 1987 and they have come up with widely different figures for assaults. However, all but one has studied violence against women only, rather than family violence in its entirety. The study which produced the highest figure — the magical 30 per cent — was the 1994 survey by Juristat. There are a number of curiosities about that study, not least of which was its unlikely finding that the assault rate in British Columbia was twice that of Newfoundland. Another incongruity occurs on page 7 where it states that "a significant number of women reported being beaten up, sexually assaulted, choked, hit with an object, and having a gun or knife used against them." The actual figure, revealed by a table, is one per cent (for women from "their current partner"). Obviously this is one per cent too many, but if one per cent of males were dying of prostate cancer would a misogynist writer call this "a significant number"?

The Juristat figures are in conflict with another Canadian Government statistical survey, Canadian Social Trends. This showed that overall, "men experienced higher rates of violent victimisation than did women" the rate for men being 90 per thousand, compared with 77 per thousand for women (Canadian Social Trends, Summer 1990, page 13). That study also showed that both men and women suffered lower rates of assault if they were married than if they were single — 45 per thousand for married men or married women, 140 per thousand for single men and 90 per thousand for single women. Only 10 per cent of victims approached support agencies. That same study found that the overall rate of sexual assault was too small to provide reliable estimates.

SELECTIVE: The major controversy about the proposed ABS survey is that it will only look at violence against women by men. It will not cover domestic violence in its entirety, including against children, nor even violence against women by women. Indeed the project has undergone a number of name changes: initially titled the 'Violence Against Women Survey' it then became the 'Women's Safety Survey' and is currently labelled 'The Safety Survey' to disguise its true nature. It appears to be policy, when seeking information from households, to disguise the fact that men as victims will be excluded from the study. This has led one commentator within ABS to suggest that the easiest way to do the survey would be to restrict it to women who have obtained court orders to prevent their male partners from assaulting them. This would show that 100 per cent of victims were victims of male aggression and then it could be concluded that all women are victims of male violence.

Within ABS opinion on the proposed survey is divided. Because the survey will be funded by OSW, there are those who believe that "she who pays the piper should be allowed to call the tune". Other ABS professionals point out that a biased survey would discredit other work done by the Bureau, which is supposed to be the nation's official independent statistical agency. On 30 March, Labor MHR Graeme Campbell put a Question on Notice concerning OSW's influence in ABS. He implied that public money for ABS should not be funnelled through OSW. The situation is complicated because ABS can now take commissions to do surveys for 'legitimate bodies' but the guidelines as to what is or is not permissible are unclear. One ABS officer questioned, facetiously, whether the Bureau would be prepared to accept money from the League of Rights to run a survey on crimes by Aboriginals, Asians, homosexuals and Jews.

Others have questioned both the need for and purpose of the survey, given that the critical figures are already available. An ABS survey, Crime and Safety in Australia, indicates that only 0.7 per cent of adult women had been victims of assault or even threatened in their own home. Why spend more money to discover what is already known? That same survey also indicates that men are more likely to be the victims of violence than women, 4.4 per cent as opposed to 3.0 per cent. According to an internal ABS document, a Queensland Crime Survey found that at least 26 per cent of attacks on women
were by other women. None of these issues will be allowed to figure in the currently-proposed OSW-ABS survey.

It is also proposed to include 'emotional violence' within the scope of the survey. This is an area where the waters are particularly murky. What is emotional violence? When does irreverent repartee become nagging and then emotional violence? Where is the line between good budget management and 'economic deprivation'? There must come a point at which even buying extra clothing for the children becomes an unnecessary expenditure from someone's point of view.

Perhaps some idea of the intent of the survey can be gathered by one of the final 'catch all' questions. It asks: "Since you were fifteen years old, has a man ever touched, kissed or fondled you against your will?" It would be difficult to find a woman who would be able to say 'No' to this, but remember this is supposed to be a survey about violence against women.

Some anger within the Bureau revolves around the suggestion that men will be excluded from the operational aspects of the survey. The section which would normally manage the fieldwork has been excluded apparently because it is headed by a man. Documents from within ABS state that the Human Rights Commission has granted an exemption under anti-discrimination legislation to allow ABS to use only female interviewers who will report to female managers. This is unconfirmed, however, such exemptions are supposed to be published in advance in the Government Gazette and, oddly, so far none have been.

Other concerns revolve around the fact that it will be a voluntary survey. A voluntary survey is likely to result in a bias towards respondents with a strong interest in the topic — in this case towards women who have been subjected to domestic violence. The results would fail to give a true picture of society as a whole.

A plan to release the pilot survey during the National Week Against Violence Against Women has aroused further concerns about skewed results. One observer likened the plan to launching a survey of Australian defence expenditure on Anzac day.

WOMEN ONLY: The estimated cost of the OSW survey is over one million dollars, with a proportion of the funds coming from the Department of Health. Many ABS officers believe that a comprehensive survey of domestic violence — which includes men as victims as well as perpetrators — could be run for this figure. In a rather strangely-worded letter to the Canberra Times (February 19), the head of OSW derided such an idea:

"We are concerned about male victims of domestic violence [sic] just as we concerned about testicular cancer, male youth unemployment and illiteracy. However, women are our primary clients and they have made it very clear to us in consultation that violence, and fear of violence, is a fundamental concern. We are in the business of debunking myths, not propagating them [sic]. To suggest that any planned research on women's experience of violence should look at women as perpetrators is about as logical as the proposition that a child abuse survey should include data on child bullies."

But what about the Queensland evidence that 26 per cent of violence against women is done by other women and the US studies which indicate that women are more likely to be perpetrators of domestic violence than its victims? This may be why OSW does not want domestic violence in its entirety studied. Two-sex studies from around the world show that the distribution of interspousal violence is gender neutral. And the more urbanised the society, the more equally distributed across the sexes is the violence. When violence against children is included, then women take the lead as perpetrators. For the US, about 15 per cent of women will experience domestic violence at some stage in their lives and so will 15 per cent of men.

Australian studies are very limited, but one done recently in four Victorian hospitals by Virginia Routley and Jenny Sherrard of the Monash University Accident Research Centre shows surprisingly high levels of admissions for men who were victims of domestic violence. Indeed, 30 per cent of all domestic violence victims classed as seriously injured and requiring hospital admission were men who had been assaulted by their partners. That study also showed that only a very small percentage of hospital outpatients of either sex were actually victims of domestic violence — less than two per cent in fact.

A Superintendent of Police in Hong Kong, Patricia Walsh, recently referred to a 1994 survey which showed that 15 per cent of reported domestic violence cases involved the male as victim of the female, and an amazing 72 per cent of these required hospitalization — a much higher proportion than for female victims. Hong Kong experts and academics in this field believe that female-to-male violence is greatly under-reported, because many men feel ashamed to admit that they have been assaulted by their wives. The suggestion is that such assaults on men are likely to go unrecorded unless the resulting injuries are serious enough to force the men to seek treatment.

According to an internal ABS document, there is a plan to keep the announcement of the survey low key, "to prevent ministerial embarrassment if the survey does not continue past the pilot". Presumably the embarrassment would occur if the findings regarding the extent of male-to-female violence in the home did not support previous assertions. But if the questions are phrased carefully enough and the survey's coverage selective enough the risk of embarrassment would be minimized.
Preparing young people to compete in the business world is anathema to the educational philosophy of the Australian Education Union.

education without enterprise

KEVIN DONNELLY

SHOULD schools, and education in general, be used to promote a positive enterprise culture? According to the recently released Karpin Report, otherwise known as Enterprising Nation: Renewing Australia’s Managers to Meet the Challenges of the Asia-Pacific Century, the answer is definitely ‘yes’.

The Executive Summary of the report recommends that the formal education system be used to, “Expose students at primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary levels of education to the value of enterprising and entrepreneurial behaviour”. Currently, the education system is seen to be failing in this regard. The report states, “the lack of enterprise and entrepreneurial studies at school, in vocational education and training and in higher education, forms part of the reason why there is not a strong small business culture in Australia”.

While the Karpin Report clearly approves of such values as risk-taking and being competitive not all would agree that the education system should be used to promote a business-oriented culture. In fact, there are many groups within education who would be decidedly hostile to such a view.

ANTI-BUSINESS: The Australian Education Union (AEU) is one organization, in particular, which has a proven track record of being anti-business. (The AEU is the peak organization which represents the various State-based teacher unions. At its national conference held earlier this year Simon Crean stated that the union’s support was “crucial” to Labor winning the 1993 election.)

Evidence of the AEU’s hostility to the types of values associated with business can be found in the union’s curriculum policy which was adopted at the 1993 Annual Conference.

Informing the document is an ideology which defines the work of schools as more to do with liberating students from the evils of capitalism than from the evils of ignorance. It views schools as a crucial site of class struggle, because it is through schooling that the dominant culture reproduces itself.

To quote from the AEU’s curriculum policy, the work of schools must take into account, “The pronounced inequality in the distribution of social, economic, cultural and political resources and power between social groups, which restricts the life development of many. The role of the economy, the sexual division of labour, the dominant culture and the education system in reproducing inequality”.

The purpose of schools, rather than educating students in a balanced and impartial way, is to prepare students to survive in a “class-based society that is diverse and characterized by inequality and social conflict”.

Dr Kevin Donnelly is Director of a Melbourne-based consulting group, Education Strategies.
Important in this regard is the need to teach students about the "rights of workers" and for schools to commit themselves to "equal educational outcomes".

When the policy actually talks about the more mundane matters of assessment, school subjects, reporting and school organization, as might be expected, the left-wing ideology underpinning the policy is once again evident.

**EVERYONE A WINNER:** Competitive assessment is totally unacceptable to the union, as is the practice of ranking or comparing students in order to find out how well they might be doing. Apparently such practices are socially unjust and simply a method by which the ruling class enforces its control over the less advantaged in society.

In the words of the policy, assessment must be "co-operative rather than competitive, and premised on the goal of success by all, rather than a mixture of success and failure." This may be good preparation for some utopia imagined by the teacher union; it is certainly not good preparation for the real world in which there are winners and losers and in which most people's lives are a combination of success and failure.

The union has also been a strident critic of education for gifted and talented children. Rather than admitting that these students are often discriminated against and in need of special assistance, the union's policy insists that they be taught in mixed ability classrooms where all students are treated in the same way. As stated in the policy, "the AEU opposes the withdrawal of so-called 'gifted' children and the use of accelerated progression. Such practices have detrimental educational and social consequences for those students selected and those not selected. Such labelling of students (as 'gifted' or 'not gifted') limits options and opportunities, and limits self identities and the views others hold of them ..."

The world of business recognizes and rewards individual endeavour and excellence, but this, according to the union levellers, has no place in the classroom.

The AEU would also like to throw out the traditional academic curriculum. The AEU curriculum policy argues that traditional subjects contain "markedly conservative social and political assumptions" and, as a result, are in need of urgent renovation. In order to be politically correct, such subjects need to be rewritten in the light of what has become the new trinity of gender, ethnicity and class. (One feature of the Karpin Report which the AEU might approve of, although it would probably consider it too moderate, is the recommendation "that unless enterprise acts more vigorously to promote women to senior levels then in the near future the Federal Government may need to contemplate more stringent, regulatory measures over a limited period to promote change.")

**IMPOVERISHED CURRICULUM:** Those readers familiar with the controversy surrounding the national curriculum statements and profiles will be aware of the academic curriculum's erosion under pressure from teacher unions and other like-minded groups.

The Royal Australian Chemical Institute has argued that the view of science in the national curriculum documents is impoverished, that chemistry as a subject is not properly dealt with and that the documents fail to address the needs of the "academically able". The institute also pleads that in attempting to attract and keep more students at school, the curriculum should not be "diluted to a uniform standard of mediocrity".

Such was the anxiety and fear about the mathematics document that over 200 senior academics across Australia signed a petition describing it as a "disaster for the mathematics education of the Australian population". The profile is described as "substantially flawed" and incapable of properly preparing students for tertiary study.

Even more significant is that, at a time when the Karpin Report is urging us to be internationally competitive and to embrace world's best practice, the mathematics experts warn that "Australia will not be able to compete with the rest of the world if its people are hobbled by half-baked and incompetent approaches to the teaching of mathematics".

**OBsolete WORLDVIEW:** Especially since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former USSR it is easy to caricature the educational philosophy of the AEU as extreme and out of date. Concepts like 'class conflict', 'reproducing inequality' and 'equality of outcomes' appear obsolete and irrelevant.

It is also true that most classroom teachers have a more pragmatic and realistic attitude to the world of business and the values it represents than does the AEU. Such teachers accept the need to promote qualities like self-discipline and a positive work ethic.

Notwithstanding this, the recommendations of the Karpin Report will not be as easy to implement as the report suggests. Since the late 1960s, the culture of education, especially in schools, has been antithetical to business and private enterprise.

It is also the case that designing units of study and funding staff professional development will not, by themselves, produce the fundamental change needed if Australian society is to become truly entrepreneurial and competitive.
Political developments in the United States and Canada reflect a backlash against the unresponsiveness of governing elites to majority values.

Most Australians have some familiarity with the American experience of direct democracy as expressed through citizen-initiated referenda (CIR), which have become a regular feature of Federal and State elections in the United States. Less familiar is the growing tendency of the American Republican Party and Canada’s new Reform Party to refer their general formation of policy to the court of public opinion — to make representative democracy live up to its name in the policy sphere. It is this tendency in particular which I wish to examine here.

The mood of American politics has become very anti-Washington over recent years. The political centre is perceived by a majority of voters as a fountainhead of false values where career politicians give effect to elite agendas, and as the preserve of minorities and special-interest groups. This reaction against a Washington whose policies have consistently flown in the face of the will of the majority of electors largely explains the recourse at the State level to citizen-initiated referenda.

Issues which have moved from Washington, which did not want to know about them, to the States, where they have gone onto the ballot through the CIR process, include term limits, property rights, parental rights and eliminating reverse racial discrimination. According
POLICY FROM THE PEOPLE

has recently failed to pass the Senate, and a related bill, offering the President a line-item veto on Congressional money bills, has also run into Senatorial opposition); 2. Congressional term limits (this has now run into some trouble in the House, where there seems little agreement on a precise formula); 3. an attack on burgeoning crime through measures including truth-in-sentencing, making punishment severe enough to deter criminals, requiring convicted criminals to make restitution to their victims, taking the distribution of federal law-enforcement funds away from Washington bureaucrats and putting it in the hands of local law-enforcement officials, and streamlining the deportation of criminals who are aliens; 4. a ‘Personal Responsibility Act’ ending payments to unwed mothers under 18 (and under 21 if each State so elects), and requiring welfare recipients to work an average 35 hours per week or enter a work-training program; 5. tax incentives for child adoption and the strengthening of parents’ rights in their children’s education; 6. a middle-class tax cut; 7. a credible anti-ballistic missile system; 8. prohibition of foreign command of US forces; 9. drastic cuts in capital gains taxes and other incentives to business; and
10. assorted legal reforms such as ‘loser pays’ to discourage the wantonly litigious.

For the first time, a victorious Republican Party came into Congress with a highly specific and immediate legislative program. Though it has since become clear that far more than 90 days will be needed to give it legislative effect, there is little doubt that many of its provisions will become law over the next two years. One might note here that unfunded federal mandates, while not a specific target of the Contract, seem to be on their way out — another sign of the steady whittling away of Washington’s power over the States.

The Contract with America, then, was simply a series of policy pledges. Several weeks before the election it was signed by 300 House Republicans in the most public place in America, on the steps of the Capitol building before the cameras of the television networks. What I think is most interesting about it, however, is the way in which it had been developed and refined over the preceding months by close reference to the views and opinions of ordinary Americans across the nation’s heartland. It was the first time the Republicans had sourced their policies at the grass roots.

THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA: In the months preceding these elections, the House Republican leadership under the direction of Newt Gingrich developed their ‘Contract with America’, a promise to introduce, in the first 90 days of a Republican-dominated House and Senate, a set of 10 bills based on their careful reading of what a majority of Americans were signalling they wanted. We might remind ourselves of what these 10 putative bills stipulated. They provided for:
1. a mandatory balanced budget (this
TERM LIMITS: For instance, the proposal to limit the number of terms a Senator or Member of the House can serve in Congress — essentially a drive to create citizen-legislators in place of career politicians — reflects the results of numerous recent citizen-initiated referenda on the issue in a swathe of States which have voted to limit the tenure of their federal representatives. Just in these last elections, a further six States had citizen initiatives mandating federal term limits on their ballots, and every one of them was passed, most by wide margins of around two-to-one (Nevada went 70-30 per cent; Massachusetts, liberal home of that archetypal career politician, Edward Kennedy, voted the measure very narrowly).

If Washington is seen by most Americans as a club of self-serving career politicians and bureaucrats with unrepresentative agendas, then the obvious cure is short-term citizen-legislators who will make policy reflect the democratic will of the people who elect them. As Gingrich has put it, "The long experiment in professional politicians and professional government is over, and it failed." One might note here that term limits have also been voted in numerous States to limit the length of time county and State executive officials can serve, and around half of American cities with populations above 250,000 now have term limitations on their mayors and city councils.

Public opinion polls have shown that over two-thirds of Americans nationwide, and in some States up to 80 per cent, support term limits on elected representatives. According to one study of the trend, "It is not terribly difficult to explain the widespread popularity of term limits. The current wave of interest in term limitation began in the late 1980s as voter frustration with the nation’s legislatures escalated and as term limitations gained heightened visibility in the national media. The seemingly endless tales of corruption, scandal, neglect, and malfeasance coming out of the United States Congress and a variety of State legislatures fuelled the popular demand to impose term limits so that legislative careerists can be replaced with 'citizen-legislators' and end the stalemate of 'permanent government'."

POPULAR SENTIMENT: The Contract’s gestation involved tapping into popular sentiment on this and other key policy issues and included polling and focus groups as well as mutual consultation among Republican constituencies across 50 States. One of the movers behind it was Tom De Lay from Texas, who has pointed out that the issues were chosen on the basis of their power "to energise Republican voters", and deliberately excluded divisive issues such as abortion. Then the ideas were trialled on candidates and American voters through the summer months of 1994 to establish which ones had the greatest public appeal.

One of the Republican pollsters employed was Ed Goeas. From the polling he did, he says, "The one thing that jumped out was that voters were looking for a mechanism to hold elected officials more accountable. The most important thing about the Contract is the accountability of signing a pledge."

As well as polling ordinary voters, the Republicans polled their own candidates, who were asked to rank issues according to whether they liked each idea and whether its inclusion would help or hurt their own election prospects. Working groups then sifted out the issues of least concern, put those of most concern into legislative language and carried our further consultation with business and trade associations, mostly Republican in sympathy — De Lay says, “Anybody who was interested. Ralph Nader was not there.”

The message of the Republicans throughout the campaign was essentially ‘Power to the People’, a phrase John Lennon never intended to be used by conservatives. In this election, the Republicans were closely in tune with prominent conservative media personalities like Rush Limbaugh, a no-holds-barred, technically brilliant and aggressively comic articulator of anti-Washington, anti-elite, pro-mainstream sentiment who appears nightly on national television, and Pat Buchanan, a Congressman and television and radio personality who takes the conservative side on the nightly verbal sparring match, ‘Crossfire’.

More significantly, the Republicans tapped into the nation’s religious heartland, gaining the overt support of the powerful groupings which make up the Christian Coalition. The Coalition, while mainly evangelical, embraces a wide spectrum of the devout, from Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network, to prominent traditionalist Catholics. According to Ralph Reed, Christian Coalition's executive director, "One of every three voters was someone who attends church regularly, who is socially conservative". The
Democrats, according to Reed, “Badly miscalculated how to handle” this important segment of the electorate and tried to “marginalize and stereotype these voters and their leaders.”

On November 11, three days after the election, Newt Gingrich addressed the Washington Research Group Symposium and reiterated a central theme of the campaign: “It is impossible to maintain civilization with 12-year-olds having babies, 15-year-olds killing each other, with 17-year-olds dying of AIDS, and with 18-year-olds ending up with diplomas they can’t even read.” He made the point that, “Those who argued for counter-culture values, bigger government, redistributionist economics and bureaucracies deciding how you should spend your money were on the losing end in virtually every part of the country.”

Gingrich defined his preferred leadership model in four words: “They’re not a hierarchy, all the words are equally important, but there’s a sequence that matters. It’s a very direct sequence: listen, learn, help and lead. You listen to the American people, you learn from the American people, you help the American people; and in a rational society, if people know you’ll listen to them, learn from them and help them, they want you to lead them.” This is no mere old-fashioned political hyperbole, but a radically new philosophy on how policy should be sourced and developed.

C ANADIAN PARALLEL: Recent Canadian experience confirms the trend to direct democracy as a North American rather than merely a United States phenomenon. Through the 1970s and 1980s, Ottawa dutifully followed Washington in legislating elite agendas, taking care of special-interest lobbies and tutoring its hard-taxed citizens in the expensive civics of the welfare state and the multicultural society. The politicians and the bureaucrats knew what was best and the electors took their medicine without much grumbling. Up to the present day, Canadians have had a grand total of three national referenda referred to them in the course of their entire history.

But in the early 1990s the national mood began to change, rapidly. By the end of 1993 the political landscape had been fundamentally altered. The national elections of late-October of that year were a watershed. The ruling Progressive Conservative Party (PCP), which together with the Liberal Party represented the political establishment — the Ottawa-knows-best mentality — was reduced from 155 seats to just two seats in the House of Commons.

The reasons included the PCP’s hated consumption tax and a growing middle-class tax revolt, anti-NAFTA feeling, the perception that the Progressive Conservatives were moribund and, above all, the fact that there was a new conservative alternative, the Reform Party, which presented itself as decisively anti-Ottawa-establishment. The Liberals (centre-left) won with 178 seats (formerly 79), benefiting from the division of the small-c conservative vote, much of which went over to the new Reform Party. The official Opposition is now the Bloc Quebecois with 54 seats (formerly 8).

The Bloc’s interests, however, are focused on Quebec and the securing of some form of sovereignty for that province. The ‘real’ opposition party, in the sense of a party with a national basis and focus, is the Reform Party with 52 seats (formerly 1).9

SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES: Reform is a mass-base party (110,000 active members, 1993, and rapidly rising) of social conservatives led by an evangelical Christian, Preston Manning, who carefully avoids importing religion into his speeches. It “draws people who feel they’ve been marginalized by a chattering class of intellectuals and bureaucrats”, as one observer put it, and it has a policy of avoiding any linkage to special-interest groups.

The party was formed in Winnipeg in October 1986, at a conven-
In view of the popularity of the anti-Washington and anti-Ottawa planks in the Republican and Reform platforms, it seems extraordinary that in Australia the Liberal Party, until now, has not even contemplated presenting itself as anything but an integral part of the Canberra establishment.

Republican program to take power from the centre and bring it closer to the electorate.

- Changing the rules to allow Government backbenchers to vote with Opposition MPs to defeat spending bills without triggering an election. Manning sees this as an insurance policy for voters: “We think Canadians have reservations about giving anybody, especially a traditional party, a blank cheque”, he says. Removing the no-confidence element from Parliamentary voting would allow MPs to vote according to the feelings of those they represent, rather than always having to vote according to the party line.

Parliamentary votes would more closely reflect the mood of the electorate on the matters under debate. According to Manning, “The treatment of every motion in most of our legislatures and Parliaments as confidence motions ... is a convention which could be changed simply by a policy statement by the Prime Minister, Premiers and most of the legislatures at the beginning of the session.”

- Giving voters the right to recall their MP if their MP fails to represent their views adequately. “So you don’t trust politicians?” he asked during the campaign. “Here is our money-back guarantee: we’ll put the power in your hands to fire your elected MP.” Recall is the Party’s single most popular policy plank, according to its direct-mail surveys, and certainly its most constitutionally radical, and one may expect it to be implemented should Reform win the next Canadian elections. As the Party says in its advertising literature, “Recall will obligate MPs to listen to their constituents between elections.”

- Cancelling government subsidies for special-interest groups. This policy goes straight to the heart of voter sentiment, which is in revolt against the power and influence of unrepresentative groups who have learned to regard Ottawa as their milch cow.

- Pulling the government out of unemployment insurance and letting employers and employees fund it themselves. This policy reflects that same concern shown by the Republicans for making people more responsible for themselves.

- In general, allowing each person to be the major provider of his or her own basic needs, including most social services and medicare. This means, in effect, that more social services should be user-pay, and that relatives and private charities should bear more of the welfare burden.

- In view of massive unemployment, slashing immigration from 250,000 a year to somewhere between 100,000 and 150,000, the size of the intake...
being based on economic needs and the policy to be racially neutral.

- Putting certain tough issues, like capital punishment, perhaps, and possibly abortion, to referendum.
- Not giving any government seal of approval to homosexuals, abortion-on-demand and political correctness generally: "Reform," Manning told one rally, "refuses, and continues to refuse, to be intimidated by the extremists of political correctness".

In addition, Reform would abolish the policy of official bilingualism.

Several of these policies reflect a strong anti-Ottawa sentiment and in this lies the real secret of Reform's appeal. In view of the popularity of the anti-Washington and anti-Ottawa planks in the Republican and Reform platforms, it seems extraordinary that in Australia the Liberal Party, until now, has not even contemplated presenting itself as anything but an integral part of the Canberra establishment.

That in the run-up to the elections Reform was continually attacked by individuals and groups clearly associated in the public mind with the Ottawa establishment probably helped boost the Party's vote. At the same time Manning frustrated the desperate "extremist" charges of his foes by cutting the Party's ties with those two or three members who came out with statements which could be viewed at extreme. As a result of this, and the impression of reasonableness Manning projects, scare campaigns waged against Reform in the media by politically-correct newspaper editors, television commentators and special-interest groups turned out to be counter-productive.

**Democratic Conscience:**

Since its entry into the Canadian House of Commons, Reform has taken the opportunity to assail the Liberal government on any issue where that government's legislative program seems to run in the face of public opinion. On election night, Preston Manning made a promise on national television that "Whenever the government proposes any major public policy initiative, we will act as the democratic conscience of Parliament, asking: Were the people truly consulted? What do the people think? Do the people approve or disapprove of this course of action?"

In its most recent thinking on the referendum issue, the Reform Party seems to be inclining to two distinct types, the binding and the advisory. Referenda would coincide with national elections and might also be held on some fixed mid-term date. There would be the minimum of restrictions on 'educational campaigns' to do with referendum issues, double-majority decisions would be required on most referendum questions and the current preference seems to be for a 3 per cent minimum of electors' signatures to initiate a referendum. The Party is working hard to develop a mechanism for recall which is proof against abuse. Within the Parliament, the Party has developed the practice of forming 'cluster groups' of MPs, each group assigned to probe a particular of policy and formulate strategic guidelines upon it.

Interestingly, unlike so many Western political parties, Reform is not dominated by lawyers. In fact of its 52 MPs, only one is a lawyer. They come from a wide, very representative range of professions and occupations, including farmers, foresters, fishermen, physicians, businessmen, realtors, economists, professors and teachers, broadcasters, accountants, retired military officers and so on.

One Canadian political scientist describes Reform as "the politics of postmodernism". Unlike most forms of postmodernism, which are associated with the aesthetics of the left and with cultural elites, the Canadian politics of postmodernism are conservative and radically democratic. They contrast with the modernist politics of the elite, of centralism, the welfare state and the multicultural society which still dominate Australia, but which in Canada "no longer seem viable to a large number of voters".

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2. See the text and descriptions of the 10 draft bills designed to implement the Contract with America in Congressional Quarterly, 19 November 1994, p. 3366-3379.
4. Mark Petracek and Darci Jump, 'Term-Limitation Express', Society, XXXI, i (Nov.-Dec. 1993), pp. 61-69. The movement has gone much further since this article appeared.
11. Ibid., p. 4.
the AIDS sceptics

ANDREW MCINTYRE

Is it possible that after more than a decade of research the official view of AIDS is flawed? Sceptics who think that it is are beginning to raise their voices.

IPA Review cannot assess the validity of their claims but believes they should be heard.

"Experience does not ever err; it is only your judgment that errs in promising itself results which are not caused by your experiments."

LEONARDO DA VINCI

"Everyone who eats a tomato dies."

ANON

According to a Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health brochure the HIV virus "can affect anyone ... It doesn't discriminate between men and women. It doesn't judge us by the colour of our skin. It doesn't recognize any cultural differences."

Why is it then that in the 13 years since HIV was detected in Australia only a handful of women have contracted AIDS? Apparently, the HIV virus does discriminate between men and women.

Why is it that almost the only mothers in the Western world who give birth to HIV-positive babies are Afro-American and live in New York and Miami? HIV does appear to judge by colour.

Why is it that AIDS in Africa and Asia is apparently equally distributed between men and women, but that in all OECD countries it is still overwhelmingly a male disease? HIV does seem to recognize cultural differences.

Why is it that non-drug-taking European prostitutes with up to 600 partners per month are no more likely to be HIV-positive than anyone else? A similar pat-
tern is emerging in Sydney. HIV does not appear to affect just “anyone”.

If the amount of money spent on it is any indication (over $150 million this year in Australia, but many times that worldwide), AIDS is one of the biggest medical problems this century. Yet in spite of thousands of researchers and thousands of publications devoted to it, in spite of the billions of dollars spent on research, care and hospitalization, nobody has yet found a cure.

BACK TO BASICS: As a reaction to this failure, a group of over 500 biomedical scientists, statisticians and other professionals have formed an international body, the Group for the Scientific Reappraisal of the HIV/AIDS Hypothesis. The Group’s contention is that the medical-scientific establishment needs to review its most basic assumption about AIDS, namely that the HIV virus is its cause. As the 1993 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, Kary Mullis, points out, at no time since Robert Gallo expounded his HIV theory of AIDS at a press conference in 1981 has there been a scientific paper that proves the connection.2

The editor of the Group’s journal Reappraising AIDS, molecular biologist Dr Harvey Bialy, believes that the hypothesis has become all things to all people and that it violates everything we know about viral disease. And, as he puts it, “Once you remove HIV from the AIDS equation, what is the reason for considering the tuberculosis of a drug addict, the Kaposi’s sarcoma of a drug-abusing homosexual, the diarrhoea of an African, the internal bleeding of a haemophiliac, and the kidney failure of a transfusion recipient — as being the same disease?”

Can the medical-scientific establishment really have got it so wrong? There are reputable scientists who believe that it has, and there is much detailed evidence that something is amiss with the HIV hypothesis. Against efforts to stop it, a day-long symposium was sponsored by the Pacific Division of the American Asso-
A clue lies in the origin of the definition of AIDS.

**MULTIPLE CAUSES:** At the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco in 1981 a range of diseases was common amongst 'fast-lane' gay men. These otherwise "apparently healthy men", in the words of the US Public Health Service’s Centers for Disease Control (CDC), commonly had infestations including: Epstein-Barr virus (mononucleosis), cytomegalovirus (CMV) and several other herpes viruses, varicella zoster virus, adenovirus, chlamydia, toxoplasma gondii, respiratory syncytial virus, hepatitis A and B virus, gonorrhoea, candida albicans (thrush), syphilis, plus a variety of enteric and protozoan infections. Each of these, particularly CMV, can cause immune suppression. Many of the men, moreover, used nitrite inhalants to facilitate anal intercourse. Nitrite use causes immunosuppression. Another condition known to be common among the men, anorectal mucosal trauma (brought on by anal intercourse), also causes immunosuppression, by allowing semen to enter the bloodstream. (Semen becomes an antigen when it enters another person’s bloodstream.) The abuse of antibiotics was also common, and this again causes immunosuppression. Thus one condition, namely a deficient immune system, had many and various causes; yet it was classified as a single disease with a single cause. Initially called Gay Related Immune Deficiency or GRID, it was later termed AIDS.

Although the fact that immunosuppression had multiple causes was known in 1981, the US Centers for Disease Control chose to endorse a theory favoured by some scientists which assumed a single viral cause. As the opening speaker at the San Francisco Symposium, Professor Phillip Johnson, explains, "It became fact in an atmosphere of near panic, in which the demands for an easy answer and a miracle cure were irresistible."

The battlefields for scientific argument over the HIV hypothesis are as numerous and far-flung as the increasing complexity of explanations. Two of the most interesting areas of contention are haemophilia and blood transfusion. Professor Duesberg and his critics agree that haemophiliacs will provide the best evidence for their theories. Whilst there is disagreement, it is nevertheless being debated in scientific publications.

With blood transfusion, there are studies which claim that recipients of HIV-positive blood do not die any quicker than other recipients. In the US, one study showed that of 694 recipients of HIV contaminated blood, 331 (48 per cent) died within a year. Of 146 recipients believed to be uninfected, 73 (50 per cent) died within a year also. Other studies have validated this.

**WHO IS AT RISK?:** Associate Professor John Kaldor, deputy director of the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research in Sydney, claims that at least 13,119 people in Europe have acquired AIDS through heterosexual contact. If this is not the case, he adds, they must be telling lies. He believes, as does all the 'Papadopoulos and Turner dispute this. They claim that the "epidemiology suffices to show that passive anal intercourse practised by either sex is the risk factor which leads to the acquisition of 'HIV antibodies' and eventual AIDS." They quote the conclusion of a review published last year by Van Griensven and Careres examining more than 25 large studies on gay men. It concludes that HIV antibodies and AIDS can be acquired only by the passive partner. In the history of medicine there has never been a sexually-transmitted agent/disease which is spread unidirectionally.

Kaldor's claim also appears to be contradicted by studies throughout Europe on prostitutes, and others done in New York on heterosexual couples. In tests of 519 female prostitutes in Spain between May 1989 and December 1990, each of whom had up to 600 unprotected contacts a month, only 12 (2.3 per cent) had a positive Western Blot (WB) test, and for these there was a direct relationship to anal intercourse. In 1990 and 1992 in two Scottish studies not one non-intravenous-drug-using (NIVDU) prostitute was found to be WB positive. In the 1993 'European working group on HIV infection in female prostitutes study', only nine (1.2 per cent) of 756 NIVDU prostitutes were found to be WB positive. The same pattern is emerging with prostitutes in Sydney, the city where 60 per cent of Australian AIDS cases are to be found. A review of over 100 papers on prostitution and HIV confirms that HIV is related to poverty, health and drug use.

Perhaps Dr Kaldor's facetious comment about 'heterosexual' cases telling lies is closer to the truth. In New York in 1984, Anastasia Lekarsas, co-ordinator of investigations for the AIDS Surveillance Unit of the New York City Health Department, said that 60 per cent of female HIV-positive infections were "related to sexual activity with non-prostitute male partners, not female prostitutes, and that 20 per cent were related to women who worked as streetwalkers."

Official published literature in Australia, that female to male transmission of HIV is only "somewhat lower" than that of male to female, and anal intercourse carries a "somewhat" higher risk than vaginal intercourse for the receptive partner. Asked to put a figure on it, he says vaginal intercourse is only one-half as efficient.
York City Department of Health, investigated 300 AIDS patients classified as ‘No Identified Risk’. That excludes homosexuals, bisexuals, intravenous drug abusers, haemophiliacs, recipients of blood transfusions, people from Haiti or Africa, and sex partners of anyone in a risk group. Of the 300, 297 turned out to have had homosexual contracts that were initially denied. Only three remained unexplained.\(^{12}\)

Remarkably, in all the years that HIV has been spreading in Australia, only nine women, or fewer than one per year, have died of AIDS through alleged heterosexual transmission where all risk factors have been excluded. An Australian woman runs a far greater risk of being killed by a random lightning strike than of dying from AIDS after sleeping with a heterosexual partner.

This did not prevent a recent federal government publication, appearing in the December 1994 issue of Cleo magazine, from giving a graphic account of a woman who contracts AIDS from her boyfriend, who in turn had contracted it from a casual female lover. According to the official statistics, these cases are non-existent in Australia. The evidence of vaginally-transmitted HIV remains speculative, relying at best on anecdotes. The evidence in the United States points in exactly the same direction.\(^{13}\)

But the myth that AIDS does not discriminate persists. At the World Health Organization conference on Women and AIDS in Geneva in February, the chairwoman, Indonesian MP Dr Nafsiah Mboi, stated, "Every minute of the day, every day of the year, two women become infected by HIV and every two minutes a woman dies of AIDS". The report in The Australian (10 February 1995) was headlined ‘Women Catch Up with HIV’. Only well into the story was it admitted that this is not the case in the West.

**AIDS IN AFRICA:** In Australia, Europe and America, the evidence that is used most to try to sustain the notion of the heterosexual transmission of the HIV virus is the African experience. But this raises more questions than it answers. One of the proponents of the HIV theory, Jerold Lowenstein, talking at last year’s AAAS Symposium, claimed that 70 per cent of the world’s 13 million AIDS cases are in Africa.

But there are scientists who believe these sorts of claims are gross exaggerations, that they are based more on racial prejudice and the myth of black sexual promiscuity than on hard evidence. Professor P.A.K. Adly,
head of clinical microbiology at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana says, “I’ve known for a long time that AIDS is not a crisis in Africa as the world is being made to understand.” In fact, the best predictor of AIDS-defining disease in Africa is not sexual behaviour, but poverty. It is impossible in the scope of a short article to cover all the arguments concerning AIDS in Africa, but three points should be kept in mind.

Firstly, according to Papadopoulos and Turner, “Validation studies from Zaire and Uganda have shown that 62-83 per cent of ‘AIDS’ patients had a positive [HIV] test, but so did 44 per cent with malaria, 97 per cent with shingles, 41 per cent with a carcinoma, 33 per cent with piles and 42-87 per cent of women with amenorrhoea. Simply put, there is an abundance of ‘AIDS’ without ‘HIV antibodies’ and an abundance of ‘HIV antibodies’ with non-‘AIDS’ diseases.”

Secondly, the definition of AIDS is different in Africa than in Western countries. Tuberculosis has now become an AIDS-defining illness, as have a number of other previously-known diseases. The World Health Organization’s Clinical Case Definition of AIDS in Africa is not based on an HIV test or T-cell counts but on several combined symptoms, none of which are new or uncommon on the African continent. Nor are these conditions sexually transmitted.

Thirdly, HIV tests are almost meaningless in Africa. According to a 1994 study in the Journal of Infectious Diseases, “HIV tests were useless in central Africa where the microbes responsible for tuberculosis, malaria, and leprosy were so prevalent that they registered over 70 per cent false positive results.” Researchers have not yet established a mechanism of causation connecting HIV and AIDS. Nor have they succeeded in confirming the HIV model by inducing AIDS in animals.

In the absence of a mechanism or an animal model, the HIV theory is based only upon a correlation that turns out to be primarily an artefact of the theory itself. So a person with tuberculosis is an AIDS patient if and only if HIV is found. If HIV is not found the person is a tuberculosis patient. And yet even when known causes of immune suppression are present, if HIV is found it is blamed for the damage.

The Director of the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, Professor Ron Penny, states that “HIV is the necessary and sufficient cause of AIDS. He rejects the charge that such a definition is tautological.

HOSTILE REACTION: Professor Penny has no time for the AIDS sceptics, dismissing them as “an extraordinary lunatic fringe”. His deputy Dr John Kaldor likens them to those “dark forces in human nature” who deny the Holocaust (even though nobody in the HIV/AIDS debate is trying to underestimate the deaths or the suffering). He accuses the critics of suggesting “that somehow the Western scientific community had manufactured the African AIDS epidemic for its own amusement”. He refers to them as “part of a visible conspiracy” and warns of the “fine line between healthy scepticism and deliberate disinformation”.

Professor Penny is joined in his criticisms by others active in the ‘AIDS industry’. Alan Brotherton, spokesman for People Living with HIV and AIDS, describes the Duesberg position as “irresponsible” and “patently a homophobic gay lifestyle attack.” But remarks like this do not really address the issue.

At the same time there are gay organizations, as well as individual homosexual AIDS sufferers, who are more than happy to keep an open mind about alternative theories of AIDS. They recognize that, whether or not the sceptics are correct, AIDS sufferers and those at risk are not helped by a refusal to subject the causation of AIDS to rigorous scientific scrutiny. To make accusations of conspiracy and homophobia is as sensible as labelling ‘racist’ those who report on Aboriginal health problems.

3. AAAS Symposium, op.cit.
18. ibid.
SOME sections of the Australian media hailed Ralph Willis's 1995-96 Budget as an 'election Budget'. They did so mainly on the basis that the Government estimated a surplus for 1995-96 and the following three years. Even though the estimated surplus for 1995-96 was quickly revealed to be a substantial underlying deficit, the general strategy was perceived as reducing, if not eliminating, the need for a further rise in interest rates beyond the increase of 2.75 percentage points (to 7.5 per cent) in official cash rates since the middle of last year. As political polling had been suggesting, such increases had a big negative effect on voters; hence the conclusion that this was an election Budget.

I found such an interpretation mildly amusing given that, when I first proposed a public sector surplus of two per cent of GDP soon after I resigned from Treasury in early 1987, the media declared it "unrealistic". The adverse effects which high interest rates subsequently had at the end of the 1980s are, however, now evidently imprinted on people's minds. In addition, the need to lift national savings has become more widely recognised, such as in the report by Dr Vince Fitzgerald arguing for an increase of five percentage points of GDP.

THE PITCH: Immediately after the Budget, Prime Minister Paul Keating spent a hyperactive two weeks criss-crossing the country trying to sell the idea that the proposed measures would solve the country's economic problems. By the year 2000, everyone was told, the addition to national saving from moving the Budget into surplus and from (compulsory) additions to superannuation would be four to six per cent of GDP whereas 'the problem' to be overcome — as represented by the excess of the current account deficit over that required to stabilize the ratio of external debt to GDP — was portrayed as being only two per cent of GDP. Game, set and match!

Mr Keating worked very hard to produce a recovery in the opinion polls. But then came the 'deep thud'. This was not the deep thud of bass notes in a Mahler symphony with which Mr Keating compared the long-lasting impression he expected to create with the Budget. Rather, the thud came from the widening of the opinion poll margin with which the Government trailed the Coalition. Clearly, any early election plans had to be put on hold, if not entirely discarded, and an alternative strategy adopted. Hence the rapid move of the republic issue to centre stage.

What, then, went wrong? Why did the electorate apparently not accept that the Budget had fixed things?

This question carries added weight given that no sooner had the Budget been brought down than interest rates started to tumble. Naturally, the Government attempted to claim the credit. But it rapidly became clear that the fall was principally due to reductions in overseas markets in the face of increasing evidence of slower than expected growth among our major trading partners. In addition, the apparent slowing in the Australian economy itself — subsequently confirmed by the March quarter figures for GDP — had already reduced the local demand for credit before the Budget.

These developments overcame the scepticism which many (including myself) had hitherto shared that the slowing of growth both overseas and in Australia would be very temporary. My own view remains that the slowing will not be long lasting either in the US or here: the tightening in policies has not been sufficient to produce either a downturn or an extended period of stagnation and some of the slowing reflects the temporary effects of reducing excess stocks. But it does now seem that the fear of interest rate rises and of a repetition of the end-1980s experience is making people cautious.
So we come back to square one: although the interest rate falls could not be attributed to the Budget, they should have made the Budget easier to 'sell' and to hold an early election. The unfavourable initial opinion poll reaction must therefore have been due to other factors.

**CREDIBILITY GAP:** Perhaps Mr Keating's credibility has been diminished by so many previous assurances of a similar kind that few people now believe his sales pitch. For most there is no 'end of history' where Australia's economic problems are concerned and even some Labor supporters are starting to realize that Mr Keating's tendency to over-sell may be a liability. The idea that he could convince the electorate of the end of Australia's savings problem becomes even more fanciful when it is realised that:

- While the forward estimates of Commonwealth expenditure project a reduction from around 27 per cent to 24 per cent of GDP over the next four years, the Keating Government has a track record of consistently exceeding its own forward estimates by a considerable margin. In the current year, for example, expenditure will be no less than $11 billion (about 2.2 per cent of GDP) higher than when the estimates were first made in the 1991-92 Budget!

- Although the forward estimates of tax revenue project an increase from 23 per cent to 24.5 per cent of GDP, they assume no tax cuts during the period even though there would be considerable 'bracket creep' and resultant pressure for such cuts.

- Forward estimates of both revenue and expenditure depend on achieving a projected steady rate of economic growth of about 3.75 per cent per annum over the next four years, even though that would mean an exceptionally long eight years of relatively high growth. As the 1995 Economic Survey of Australia by the OECD has highlighted, there is doubt in any event about whether Australia's capital stock is sufficient to sustain a growth rate much above three per cent per annum.

- Even if the forward estimates of expenditure and revenue are realised, the projected annual contribution of the Commonwealth Budget to national saving would average only about 0.5 per cent of GDP over the period. That falls a fair way short of the annual contribution of two to three per cent of GDP suggested by Fitzgerald and others.

- The projected net addition to national saving of around one per cent per annum of GDP by 2005 and 1.7 per cent per annum by 2020 from the proposed additional superannuation depends in part on the Industrial Relations Commission agreeing to award an employee contribution of 3 per cent of wages. That cannot be taken for granted. Nor does it seem realistic to assume that the employee contributions will be offset by only a 30 per cent reduction in their other saving.

What these reservations indicate is that, as with Mr Keating's previous exaggerated claims, little substantive credibility can be attached to his suggestion that the shortfall in national savings will be overcome. True, the rhetoric is good and the general direction of policy is appropriate. But, particularly for the next three or four years, the country is likely to remain seriously exposed by inadequate domestic saving and high current account deficits to the risk of an externally induced recession.

**TAX RISE:** Another important factor in the unfavourable reaction to the Budget has undoubtedly been the tax increases (which will yield an additional $2.4 billion in 1995-96 and $3.6 billion in 1996-97) and the effective abandonment of the second tranche of personal income tax cuts announced in the 1992 One Nation statement. These come on top of the substantial tax increases in the 1993-94 Budget and after Mr Keating said in the 1993 election, "What I am promising is not to put up tax." Most importantly, they fail to recognise the adverse effects which such increased taxes have on incentives to earn income and to invest.

The tax increases reflect the almost total failure by the Government to deal with its excessive level of own-purpose spending. The net effect of spending decisions is to reduce total expenditure by only $0.7 billion in a Budget of $129 billion. Excluding the estimated effect of asset sales there will actually be a real increase of 2.5 per cent in total own-purpose outlays in 1995-96 — some 'restraint'!

None of the foregoing necessarily means that the Keating Government will remain down in the opinion polls.

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Little credibility can be attached to Mr Keating's suggestion that the shortfall in national savings will be overcome.

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What does seem clear, however, is that the Budget, and especially Mr Keating's efforts to 'sell' it, has proved to be a 'fizzer' politically. While one can draw some encouragement from the latest about-turn by Mr Keating (not so long ago he was attacking as 'deficit dales' those who advocated a Budget surplus), his Government will have to do a lot more to get on top of Australia's inadequate savings problem.
The high costs and long delays associated with the public court system have led to the development of an effective private alternative.

Few would quarrel with the former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, W. Burger, when he said: "The obligation of (the legal) profession is, or has been thought to be, to serve as healers of human conflict. To fulfil our traditional obligation means that we should provide mechanisms that produce an acceptable result in the shortest possible time with the least expense, and a minimum of stress on the participants. This is what justice is all about."

Against this fine ideal we have the reality. How often have we heard the comment, "I/We cannot afford to go to court"? The escalating legal costs associated with litigation and the long delays that often precede the hearing of a case make access to the public courts beyond the resources of many. Even after a writ has been issued, cases have languished in the Supreme Court of Victoria for up to seven years.

Fortunately there is an alternative means of resolving disputes, private mediation, which avoids the slowness and the onerous legal costs associated with court action. According to the Australian Financial Review (28 April 1994), "In 1994 mediation saved $12.5 million in legal fees following a recent mediation program run by the NSW Law Society". The paper reported that "the average saving per mediation case was $30,092, or just under $12.5 million for all 415 cases". This is a most impressive and persuasive argument for prospective litigants at least to canvass the possibility of their cases being amenable to some form of dispute resolution procedure, of which mediation is the most common in this country.

What is mediation?: Sir Laurence Street, former Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales until his retirement in 1988, described mediation as a process that has three identifying elements:

"the first is that the parties call in the aid of an impartial third party to structure a process for them within which they can negotiate a resolution of their dispute in the course of which they will meet and..."
THE CASE FOR MEDIATION

"The issue was whether company X had to pay a particular statutory fee. The company secretary of company X was adamant that his company would not pay one cent towards this fee. It appeared to the mediator that company X was liable for the fees in question, a view shared by the other side. In private session it transpired that the secretary had total control over finance and could approve anything in this regard. The true reason [the hidden agenda] as to why talk together with the mediator and the mediator will talk privately with each party in the course of the discussions.

The second indicator is that the third party has no power at all under the mediation agreement to impose any decision or to hand down a determination. The mediator is there simply to facilitate the flow of communication and develop mutual understanding and help the parties towards a consensus. The third ingredient is that the process is consensual throughout. It is consensual from the beginning ... consensual in that it continues as long as the parties want to go on negotiating [and] consensual in its culmination in that a successful mediation results in a contract which is just as enforceable as any other contract."

ACTUAL CASES: The following examples illustrate the advantages of the mediation process.

Example One: both parties win.

Company A owed company B $8 million. B supplied specialized machinery to A and wished to continue cordial business relations with A, but was facing a cash-flow problem. Meanwhile company C was proposing to provide A with the machinery it needed, thereby excluding B. B wanted to ensure that this did not happen. A and B were reluctant to air their grievances through the court system. B had been involved in a previous long drawn-out trade practice dispute in which it had paid out over $400,000 in legal costs. A and B agreed to try mediation prior to any form of litigation. After seven hours an agreement was reached. The costs were only $700 to each party, a poignant reminder of the value of mediation. Moreover the bitterness that often results from a prolonged battle in the courts was absent: Company A and company B are still trading today.

Example Two: not all examples are winners!

A well-known commercial entity in Melbourne was sued by an individual claiming $2 million. Following a delay of four years since the issuing of the writ, the parties elected to mediate. Costs to both sides had exceeded $100,000 at the time of the mediation. During negotiations the plaintiff reluctantly agreed to lower her claim to $450,000. The mediator challenged a number of issues related to the claim but the plaintiff, her counsel and solicitor were adamant. The defendant, with the weight of evidence on its side, increased its offer to $75,000. The parties failed to reach agreement.

Three months later the matter proceeded to court where the plaintiff received $5,000 and a fraction of the costs incurred. The only winners were the legal profession. In this case both the public system, the courts, and the private system, mediation, failed the parties. Perhaps the plaintiff should have studied the cartoon opposite.


Enthusiastic support for mediation by the Chief Justice of the Victorian Supreme Court, Mr Justice Phillips, led to the so-called Spring Offensive in 1993 and the Autumn Offensive in 1995. Enthusiastic support for mediation by the Chief Justice of the Victorian Supreme Court, Mr Justice Phillips, led to the so-called Spring Offensive in 1993 and the Autumn Offensive in 1995. Both were attempts to reduce the backlog of cases by directing parties to mediation where appropriate. In the Spring Offensive over 50 per cent of cases were reported settled, thereby increasing the efficiency of the public court system. In addition, the Supreme Court Act has been amended to permit judges to order that proceedings be referred to a mediator.

Example Four: the hidden agenda.

The reasons for litigation are not always as they seem. All sorts of undeclared personal interests and feelings can underlie and prolong a dispute. Mediation can help find a way around these, as the following example illustrates.3

"The issue was whether company X had to pay a particular statutory fee. The company secretary of company X was adamant that his company would not pay one cent towards this fee. It appeared to the mediator that company X was liable for the fees in question, a view shared by the other side. In private session it transpired that the secretary had total control over finance and could approve anything in this regard. The true reason [the hidden agenda] as to why

How many litigants view their cases.
before retirement. He thought litigation would take this long and whilst this litigation was being fought, he at least would have peace of mind. All the problems which might result from any litigation would have to be sorted out by his successor. He was quite happy to leave the problem to his successor in order to enjoy the quiet life for his last two years in office. The other side did not care what happened so long as the fees were not its responsibility. The solution was the secretary of company X had his way. His company did not pay the fees. The other company (company Y) paid them. But company Y was recompensed for its payment by an increase in the sum payable to it under other financial arrangements between the two."

This is a perfect example of how mediation can satisfy disputing parties by finding a win/win solution.

Example Five: lateral thinking.

Mediators have greater flexibility than the courts to approach problems in innovative ways. William Ury tells the story of a man who left 17 camels to his three sons.4 "He left half the camels to his eldest son, a third to his middle son and a ninth to his youngest. The three set to dividing up their inheritance but could not negotiate a solution — because 17 could not be divided by two or three or nine. The sons finally consulted a wise old woman [let us say a mediator]. After pondering the problem the old woman said, 'See what happens if you take my camel'. So then the sons had 18 camels. The eldest son took his half — that was nine, the middle took a third — that was six, and the youngest son took his ninth — that was two. Nine and six and two made 17. They had one camel left over. They gave it back to the wise old woman." The mediator has the opportunity to canvass options unavailable to a judge in the public system.

BENEFITS: It is true that 95 per cent of all cases achieve settlement and that only about five per cent of disputes are dealt with by the courts — "most that commence legal proceedings are settled or abandoned prior to such processes and the vast majority of disputes or potential disputes never reach legal processes and therefore are never litigated."5 But the costs incurred to commence litigation and to undertake the required interlocutory steps are in themselves likely to leave a legal account payable by respective parties of some thousands of dollars. If there is an opportunity for the parties to consider mediation before litigation, there is a strong likelihood of the costs being limited, as suggested in Example One above.

The international mediator Andrew Acland states, "the mediator will hold joint and separate meetings with those in conflict in order to:

- reduce hostility and establish effective communication;
- assist people to understand each other's needs and concerns;
- ask questions which reveal the real interests of each side;
- raise and clarify issues overlooked or inadequately covered;
- assist people to develop and communicate new ideas;
- help reframe proposals in more palatable terms;
- moderate unrealistic demands;
- test receptiveness to new proposals;
- help draft agreements which solve current problems, safeguard relationships, and anticipate future needs."


The costs saved by mediation are not just in legal fees. By-passing the courts also saves the expense of company executives having to involve themselves in the preparation of the lengthy documents that commonly form part of the evidence required in an adversarial, commercial dispute. An added bonus is that a mediated consensual settlement helps re-establish cordial business relations between the disputants.

The modern commercial adoption of mediation, as evident in America during the last 25 years, is not without precedent. The Chinese have employed the skills of negotiation with their form of mediation (and other non-adversary procedures) for many centuries.6 But even in the West, mediation is not alien. After all, negotiation is part of our everyday commercial life. Mediation is assisted negotiation.

THE FUTURE: Mediation will not replace the court system, it will complement it. Increasingly, commercial parties are likely to include dispute resolution clauses in contracts, making it mandatory for the parties to adopt mediation in the event of a conflict, prior to any adversarial contest — that is, prior to litigation or arbitration. If this procedure is adopted, the parties control the conflict. Mediation is not a means of excluding access to the courts, but a private initiative which will help revitalize the public system by reducing pressure on it. ■

Convoluted abstruse legislation is costing Australia dearly.

The American State of Pennsylvania has a 'plain English' law for its own statutes, requiring an average word length of less than 1.55 syllables, an average sentence length of less than 22 words, and an average paragraph length of less than 75 words. No sentence may exceed 50 words and no paragraph may be longer than 150 words.

This imaginative attempt to force style by legislation, while no doubt well-intentioned, seems naive in the extreme. Style is not a matter of mathematics — there is no such thing as an 'ideal' size for a word, a sentence or a paragraph. However, the community in this country would benefit if the Parliaments in Australia at least followed the spirit of the Pennsylvanian law.

British textbooks on the English language sometimes quote the following famous passage from one of their pieces of subordinate legislation:

"In the nuts (unground) (other than ground-nuts) order, the expression 'nuts' shall have reference to such nuts, other than ground-nuts, as would, but for this amending order, not qualify as nuts (unground) (other than ground-nuts) by reason of their being nuts (unground)."

But are things any better in this country? Every citizen is expected to know the law. A nice enough theory — at least from the perspective of a police prosecutor — but what do the authorities do to help citizens cope with legislation? The sheer bulk of modern statutes is terrifying — and new laws are getting enacted at a fast rate. Mr Kerry Packer, the media proprietor, surely had a point when he told members of a parliamentary committee that they should not pass a new law unless they first repealed an old one!

Even an Act affecting virtually every person, such as the Income Tax Assessment...
The sheer bulk of modern statutes is terrifying.

The simpler language of the main text, the shorter sentences, the use of examples, the logical order of presentation and the better use of headings and cross-references all helped to make the prose very understandable. Definitions were set out in logical places and avoided deeming provisions and other artificial concepts. If highly sophisticated provisions such as these can be simplified then so can every other piece of legislative drafting.

The noted tax expert, Ray Conwell, in a recent paper quoted from a judgment in a case involving a provision in the Act:

"The wording appears involuntary and to have the aberration of tenses and in the use of the subjunctive mood. But if meanings of both the protasis and the apodosis sufficiently emerge we need not be concerned by inelegances appearing on a syntactical analysis."

Conwell then commented:

"It would be a cruel blow indeed if after finally coming to grips with the legislation you cannot understand the judgment."

The hidden costs to business in trying to find out just what some legislation means must be enormous.

TEST CASES: Finally, it is appropriate to raise two additional matters of concern to members of the general public.

Periodically the meaning of words in legislation has to be settled in a court. The parties who take such issues to a tribunal provide a useful public service, but they incur enormous personal costs in the process. Is it really fair that private pockets should finance the cost of fixing up what are really errors in the drafting which is provided by Parliament?

It would also be most desirable for Acts which are tested in court in this way to be formally amended as quickly as possible, so that future users can as far as possible find all the relevant law in the one place. Such an amendment could either reflect the court decision, if that accords with current policy, or it could specifically reverse that decision if it does not (or if the verdict has produced an unintended result).

Many such cases affect taxation issues. If at the end of the day a redraft of defective legislation is going to benefit a taxpayer then it is hard to see why an expensive and delaying test case needs to fought at all, when speedy retrospective legislation could always be brought in as soon as a defect is pointed out.
**Press index**

**RALLYING TO THE REPUBLIC**

On 7 June the Prime Minister presented his model of an Australian republic. On 8 June the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Howard, responded. To the former the press reaction was generally warm, even enthusiastic (P.P. McGuinness was an exception); to the latter is was, in the words of the *Courier Mail*’s Peter Charlton, “overwhelmingly negative”.

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<td><strong>Sydney Morning Herald, 8 June</strong> Mike Seccombe</td>
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<td><strong>The Australian, 8 June</strong> Michael Gordon</td>
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<td><strong>Sydney Morning Herald, 13 June</strong> Geoff Kitney</td>
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choosing a president

GRAHAM LEDERMAN

Before we decide to elect a President, a series of complex and awkward questions must be resolved.

EVER since Prime Minister Paul Keating actively took up the republican cause there have been numerous calls for his government to provide some specific proposals as to how the Constitution would be changed. On 7 June he finally stated his government’s position. Although presented as a “simple and modest undertaking”, Mr Keating’s proposal cannot gloss over the complex questions involved in any transition to an Australian republic. Indeed, the quite extraordinary difficulty the task presents is most likely the reason for Mr Keating’s uncharacteristic reticence in coming forward to detail his vision.

Taking just one of the many issues to be dealt with demonstrates its complexity. I refer to the office of head of state in a newly chartered republican system of government. Leaving aside profound questions as to the social role and political powers and responsibilities of this new office, far less abstruse and more easily addressed matters concerning rules of incumbency, the manner of appointment, eligibility, and mechanisms of nomination, are not satisfactorily resolved by Mr Keating’s 7 June statement. Without begging the question of whether a change to republicanism is the best way forward for Australia, it might be useful to examine these latter questions.

MANNER OF APPOINTMENT: Sir Zelman Cowan has expressed concern at the prospect of a popularly elected head of

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He has drawn attention to the fact that a directly elected President (we might as well call this particular spade by its likely ultimate title) would effectively take precedence over a Prime Minister who is not so elected: the President’s power would come directly from the populace while the Prime Minister’s comes derivatively through the political party in government office. The point is cogent. The difference and its significance are indicated by the fact that while the Prime Minister can be removed at any time and without the consent of the people simply by the incumbent political party changing its leader, the President would presumably be secure in his or her statutory tenure, unless guilty of some specifically prohibited lapse of conduct, and would continue in office regardless of changes of government.

Having such different sources of power and, even more significantly, different conditions of tenure, it is more than possible that these two leading figures of political life would assume conflicting and competitive positions on matters of national importance and debate. While Prime Ministers would have the interests of their party and their own personal ambitions of staying in office at least as prominent in their priorities as the welfare of the country, the President would be free to take a more principled and idealistic stand on any vexed issue that might arise. On the other hand, the views of Prime Ministers are informed by a realistic appraisal of the possible because Prime Ministers shoulder the practical responsibility for making things work. However the duties of the President come to be determined it is inconceivable that any share in that responsibility would be included. Nor would any proposal to deny the President the option of speaking on matters of public interest sit comfortably with a society which has embraced precepts of open government, freedom of information laws and of the media, and major curtailments of defamation laws.

The clearest and most consistent message the people (almost 80 per cent of them) are sending via the polls is that only direct popular election will be acceptable. It seems therefore that we must proceed on the basis that the President will be popularly elected.

Eligibility: The oft-stated rationale for the republican exercise is one of national identity. As a relatively new country with a population comprised of pockets of migrants from many and diverse nationalities and cultures, we apparently lack a unifying symbolic identity. It is argued that many migrants and their Australian-born children do not feel part of the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture established by British settlement and are therefore not effectively bonded together in a cohesive, uniquely Australian, national ethos.

If a republican form of government is to achieve this end it is clearly vital that nothing divisive be built into the new constitutional arrangements. And in particular, the highest possible percentage of the population must approve the choice of President.

Currently, the Governor-General is appointed by the Crown. For that reason there is in the electorate only a minimal sense of real connection, involvement or interest in the incumbent. If that situation is changed to one wherein the appointment is made by universal election, the sense of connection, involvement and interest would be greatly increased. The head of state would no longer represent the Crown but would directly represent the people of Australia who would themselves effect the selection of incumbents.

And so much the better, one might say. But along with that closer and more active sense of involvement would come a more intense interest in the choice of incumbent. The issue of
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The probability is that direct popular election, far from guaranteeing a widely accepted outcome, will increase the chances of passionate partisanship and controversy. A code of criteria for eligibility is therefore the first gritty consideration that must be addressed as the primary means of preventing the presidency from being a source of social conflict.

I say “gritty” because, given the goal of symbolic national unity, it is clear that the first criterion should be that candidates be native-born to Australia. The migrants who come to Australia bring with them a cultural baggage that includes histories of wars, religious and economic conflicts, and racial and cultural incompatibilities. This is no-one’s fault; it is just an inevitable consequence of the tribal aspect of human existence. It is therefore highly probable that, in a populace composed of diverse national groupings, it would be divisive rather than unifying to have an immigrant President.

Australia has so far been remarkably lenient on questions of eligibility for public and political office. We have permitted migrants to occupy seats in parliament and there is nothing to stop someone born outside Australia from becoming Prime Minister of the land. This easy-going practice is said to exemplify the Australian way, but before we take it into a new republican era it would be well to note that as a practice it has failed to deliver the sense of nationhood that we so crave. By comparison, the Americans, who are composed of a multitude of disparate nationalities, are much tougher and more single-minded on this question; only a native-born American can aspire to the office of the United States presidency.

It might be argued that since this tolerance has not caused problems in our political system thus far, why should it do so with a newly constituted and directly elected head of state. Pursuing further the argument advanced above, we must address the fact that the person occupying the office will be a singular entity, not part of a political party. He or she will therefore stand as a distinct and isolated figure identifiable only in terms of background and personal associations. A Greek, Italian, Chinese or British immigrant — or whatever nationality one cares to name — who is elected to Parliament is (unless one of the microscopically small percentage of independent parliamentarians) elected as a member of a political party: it is therefore, in major part, the Australian Labor Party or the Liberal or National
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Party that has been elected, not the Greek, Italian, Chinese or British man or woman.

Mere tolerance of the incumbent will not be adequate; that suggests a passive and possibly resigned acceptance which would fall considerably short of the widespread esteem that the governor-generalship has enjoyed. If the new Constitution is to forge a strong and united nation, we need the presidency to attract and sustain strong support. It will not be constructive to congratulate ourselves about our much self-lauded national characteristic of tolerance; we must be清醒 sighted about what is necessary to achieve our objective.

At least as controversial is the question of religion. Clearly, religious leaders and ministers, even if retired, cannot for the same reasons be regarded as suitable candidates. In addition to the obvious ideological, spiritual and moral divisions between the different religions, there are deep and long-established alliances between the various religious camps and ethnic groups, such that presidents drawn from the ranks of retired religious leaders would in effect be presidents unduly representative of partisan ethnic groups.

Again it might be argued that religious affiliation has never been a bar to appointment to the governor-generalship and neither has it ever caused trouble: thus, why should an embargo be placed on it now in the case of a republican presidency? The point to remember is that in the past the Governor-General was appointed by the Crown and the appropriateness of the choice was thus distanced from the populace; the question of just and fair representation did not arise.

In the American case, while the President may have, and often has had, close ties to a religious community, he assumes office as a result of political election and as the nominee of a particular political party. To my knowledge no-one seriously intends that our Prime Ministers are henceforward to be our Presidents.

We will also be faced with the question of whether it would be acceptable for a candidate to have any form of criminal record. While it is fairly obvious that a past conviction for straightforwardly criminal activity would rule out a candidate, we would need to consider the status of say a major traffic offence, or drink driving, or for resisting arrest during a political demonstration. And what about a drug offence or charges of sexual harassment? Or are we to adopt the modern forgive-and-forget approach to past misdeeds and to place no prohibition on candidates with criminal records?

Presumably people with strong political connections would be unacceptable, but how strong? An ex-Prime Minister, an ex-Minister, an ex-leader of a political party, or anyone who has ever been a member of a political party: where do we draw the line? Mr Keating has said that politicians should become eligible five years after leaving Parliament. My own view is that anyone who has held political office, either in the public sphere or at party level, should be disqualified but that ordinary membership of a party is not a sufficiently significant private commitment to interfere with the objective of impartial representation.

And how are we to regard our highly politicized trade union movement? Could the nation feel itself unified under so partisan an incumbent as leading trade union figures take pride in being? I should have thought not.

Then there are those considerations that one is diffident to raise. For example, how well educated should an incumbent be? Remember that this is Australia. Might it come to pass that retired sports champions will be selected to symbolize our national identity? Or people in other entertainment fields who have deservedly earned our admiration and affection? And if so, and if we take Mr Keating’s concerns to heart about the damaging image we present to the world by having a head of state who represents a foreign monarch, how will the nation’s international prestige stand with presidential incumbents who, having devoted their lives to sport or to other publicly prominent and engaging occupations, have not had the interest or opportunity to acquire the immense quantum of background knowledge that the likes of Sir Zelman Cowen (to name just one example) have previously brought to the nation’s highest representative office? Does the post require a comprehensive grasp of history, geography and current affairs? Does it need a high level of verbal and intellectual skills? A statesman-like demeanour? And are these qualifications perhaps necessities rather than the sort of peripheral characteristics that can be left to the electorate to decide in individual cases?

Nomination: While the above by no means entirely covers the ground to be canvassed on the question of eligibility, it should suffice to demonstrate the problematical nature of this vital component of republicanism. Equally complex and of disturbing magnitude are related matters concerning nomination.

At the simple opening level the questions are: assuming that the President is to attain office by general election, how are candidates to come forward, how is the public to be made aware of them, who may propose them and by what means?

If, as Mr Keating wishes, the President is to be elected by a two-thirds parliamentary majority after nomination by the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister’s office will be the natural and efficient bureaucracy to identify potential candidates, to weigh up their respective merits, to sound out the
views of the parties in opposition, and to make recommendations to the Prime Minister. But if the polls are right, this is not to be.

It would appear that all otherwise-appropriate existing bureaucratic agencies would, for reasons of political connection, be unsuitable for the job. Hence, an entirely new public office would be needed to gather, investigate and present to the public a range of candidates, and thereafter to organize, staff and preside over the mechanics of popular election. The one existing possibility, the Australian Electoral Commission, is equipped only for the responsibility of dealing with the last of these duties in respect of federal elections and referenda; it could not, in its present form, possibly take on the immense tasks preparatory to the purely mechanical election process of presidential candidates.

So, given a new bureaucratic machine to handle the task in its totality, is it to be the case that the entire adult population, subject to given eligibility criteria, be invited to nominate at will? Or should candidates be required to gather a minimum number of individual nominations? Alternatively, or additionally, are organizations — social, academic, legal, welfare, business etc. — the best sources of candidates?

And keeping these questions in mind, how are the various candidates to be presented to the public prior to election? Are there to be rules governing and limiting advertising campaigns? Because otherwise candidates without the backing of financially strong organizations or groups would be at a serious disadvantage. Or would the bureaucracy set up to administer the process itself select a short list of candidates and provide at public expense a set promotion package for them all, with perhaps a complete embargo on any other publicity undertaken independently?

Although this option would create its own problem in the accountability of those within the bureaucracy who would select the short list, I believe it is the direction to be taken. For if the arguments above concerning the threat of social division have been less than convincing, only consider the prospect of a full range of ethnic, religious, political and ideologically-based groups and organizations lobbying the general public through the media, intent on discrediting competing candidates and elevating their own. The lies, concealments, defamations and exaggerations; the entire appalling behavioural sink that occurs at the election of governments to office would render still-born all possibility that the new office of the Australian presidency would capture the hearts and minds of the populace and stand with authority and status at the vanguard of a new republican era.

Let it be conceded that the cost would be enormous if we were to undertake the necessary advertising at public expense. But constitutional change of this order will hardly be worth the candle if we merely extend an already discredited faction-ridden system of allocating public office. The cost will be enormous anyway. Even if we allow the free reign of competing groups and lobbies to fight it out unregulated and at their own expense, there will still be the massive expense of the election itself — roughly that of mounting a referendum.

Perhaps when the cost is made evident to the community people will, if only for this the least important reason, think more favourably of a Parliament-elected President. But neither is that route without its dangers. The Australian public is perfectly justified in its apprehension that political parties will annex a presidency subject to parliamentary election and use it to further party-political ends. Until recently, and because the governor-general is a Crown appointment, a decent observance of the impropriety of nominating blatantly partisan candidates has been practised. But with the recent political stacking of the High Court the way ahead for such a presidency is well foreshadowed.

The questions raised here merely scratch the surface of the problems presented by a change from a Governor-General to a republican head of state. In addition there are those even more formidable questions concerning the powers and responsibilities to be vested in the office that have yet to be adequately addressed. And then, there are all other aspects of constitutional change to a republic still to be dealt with. Perhaps when the magnitude of these considerations and their attendant dangers is fully digested, there may emerge a proper and healthy respect for the system that we know and which has served us so well throughout periods of political, economic and social turbulence, and which has so successfully withstood the test of time. ■

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CHOOSING A PRESIDENT
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appointing the
GOVERNOR-GENERAL

BRUCE A. KNOX

A short time ago, two prominent individuals separately made suggestions touching the appointment of the next Governor-General. Sir David Smith, in a letter to the press, and Sir Zelman Cowen, during the course of a public debate, took up the Prime Minister on his declared views on the mode of procuring a President of his projected republic — his reluctance to have that hypothetical functionary elected by the people, and his preference for election by the two Houses of Parliament. They urged Mr Keating to undertake "a dry run", as Sir Zelman put it, by accepting, as his nominee to the Queen as the next Governor-General, a person chosen by the method proposed for the imaginary president.

Supporters of the republican movement, including notable elements in the press, took comfort from these utterances by persons, one of whom is clearly anti-republican, and the other at least sceptical of republican arguments. It is unwarranted, almost mendacious, to use the views of either Sir Zelman Cowen or Sir David Smith to claim (not for the first time) that the 'whether' of the republican debate is past, and all that remains is 'when and how'.¹ But that is beside the point.

The Smith-Cowen suggestions were, perhaps disingenuously, in the nature of a challenge to Mr Keating. To others they offered an opportunity to consider the problems involved in some form of parliamentary election of the Governor-General, both in its principle and in its implementation.

Election by Parliament invites either trivialization or politicization of the office of Governor-General. It gives scope for more or less undesirable or bizarre processes, related not least to the

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.question of who is to propose the candidates for Parliament to vote on. Nothing would save both the procedure and the result, however circumscribed by statutory or other conditions, from being anything from the farcical to the corrupt. At its best, the business would be likely to repel worthy individuals, other than those of crude and therefore thick-skinned ambition, or provided by political-party machines. It ought therefore to be avoided, on this ground alone.

CONCERN: As both Sir Zelman and Sir David imply, however, there is reason for disquiet about the present mode of appointment of the Governor-General — that is, of a person named to the Queen, in confidence, by the Prime Minister. Up to date, the result has been satisfactory; the nominees, whatever their antecedents, have merged pretty well with the traditions, constraints and demands of the post, even to the extent of being transformed by it. We cannot assume that this will continue to be so. We need to guard against the danger that we could end up, by design or otherwise, with a crippled or even corrupted governor-generalship. There needs also to be an end to any possibility that the Governor-General might be summarily dismissed. The two things are related, in that each involves the Prime Minister’s entitlement to make use of the Crown’s prerogative by ‘advising’ the Queen to appoint X, Y or Z as Governor-General.

As things stand, the best we can hope for to succeed Mr Hayden is someone of, perhaps, decent enough basic credentials, but pliant, even sympathetic, to the Prime Minister’s constitutional designs. But we cannot ignore the possibility that it would suit Mr Keating to have an actual stooge or a clown as Governor-General. Such a person would give the public reason to suppose that the constitutional system indeed needs radical change. Nothing in Mr Keating’s behaviour over the last few years gives the slightest reason to believe that such a stratagem is beyond him: and he is probably aware of the Irish Free State precedent of the 1930s. It is an uninviting prospect.

Nothing, however, should be done to transfer the Prime Minister’s right of advice to any other body, even, as I have suggested above, Parliament. At the end, the Queen should appoint on that advice: anything else would be a distortion of the general idea of parliamentary and cabinet government, which has enough to contend with as it is. But there is no harm in recognizing that appointment to vice-regal office is an act of patronage, and that patronage, in this case pura excellence, ought to be exercised carefully and responsibly, with the assistance of a reasonably impartial body whose deliberations are as confidential as may be.

Such a body exists. It is the Council of the Order of Australia, which deals already with persons of eminent qualities. To it could be delegated the task of making a short list of candidates eligible for the governor-generalship. A Prime Minister anxious to improve — mirabile dictu — our constitutional system should have no difficulty in accepting such a list from which to make a final choice. Once accepted, the practice would have every chance of becoming established as normal, for any later Prime Minister would incur public odium by an attempt to depart from it, unless it were clear that it had resulted in a mistaken appointment. Thus would we achieve a system of vice-regal appointment which does not depend on legislative or constitutional change, and which gives a reasonable prospect of acceptable results.

Of course, it is not within the present brief of the Council to judge persons in terms of their suitability for appointment as Governor-General.

We cannot ignore the possibility that it would suit Mr Keating to have an actual stooge or clown as the next Governor-General.
The brief would need to be specifically changed for this purpose, so that the Council would look for qualities such as (for instance) political competence or understanding of some kind, acquaintance with constitutional matters — including history, one might hope — and a degree of administrative experience. Probably also, it would be desirable that candidates should be garnered rather as they are for nomination for honours. But these and other matters are details which ought not to compromise the main idea.

**TENURE:** The question of tenure raises other considerations, likewise connected with the use of the prerogative. To start with, I have some doubt whether it is, in fact, possible for a Prime Minister to secure the summary dismissal of a Governor-General. No removal could be undertaken without stated cause. The country would be, surely, outraged by such an action not justified by urgent public reasons, but the result rather of Prime Ministerial pique or whim or political convenience. Would even Mr Kearing attempt such a thing? Would Mr Whitlam have attempted it at a critical moment in 1975, as Sir John Kerr himself assumed he could? What reason could Mr Whitlam have given for the action, which would not have been received with profound scepticism by the public? And, bearing in mind the particular circumstances of 1975, it seems unlikely that the Queen would accept advice of such moment merely over the telephone. Might it not reasonably be hoped that she would request her interlocutor to supply a reasoned case, in writing, even if this represented no more than her exercise of the right (as conventional wisdom has it, on the flawed authority of Walter Bagehot) to be consulted, to encourage, and to warn?

Persons more learned in the law than I might consider another possibility. The Crown has undergone great changes over the last many years. The Queen's hereditary authority is the source of executive power in Australia, as it is in the United Kingdom or, for instance, Canada. By a complex and subtle process, related to the transmogrification of the British colonial empire during roughly the last 150 years, her Crown has become an autochthonous Australian institution, independent of United Kingdom practice: a condition confirmed, not created, by the Australia Acts, 1986. Her Majesty in person is, however, for most practical purposes, occupied with the affairs of the UK. Doubtless she could if she chose — assuming the reasonableness and possibility of such a systemic and personal upheaval — function directly as sovereign, were she to be physically present in this country. But she is not ordinarily so present; and when she is present, it is not in order to exercise powers in that sense. Though her name is naturally invoked for various purposes, ceremonial and otherwise, she herself normally exercises no day-to-day Australian functions. From time to time, however, she must indispensively ensure the continuity of her Crown and all that it involves for Australia, by naming the person who shall represent her here.

The Prime Minister has the right to advise the Queen in this, and to expect that advice to be taken. That done, the Crown's functions and authority are vested in the individual appointed as Governor-General, subject to any convention or statutory provision. In such a sense, he or she might be said to replace the sovereign's person. For the Prime Minister to advise the Queen to dismiss the Governor-General, then, is rather like advising Her Majesty herself to abdicate — which might be done (was done to the Queen's own uncle) but which might also be resisted, and would provoke serious divisions in the public. It would be serious, therefore, to assume that, once the appointment is made, the Prime Minister has become to the Queen almost in the position of any other subject: that is, he may petition for something to be done, but may not 'advise' in that sense which carries the expectation that advice will ordinarily be accepted. Certainly this should be so in relation to the Governor-General's post. There must, however, be a caveat: for were the Prime Minister able to produce to the Queen evidence that continuation of her representative in office would be dangerous to the public interest, there should be no doubt that his petition for removal would be acceded to. But this leads us again into the realms of the bizarre. We may reasonably conclude that, under the conditions I have suggested, summary or arbitrary removal of the Governor-General becomes virtually impossible.

If any part of this argument is valid, and the propositions able to be refined, the problem of the Governor-General's tenure is on the way to solution. If it is not, it seems to me urgently necessary to obtain a constitutional change which secures that tenure. This is easier said than done, of course, and it might be better to try to achieve the same result by means of an ordinary statute, but at least we should consider what the change should be. My own inclination is in the direction of tenure akin to that of judges of the High Court. The Governor-General must, of course, be appointed for a term of years. But it should be clear that, within that term, he or she cannot be removed without an Address of both Houses to the Crown, which, in such a case, would have to be specifically the Queen herself.

1. It is equally unwarranted for Mr Paul Kelly to draw these sorts of conclusions (stated in a speech to the converted, reprinted in *Quadrant*, May 1995) from brief remarks by Messrs Fischer and Kelly. But this is equally beside the present point.
2. For an attack on the idea that the Governor-General might properly be elected by Parliament, see Tony Abbott's vigorous and incisive article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 March 1995.
3. I attempt no suggestion here as to the appointment of State Governors, though obviously similar considerations apply, especially if there is any doubt about their liability to summary removal.
T seems to be accepted by many that 'the greenhouse effect' necessitates major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide, lest dire climatic changes occur to all our detriment. The alarmist prejudices of insecure people have been boosted by those who have something to gain from widespread public concern.

Typical of recent media comment on the issue is the assertion: "But some scientists are increasingly worried that greenhouse gases could wreak havoc with the earth's climate in future generations, creating huge floods and droughts from global warming." As usual there is no indication of which scientists have these calamitous opinions; they certainly do not originate from the international consortium of climatologists who are continually collating results from recent greenhouse-climate change studies and updating informed opinion.

Nevertheless such unchallenged hyperbole has induced something akin to panic reaction from policy-makers, both national and international. In response, our Government has adopted a national interim target of a return to 1988 greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2000 and to a level of 20 per cent below 1988 emissions by the year 2005. Also, together with well over 100 national signatories, it has ratified the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), opened for signature at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. This has as its aim the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Both the national target and the international aim are, to say the least, highly questionable.

But why do we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? A rational consideration of this question involves a sequence of four assumptions:

- that the scientific theory linking greenhouse gases with climate change is valid, and that global warming and other climate changes will be induced by higher gas concentrations;
- that any such climate change is necessarily detrimental to our well-being;
- that realistically we can achieve a sufficient reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to effect a stabilization of gas concentrations in the atmosphere and thus limit any climate change that would otherwise occur;
- that the total cost to society of such a reduction is less than the cost of adapting to the climate change.

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THE GREENHOUSE PANIC

How valid are each of these assumptions?

THE THEORY. Greenhouse scientific theory is well founded, despite the criticisms of sceptics and iconoclasts; but many uncertainties still exist.

While human activity has caused no significant direct increase of the major greenhouse gas, water vapour, there can be no doubt that other such gases are increasing. Measurements made at many sites throughout the world make this evident. The more important of these remaining greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Fossil-fuel burning is the main reason for the increase of carbon dioxide, and agricultural practices play a major role in the increase of methane and nitrous oxide. Thus energy and food requirements for increases in world population, together with the voracious demands of the existing population, make it inevitable that these gases will continue to accumulate during the foreseeable future. The rate at which this will occur is a current concern — as is whether we can do anything about it.

Although recent and continuing scientific progress has occurred on several fronts, the timing, magnitude and geographical distribution of climate change due to higher gas levels can be estimated only within quite wide error limits and with limited detail. Many important processes are recognized by climate scientists as being inadequately treated in their models; notable difficulties include the roles of clouds and ocean currents. While obviously the most sensible and careful attempts are being made to effect improvements, there remain some misgivings associated with the way in which these models represent the real atmosphere, and hence with the simulation of any but the broadest aspects of climate in a world with higher greenhouse gas levels.

In view of these uncertainties and the cautious way in which the scientists carrying out climate change studies regard their results, it is surprising that a number of people on the periphery of knowledge extrapolate so freely and talk of potentially calamitous consequences within the next century. There is no scientific justification for such a pessimistic view of likely events.

Only one climatic prediction can be hazarded with any degree of confidence: that near-surface air temperatures can be expected to be a few degrees Celsius higher when an effective doubling of current greenhouse gases occurs, probably towards the end of the next century. Even this limited prediction depends on a correct treatment of climate processes represented in the models. Associated with these air temperature increases we can predict higher near-surface sea temperatures and, with somewhat less confidence, sea level rises of up to half a metre due to thermal expansion of sea water. These would be superimposed upon vertical land movements of similar magnitude due to tectonic processes. Another century further on, circa 2200, at a time when greenhouse gases may rise to some three times their present concentration, models indicate a total climate change from the present some 50 per cent larger than these figures.

There is scientific consensus on little else. Assertions that climate models indicate increasing extreme weather are groundless. Suggestions of increased frequencies of tropical cyclones or of droughts are highly speculative and seem to be based more on a fear that any change must be for the worse than on deductive argument; indeed qualitative scientific reasoning suggests that a decrease in extreme weather is more likely to be true. Some analyses of recent climate-model results reveal a small increase in the frequency of high rainfall events for twice as much CO₂ as currently exists in the atmosphere, but this may be accepting too much detail from the surrogate model, given its crude spatial resolution and approximate treatment of rainfall processes.
A recent authoritative review of Climate Change Science\(^5\) has said explicitly, "there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the world in general, or Australia in particular, will be subject to more frequent extremes of climate such as floods and droughts". What is certain is that assertions that, for example, the January 1995 floods in Western Europe or the large iceberg sighted off the Antarctic coast in February 1995 may be the results of the greenhouse effect are scientifically silly. Yet the media continue to highlight such nonsense.

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE: If there is so little evidence to support the notion of deleterious climate change associated with global warming, why has so much alarm been generated? The answer lies in part in the negative and fearful perspective that seems to characterize the views of environmental activists. But this has been bolstered by the development by scientists of 'scenarios', a term adopted to describe sets of climate change parameters regarded as feasible in the light of emerging model results — no matter how preliminary. These were first prepared to provide a benchmark for those who wished to estimate the sensitivity of different sectors of society and the economy to possible climate change. From their inception scenarios were issued with strong caveats indicating that they should not be regarded as forecasts and were based on models known to be inadequate in many ways. Unfortunately, using hindsight, it is not surprising that such qualifications were often ignored: the explanatory notes issued with early scenarios were loosely worded and, taken in isolation, implied forecasts.

A gloomy perspective was ensured by a tendency amongst impact practitioners to focus on potential damage to systems based on the present climatic state. The fact that throughout history adaptation has been a hallmark of human resilience was ignored, as were the opportunities for deriving benefit from notional climate change. Typically a model indication of broadly more rain tends to be regarded as causing more floods rather than fewer droughts, and of less rain as causing more droughts rather than fewer floods. Such trepidation has caused a senior Australian scientist\(^6\) to bemoan: "We have created the most unnecessarily fearful generation of humankind that ever populated the earth".

Emission reduction by developed countries alone is futile in the face of an understandable reluctance from developing countries to compromise their drive for increased standards of living. A further difficulty arose with the politicization of greenhouse matters in the 1980s. Emerging results in a rapidly developing science were often seized upon by either the sceptical or the alarmist camps as evidence supporting their prejudice. Unfortunately some scientists exploited this interest in their work, and too frequently the first their colleagues heard of a new piece of research was in some newspaper, long before it had been subjected to the normal gauntlet of informed scientific criticism. This is why there is still much talk of increasing drought, of more frequent and severe tropical cyclones and of the sea level rising by several metres over the next century. Modern improved simulations imply no such deleterious climate changes.
MISSION REDUCTION: It is sometimes said that realism is the impact of thinking upon wishing. With the world population rising more rapidly than at any previous time in history and with greenhouse gases necessarily involved in the industrial programs of developing nations and in world food production, it is sanguine indeed to expect a brake to be put on world greenhouse-gas emissions. Australia's uncritical adoption of internationally-proposed emission-reduction targets, and its belief that they could be achieved by implementing the existing possibilities for energy efficiency and renewable energy, was certainly wishful thinking. Clear advice from the Australian Minerals and Energy Council and from the Industry Commission, indicating that this was impossible, was ignored. Policy development had overtaken scientific knowledge.

This state of affairs was evident as early as 1988, at the Toronto Conference on the Changing Atmosphere. Here a proposed CO$_2$ emission reduction of 20 per cent by 2005 was regarded as a "challenging target" by policymakers, with little consideration of whether this was feasible without enormous downstream consequences to society. There seems to have been no thought given either to the trivial effect such a reduction would be likely to have on the rate of climate change or to whether even this reduction would be politically acceptable to many nations.

The extent of the decoupling between policy-making and science reached embarrassing proportions in the FCCC. The objective was declared to be, "stabilization of Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time framework to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner."

This objective is inconsistent with scientific knowledge. It is perhaps kinder to attribute it to wishful thinking rather than to call it cant. Even the international scientific establishment, generally more compliant to political pressures than independent scientists wish to acknowledge, two years later declared that "stabilization at present CO$_2$ concentrations ... obviously is an impossible option". It also questioned the imprecise wording of the FCCC objective. Any reasonable interpretation makes achievement of the objective virtually impossible — at least until world population stabilizes in one or two centuries, or until a substantial acceptable new energy source is discovered.

THE COST OF EMISSION REDUCTION: An assessment of the economic impact of a specified CO$_2$ emission reduction requires an assessment of complex consequences. The models used for this are even more uncertain than climate models, if only because they have to take into account the reaction of people. The state of development of such models is also less advanced. Nevertheless it is clear from several preliminary estimates that the direct economic costs of the magnitude of emission reduction being contemplated are enormous.

In 1991 an Industry Commission report had carefully reviewed the problem. Without much reading between the lines, it was evident even then that the clamour surrounding climate change 'threats' was unjustified. Uncertainties in both the scientific and economic arenas were recognized as being too large for an adequate estimate of the costs and benefits either of potential climate change or of mitigation actions that would clearly affect our nation's economy. A more recent assessment indicates that the national emission reduction target cannot be achieved without severe disruption of the economy, equivalent to a 40 per cent reduction in the GDP growth rate for the decade 1995-2005, amounting to some $179 billion and the abolition
of the aluminium industry. Another assessment implies that emission reduction by developed countries alone is futile in the face of an understandable reluctance from developing countries to compromise their drive for increased standards of living.

THE BERLIN CONFERENCE: And so we come to Berlin, April 1995, where a conference of parties to the FCCC was going to require nations to attest to their programs to "formulate, implement, publish and regularly update" emission reduction measures "to mitigate climate change". As expected there were pressures from representatives of environmental movements to increase and strengthen reduction targets. This line was also taken by so-called 'poor countries' (a new euphemism for what were previously called 'developing' or 'south' countries), who refused to accept any reduction applying to themselves. These countries included China whose current emissions are already half those of the United States. The difference is that US emissions have approximately stabilized, for national economic reasons rather than greenhouse commitments, while China's emissions increased by 53 per cent in the 1982-91 decade. The comparable decadal rates of increase for India, North Korea and South Korea are 61 per cent, 62 per cent and 68 per cent; for Australia it was 20 per cent.

Surprisingly the unattainability of existing targets was not acknowledged at the conference; this could be due to sublime self-delusion or blatant hypocrisy. In the event, little more was decided than to launch a new round of negotiations aimed at delivering some sort of legally binding instrument on which all delegates can agree at the 1997 Conference. Indeed most participants seemed to be concerned more with making new commitments than with meeting old ones. And the three central issues — the economies of developing nations, world population increases and realistic and practical solutions — were hardly mentioned at all. It will set an interesting exercise in political dialectic over the intervening years to justify the gradual abandonment of implied pledges without losing face. The caveats incorporated in many national compacts are likely to be invoked in good measure.

Tinges of hypocrisy were indeed evident at Berlin, including:

- bureaucratic opportunists who, having pushed policy formulation well ahead of scientific justification, now see career prospects from continuing rounds of expensive international negotiation — though most would protest a preference to be involved with matters less connected with politics.
- environmental opportunists, who grasp at any information no matter how selective or exaggerated to foment alarm and hence boost their own prejudices, and who appear unconcerned at the downstream effects of their extravagant demands.
- 'rich nation' opportunists who, because their current economic circumstances involve a (temporary) stabilization of their gas emissions, see a means of imposing economic restrictions on those of their competitors who are not so favourably placed. This is likely to be short-sighted, especially for Europe, because as former Eastern Bloc regions come back online this must result in more gas emissions and perhaps an increase in the unique problems associated with nuclear power. (I wonder how environmental activists regard this particular trade-off.)
- 'poor nation' opportunists who, while rejecting emission reductions for themselves, seek to impose restrictions on 'rich nations' — because their extravagance caused the problem in the first place. This, too, may be short-sighted because much foreign aid depends on disposable wealth — which will be curtailed if such emission reductions ever eventuate.

Together with the occupancy of high moral ground and blatant self-interest, the 'precautionary principle' is a central plank in the arguments of those earnestly seeking reductions in greenhouse gas emissions — seemingly at any cost to themselves and their fellow world citizens. But precaution against what? It is vitally important that we should not let emotionally-based concerns stampede us into chasing non-existent solutions thereby making other aspects of our lives more difficult.

2. In 1988 the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program set up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This has established three working groups: on science, impacts and response strategies.
4. I have given a more detailed discussion in 'Greenhouse: facts and fancies', IPA Environmental Backgrounder No. 21, 28 November 1994.
5. Climate change science: current understanding and uncertainties. A report by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, in association with the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Social Sciences, February 1995.
7. Statement of purpose by the IPCC Chairman, Professor Bert Bolin for a Conference held in Brazil in October 1994 to study the scientific implications of the FCCC wording.
9. 'Climate change — major policy issues and optimal policies' by M Hinchey, K Hanslow, J Torney and B S Fisher, Outlook 95, 123-132.
WHEN Franz Schubert died of typhoid fever at just 31 years, he left not only his Eighth Symphony unfinished, but a tenth and twentieth unwritten. Schubert was just one of many composers, artists and writers who in past times died prematurely from diseases which today are no longer major causes of death in Western nations. How many great works might have been produced had the benefits of modern science, technology and industrial progress been available to earlier generations — benefits which, as C.P. Snow complained years ago in *The Two Cultures*, are often scorned and rarely understood by literary intellectuals?

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### CAUSE OF AND AGE AT DEATH OF GREAT CREATIVE MEN AND WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Byron</td>
<td>Poet</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Typhus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frédéric Chopin</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Tubercolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Schumann</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Syphilis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Bronte</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Tubercolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Bronte</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Tubercolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Baudelaire</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>1821</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Syphilis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Gauguin</td>
<td>Painter</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>45</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Painter</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>31</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugo Wolf</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.H. Lawrence</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Orwell</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>1903</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Egon Schiele</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Influenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Kafka</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Tubercolis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WEIRD CONNECTION: The bombing in Oklahoma City revealed a strain of madness in American politics, and not all of it among the terrorists. Bill Wyndham, reporting for The Sunday Age, was impressed by the efforts of Victor Navsky, editor of the left-wing Nation magazine, to connect the bombing with the Republican Party and its small-government philosophy. "The majority of Americans might not practice survival techniques in the woods on weekends, or christen their little ones 'Adolf' [Navsky argues]. But the general population had elected Newt Gingrich's Republicans in a landslide last November and many of those new arrivals in Congress have pledged to dismantle as much of the government as the law allows. The gun-toting crazies in their camouflage fatigues are all part of the same movement ..."

SELL-OUT: Free traders might have recruited an unlikely ally in their battle against protectionists. In an article entitled 'Marx on Free Trade' (Science and Society, Spring 1995) Reza Ghorashi argues that the author of The Communist Manifesto preferred free trade to protection. Protection in his view was outdated; the progressive forces of history lay with internationalism and free trade. Marx formulated his views, however, in the context of 19th-century Europe. It would be an unwarranted extrapolation, Ghorashi is anxious to point out, to list Marx as a supporter of the Uruguay round of GATT.

NOTHING HE CAN'T DO: In early June, Professor Marilyn Lake, who teaches history and women's studies at La Trobe University, argued that the affair involving former Victorian Finance Minister Ian Smith and his ex-lover Cheryl Harris, challenged us all "to imagine a new social and political order where ... the distinctions between men and women no longer hold." But surely, some readers must have been thinking — if not actually daring to utter — some distinctions will remain: after all, only women can bear and breast-feed children. Such readers were about to be disabused of their quaint notions by a feature article, 'And Now for the Chest-Fed Baby', published just a few days later in Anne Summers' Good Weekend. With a combination of manual nipple stimulation and hormone injections, the article declared with satisfaction, men may be able to lactate. "The remaining obstacle will then no longer be physiological but psychological: Will all you guys be able to get over your hang-up that breast-feeding is a woman's job?", it concluded. Male pregnancy is next.

NEW AGE NEWSPEAK: At Master Charles's Synchronicity Centre in Melbourne New Age awareness meets High Tech. In the words of the Centre's brochure, "we offer integrative assistance for those journeying the High-Tech meditative lifestyle." The meditator's journey, we are told, "is in essence one of increasing clarity" but the same cannot be said of the brochure-reader's journey — it passes through galactic fogs like this: "Theta Window Biofeedback with Transformational Rescripting is a powerful combination of healing modalities for the integration of catharsis. It consists of Transformational Rescripting, a counselling technique which explores and rescripts limiting data contained in the subconscious/unconscious storage areas, which are accessed through theta frequencies, followed by Theta Window Biofeedback, a precision training and monitoring system to entrain and strengthen theta brainwave frequencies."

HOOKED ON WRITING: "I hate to be thought of as a prostitute who has written a novel," Marianne Wood declared in May. Well, she can hardly blame people for making the mistake. Her only book, a novel which she freely admits is based on her own experience, is entitled Just a Prostitute.
"Like the troubled protagonist in her book," we are told, "Wood first drifted into prostitution after dropping out of a fine arts degree at RMIT, meeting a massage parlour worker in a lesbian bar, and accepting her offer of a job." Marianne wants it known that she can write about other topics as well. Her next novel, for example, will focus on the gay bars of San Francisco.

UNDEFINABLE: What role do museums have in defining our sense of ourselves as a nation? According to Rebecca Duclos, a visiting fellow in Deakin University’s Museum Studies Unit, writing in *Museum National*, museums "are describing national consciousness precisely through a refusal to define it." "In Foucauldian terms the 'discursive formation' of the institution is: '... no longer an ideal, continuous, smooth text that runs beneath the multiplicity of contradictions and resolves them in the calm unity of coherent thought; nor is it the surface in which, in a thousand different aspects, a contradiction is reflected that is always in retreat but everywhere dominant. It is rather a space of multiple dissensions; a set of different oppositions whose levels and roles must be described.'" Well, that clears that up.

POETIC LICENCE REVOKED: Arriving back in the USA from Europe, Harvard Zoology Professor Stephen Jay Gould noticed a large granite plaque at John F. Kennedy Airport inscribed with the familiar words of Emma Lazarus’s poem ‘The New Colossus’: ‘Give me your tired, your poor/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ... / Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me/ I lift my lamp beside the golden door!’ The words are familiar, at least to Americans, because they are also inscribed on the Statue of Liberty. Yet Gould sensed that the poem was somehow out of rhythm; something was missing. Then it struck him. A line had been excised: "The wretched refuse of your teeming shore." The line had been removed not because of lack of space, but because it offended the politically-correct ‘language police’. As Gould commented on 7 June in the *New York Times*, "We may call people ‘homeless’ and ‘tempest-tost’ but they may not be, even with poetic license, ‘wretched refuse’. Did these particular police ever hear of metaphor? Did they consider that Lazarus might have been describing the attitudes of ruling classes in foreign lands toward their potential emigrants?" They would rather "play safe and destroy poetry.”

CLEAN HARRY: Noted among the credits of Hollywood films of late is the disclaimer that no animals were harmed in the making of the film. Now appearing (for example on the video release *Trapped in Paradise*) is a further disclaimer that no rainforest timbers were used in the making of the film. The possibilities for lobbyists are unlimited. No cigarettes were smoked in the making of the film (none containing tobacco, anyway); no car chases involved the use of leaded petrol; only recyclable bullets were fired; etc. etc. "You have to keep focused on the reality of this relationship and not on the publicity. I’m married to this girl and I am in love with her. We have a relationship that doesn’t get played in the tabloids. What you hear about is a fictionalized version." *Cleo* believed him, judging the relationship “much healthier ... than recent tabloid speculation would suggest.” By the time *Cleo* was on the news-stands the couple had announced their separation. Well, nothing lasts forever.

TYRANNOSAURUS JOHN: A former member of the Communist Party, and renowned for his militancy, John Halfpenny has retired as Victorian Trades Hall secretary. He admits that Premier Jeff Kennett thinks of him as a ‘dinosaur’. But what’s wrong with that? Dinosaurs might have been extinct for more than a million years but, he wrote in the *Herald Sun*, they “are regarded with tenderness and friendliness ... So I feel in honourable company.” One of his greatest achievements, he says, was helping to have Melbourne Cup Day declared a public holiday. But Bob Smith, Victorian Secretary of the AWU/FIME union, expressed the views of many when he said that Halfpenny’s resignation “is the greatest service he has rendered to the working people of Victoria.”

ALLAH AND ECONOMICS: A debate has broken out between Islamic scholars about the role of Allah’s bounty in economic growth. M. Ramazan Akhtar has developed a mathematical model based on the formula, $Y_t = (P, K, L, F)$, where $Y_t$ is output (at a point in time), $P$ is physical assets, $K$ monetary capital, $L$ labour, and $F$ level of God’s bounty. In *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (a refereed publication), Shujaat Ali Khan takes issue with Akhtar, arguing that to try to measure Allah’s attributes (which “we know of through ... revelations and the authentic hadith of the Prophet [and in which we believe] without doubt, distortion, addition, or alteration”) is wrong and undermines the cause of “the Islamization of knowledge”.

LOVETT OR LEAVE IT: In Hollywood disassembling is a (well-paid) way of life. The April edition of *Cleo* boasted a feature interview with Lyle Lovett, the country-and-western-singing husband of film star Julia Roberts. Lyle denied rumours that his marriage was in trouble. “You have to keep focused on the reality of this relationship and not on the publicity. I’m married to this girl and I am in love with her. We have a relationship that doesn’t get played in the tabloids. What you hear about is a fictionalized version.” *Cleo* believed him, judging the relationship “much healthier ... than recent tabloid speculation would suggest.” By the time *Cleo* was on the news-stands the couple had announced their separation. Well, nothing lasts forever.
WHO would have thought that this book would have been written by old Windy? Keith Windschuttle has delivered a handsomely produced hardback decrying the influence of the fashionable literary critics and social theorists on the way the discipline of history is treated in the academy. Explicit in this critique is the finding that the mindset of a culture is at stake. A generation will be influenced in its ability to think clearly and accurately if the rot continues, he argues. He is amazed how history, once so intellectually respectable, is now a prey to fashionable and bizarre theories.

Enter, in 1994, *The Killing of History*. The book is interesting in the same way that *IPA Review* is interesting. Within the academy, at least within the humanities faculties, it is rather naughty, beyond the pale. It tends to say things which are perceived to be against the interests of those in administrative control and of those academics who see opportunities in the fashionable changes brought in by the ‘cultural studies’ movement. The conventional wisdom is, of course, predominantly socialistic, ‘liberal’ in the American sense, and, while claiming to be very ‘Australian’, slavishly copies American trends. The current establishment, while building on the premise of finding the former verities wanting, will brook no questioning of their own key assumptions.

FASHIONABLE AND CHEAP: There is currently, in the academy, an unholy alliance of administrators and trendy academics. The administrators are foisting ‘cultural studies’ on the curriculum because they are fashionable and cheap, and are not dominated by fuddy-duddy professors who waste time talking about ‘standards’. As Windschuttle demonstrates, the cultural studies devotees appreciate the philosophical position that the traditional disciplines (in the physical sciences and the social sciences) cannot produce knowledge. This doubtful epistemological theory is not only adopted as such, but also as a manual for action. (Old timers will recognize agitprop when they see it.) If there is no ‘truth’, but rather merely a cultural agreement, then why not organize some like-minded colleagues, stack the committee and change the curriculum? Windschuttle sees them as following Kuhn (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*):

“... a bevy of sociologists have entered the field to take up what they see as one of the most enticing consequences of his position: the idea that what is believed in science is determined by the customs and power relations prevailing within a particular scientific community.”

The author says that he chose the word “killing” in the title of his book because “there was a lethal process well under way”. He chose history as he considered it “the queen of the humanities,” but his argument applies equally to many disciplines, especially to sociology, anthropology, or English literature. He finds it surprising that the post-structuralist theory of Michel Foucault is now “taken seriously
enough” to be taught to graduate students in accounting at the University of New South Wales. So surprised is he that he puts in the sentence: “No, I am not joking.”

The case studies which the author chooses to describe are international in interest, and some of them have been covered in the popular as well as the scholarly media. For example, the European discovery of America and the Spanish conquest of Mexico, while quite apposite for Windschuttle’s case, have been the topic for revisionist historians, scholars, journalists and political activists for well over a decade. The fuss culminated in a media blitz with Columbus’s 500th anniversary, and may be a little stale now.

Of more direct interest to Australians may be the coverage of the exploration of the Pacific and the mutiny on the Bounty. The various motion pictures about the Bounty are described in a classic ‘media studies’ or ‘cultural studies’ (small letters) style. “This tale of class conflict, of tyranny versus just cause, remained the basis of the 1935 Hollywood clash between Charles Laughton’s Bligh and Clark Gable’s Christian. By 1962, the movie reflected a reassessment by historians that it was Christian who was both better bred and better mannered and that Bligh was an uncouth, opportunistic upstart from the lower orders.” This film (with Marlon Brando and Trevor Howard) had a sub-text of humane and liberal values against the dictates of profit. By 1984, Anthony Hopkins’s Bligh to Mel Gibson’s Christian had homosexual attraction as that sub-text. But we could never know presumably, as, if we disown the empirical or realist account of history, then each accounting is as valid as any other because all are merely cultural projections of their times.

Perhaps the most interesting case study for Australian readers is the recounting of the European settlement in Australia, including British exploration, the convict system and relations with Aborigines. This is important for so many of our current national decisions depend on the acceptance of dominant myths for legislation and practice. There is not much point in defending one’s stake in a nation if one believes it is founded on a fraud.

The history of mental asylums and the penal policy in Europe will hold no surprises for those familiar with the theories of Michel Foucault, but will enlighten every other reader. The other topics seem to cover the ground of a doctoral seminar on modern theories of philosophy, politics and communication, and include one current example: the fall of Communism in 1989.

The book was published by Macleay Press in Sydney, was printed in Australia and is well presented. One can expect some attention from overseas. Perhaps one of the clubs may pick it up, as its topic is international. Whether or not it finds a market here will probably be determined by the author’s reading of the temper of the times. The conservative conquest of Congress, the Gingrich phenomenon, may have some ripple effect in Australia. In the meantime, we are on the cultural periphery, and cultural events occur in a time lag. Right now, the book will be appreciated as confirmation of what you suspected but hadn’t the time or the energy to find out. Windschuttle has done his homework. You will enjoy the book. You may be appalled at what you read. But ignorance isn’t really bliss. It is better to be knowledgeable. That is, unless you think that truth is not an absolute concept, that knowledge can never produce certainty. Then you had better rely on the authority of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, Barthes, Levi-Strauss, Benjamin, Bakhtin, Baudrillard, Deleuze, et al and you will be welcome in the academy.

Dr Myles Breen is Professor of Communication at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, and a freelance journalist.

Harvesting Memories

Bert Kelly

Heritage Farming in Australia
Produced by and available from Alexander and Ann Sloane
Box 77, Yarrawonga, Vic 3730

This video consists of original film and commentary by the late Ian Sloane. It describes farming experiences in the southern Riverina in the 1930s. As a great-grandfather farmer who left school in 1929 and who now lives mainly in the past I found it fascinating.

In the 1930s I had a lot to learn about farming, but even more about government guidance. In 1930 our letters were cancelled with a “Grow More Wheat” stamp. So I did, and the price of wheat fell steadily and disastrously between sowing the wheat crop and reaping it. This warped my belief in the wisdom of governments.

The video starts off with still pictures; then in the 1930s Sloane bought a movie camera and started taking moving pictures of the way people actually farmed in those days. Later he added voice descriptions.
explaining what they were doing and why.

He shows a team of six horses ploughing with a three-furrow mouldboard plough and says how pleasantly quiet it all was—only a bit of rattle from the harness. He should have mentioned the skylarks, which were wonderful. I used a 10-horse team to pull a six-furrow stumpjumper mouldboard plough. It used to chatter a bit. I was in love about then so my horses used to hear some romantic poetry, but they never let on. Once you had taught the furrow horse her proper place, it wasn’t hard work.

ROUGH GOING: We had a steel-wheeled Fordson tractor similar to the one Sloane’s neighbour worked. It was rough going if the ground was hard. I used to stop every hour to give it a spell as I had been trained to do with horses.

Sloane gives a clear picture of reaping wheat in the 1930s. Cripes, it was really hard work—none of this business of swanning around in air-conditioned comfort! Sewing the bags while being savaged by flies, you slogged away to finish 200 a day for a pound in real money. I will never forget the great day when we could afford a portable radio. I particularly liked listening if there was a test match on.

The best part of the video is Sloane’s description of expert haystack building. I would like to be able to brag about my stacks, but they were notorious. People said that they always seemed to lean a bit to the left. Sloane shows an immense haystack with its thatch neatly trimmed with sheep shears and with proper galvanized iron mouse guards. It stood there for 10 years and then opened up splendidly during the drought when it was really needed. And I bet the Sloanes didn’t ask for government help either.

So, get the video if you can. If you are an old bloke like me it will revive many poignant memories and it will give you the chance to tell your progeny how hard you used to work in those days. I doubt if they will be properly impressed; more likely they will say, “Yes, the poor old chaps certainly worked hard with their hands, but what about their heads?”

The best thing Sloane’s family did with his film was to put it in the tin trunk to let it mature. Videos are a bit like diaries: they get better as they get older. Perhaps even my diary—telling of my tariff struggles with McEwen — will mature with age.
IRRELEVANT: Denfeld complains that “feminism has changed — dramatically”, to become on the whole a movement that is extremist and radical, and irrelevant to most young women. Claiming that feminism has moved away from the fundamental issues of equality to embrace extreme moralizing and exclusive academic theorizing, Denfeld writes that “feminism has become as confining as what it pretends to combat”.

This is not entirely convincing. For while feminism, like most social movements, is an evolving being, it has always been radical and, at times, less than inclusive. While Denfeld spends considerable time showing exactly how radical and exclusive feminism is today, there is little to back the argument that this is a relatively recent change, one unique to the 1990s. The radical aspects of feminism that Denfeld uses to illustrate her point have largely been with the movement since its inception, in one form or another.

One notable exception to this is the trend toward goddess worship, to which Denfeld devotes one chapter. This is a new phenomenon, but it has little if any currency in Australia and shows little chance of gaining credibility in local, established feminist circles.

Despite these reservations, much of Denfeld’s book appears to speak for the young — and not so young — women of my acquaintance who have expressed doubts about organized feminism’s appeal and applicability to them.

But is this enough on which to base a book? For while Denfeld makes extensive use of surveys and studies which show the rejection of feminism, her evidence of why this is occurring is much less firm. In this regard, she relies too heavily on anecdotal evidence, with several references to the same named interviewees, and only a few brief words of thanks in the book’s opening pages to “all the young women, too numerous to name here, who were willing to talk to me openly and honestly about their feelings regarding feminism” to let the reader know on what Denfeld based her conclusions.

Similarly, Denfeld’s survey of contemporary feminism relies too heavily on feminism in universities. “Young women are far more likely to encounter organized feminism by taking an introductory women’s studies course, attending rallies on campuses, picking up the latest issue of Ms magazine, reading newspaper accounts, and browsing in the feminist literature section of bookstores”, she writes.

Unfortunately, Denfeld gives little emphasis to “reading newspaper accounts” — or indeed to other aspects of popular culture’s reaction to feminism, except when it proves a negative point. Her attention to academia ignores the fact that most people, and most women, don’t have a university education, and if they do, they are unlikely to have taken classes in women’s studies or to have taken more than a passing interest in a ‘women’s rally’. Perhaps Denfeld gives too much credibility to the impact of university feminists on the world beyond campus.

EXTREMISTS: Similarly, she highlights the views of extremists
within feminism, such as Andrea Dworkin, claiming that Dworkin’s radical offerings are commonplace on university reading lists, and are offered as mainstream feminism. Again, Dworkin’s views arguably have little currency beyond academic, philosophical or feminist circles. While I have not surveyed women’s studies courses in Australia, as Denfeld apparently has in the US, I can report that, according to the university calendar, Dworkin’s work has not appeared on the Monash University women’s studies reading lists in the last few years.

The crux of Denfeld’s arguments is in Chapter Seven, ‘Repeating History: The Feminist Descent into Victorian Morality’. In this highly detailed chapter, she draws parallels between the puritanical Victorians and their obsessive protection of women and the feminists of the 1990s. “The movement that once stood for equality for all women”, she writes, “has come to stand instead for extremism and often irrelevant academic theories and the patronizing views held by an elitist group of largely privileged women.”

This is manifest in the efforts of contemporary feminists to convince women that sexuality is “abnormal if not physically dangerous”, and that females are “above” the “masculine” characteristics of competition, aggression, lust and strength. Above all, the new Victorians have embraced the “Victorian declaration of difference”, meaning that women, unlike men, are sensitive, nurturing, magical beings. Denfeld identifies this as being most obvious through the rise of goddess worship, the blaming of patriarchy for all ills and the categorization of women as victims (“the passive voice”). She labels these new directions a waste of time, damaging to feminism and irrelevant to the real issues that matter to most women.

Denfeld spends less time theorizing about how exactly feminism has reached this predicament, concluding that, in essence, the potential to go off the rails was always there due to feminism’s fragmentation. The failure in the 1980s of the US Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to pass marked another blow, which left a directional void within the movement. New leaders and new causes sprang up to occupy this void, but they were out of touch with real women.

Denfeld also targets the conservatism of the Reagan and Bush administrations, a lack of tolerance of different views within feminism, and a reluctance among older feminists to admit that feminism has changed from the 1970s. Above all, she claims, older feminists will not admit that being feminist is about living what you believe — and if this is the case, then most young women are feminists whether they say it or not.

This rationale for the decline of organized feminism does not neatly transfer to the Australian context. Most glaringly, we did not have a conservative government during most of the 1980s, nor did Australian feminists suffer the legislative setbacks that the ERA failure represented to their American counterparts.

The New Victorians is a largely retrospective book with little attention given to the ongoing issues of feminism. These are tackled only in the book’s closing pages: childcare, birth control, abortion rights, ‘political parity’ and sexual violence. ‘Political parity’, or the need for more women in government, is given a scant seventeen-and-a-half lines. In closing, Denfeld urges us to oppose censorship and “dump women’s studies programs”.

The New Victorians provides a selective and, in large part, anecdotal account of the contemporary American feminist scene. Despite a foreword by Beatrice Faust, much of it lacks direct applicability to Australia (other than in the ways I have identified in this review). The book is largely retrospective and thus short on prescription or future directions. Despite these reservations, Denfeld’s words will undoubtedly strike a chord with those who are fed up with organized feminism’s apparently all-consuming navel-gazing, and its lack of relevance to young women.

Margaret Fitzherbert is the immediate Past President of the Victorian Young Liberal Movement and is currently employed as an industrial officer with an employers’ association.

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Defining moment

wimmin: Nonexistist substitute for “women,” coined by editors of the periodical This Magazine is For. About, and By Young Wimmin, who wrote in their first issue: “We have spelt it this way because we are not women and neither are we female ... You may find it trivial — it’s just another part of the deep, very deep, rooted sexist attitudes.” The singular of “wimmin” is woman. Example: After carefully considering a proposal to change the title of Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women to Vertically Constrained Wimmin, the Committee for an Inclusive Curriculum finally decided to ban it altogether.

The shortage of paid work in Australia is the Federal Labor Government’s greatest failure, according to Dr David Kemp, Shadow Minister for Employment, Training and Family Services. Dr Kemp was speaking to the Essington Lewis Speakers’ Group on the question of why economic growth has not generated employment growth.

Dr Kemp was one of three speakers of note to address the Group in recent months. In late April, Terry McCrann, Associate Editor Business at the Herald Sun, spoke about the media, arguing that the media reflected the society of which they were a part. In June Dr Stuart Spencer, CEO of the Confectionery Manufacturers of Australasia, tackled the implications of globalization for business and government.

The convenor of the Speakers’ Group is Graham Fraser. The next speaker (on 27 July) is David Karpin who will discuss his recent report, Enterprising Nation.
In March, IPA Senior Fellow Des Moore made a submission to the Prices Surveillance Authority Inquiry into bank fees and charges. The Submission concludes, “... while there thus appears scope for banks to reduce costs further, there is no evidence that they are imposing unwarranted charges ... Rather than introduce supervision of bank charges, the Government would be better advised to review the various factors inhibiting competition in the banking industry and what might be done to change them.”

Des Moore was critical of the Commonwealth Budget in May. Particularly disappointing, he said, was that the Government had made such a weak effort to reduce the growth in outlays. "The net increase in outlays in 1995-96, excluding asset sales and State debt repayments, is 1.9 per cent in real terms, which is why," he said, "quite unnecessarily the Government has relied on tax increases.”

After more than 40 years’ involvement with the IPA, Mr G.M. Niall AO has retired from the IPA Board. The Chairman, George Littlewood, wrote to Mr Niall expressing the Board's sincere appreciation of his contribution.

At its April meeting the Board elected three new members: Clive Smith, CEO, E.L. & C. Baillieu; Michael Folie, Managing Director, Acacia Resources Limited; and Richard St John, General Counsel, BHP.

A successful Dialogue on the precautionary principle, organized by Dr Brian Tucker, Director of the Environmental Policy Unit, brought together people from industry and conservation bodies to debate a controversial topic. The precautionary principle is frequently invoked by green organizations as a reason for preventing economic development.

In May, health economist John Logan and Director of the Regulation Review Unit Geoff Hogbin led a Dialogue on health policy. Participants included Dr John Patterson, head of the Victorian Community Services and Health Department, and representatives from the Industry Commission and the Health Benefits Council of Victoria.

The Regulation Review Unit has launched a new publication, *Plethora*. *Plethora* is a quarterly digest of information about regulation. Drawing on a mix of local and overseas sources, it presents material from the growing literature on regulation which most people would not normally encounter. The first issue includes items on the Industry Commission’s survey of business regulation, bus deregulation in the United Kingdom and taxi regulation in Australia, tax compliance costs incurred by companies and share buy-backs in Australia.

For further information contact Geoff Hogbin on (02) 955 7121.
The Unions and Labor by Des Moore
The trade union movement plays a special role in the Labor Party and has a close relationship with the Federal Government. It receives large government grants and is represented on numerous government committees and exerts influence over policy. This Backgrounder critically surveys the special relationship between unions and government. (Forthcoming)

The Implications of Globalisation for Macroeconomic Policy by Des Moore
Increased globalisation has led to claims that governments now have a more limited capacity to pursue ‘independent’ macroeconomic policies. This Backgrounder looks at approaches which should be adopted to reduce the risk of major instability from volatile actions of international financial markets, and to improve the medium-term performance of the Australian economy. (May 1995) $8.00

The Case for Privatisation by Des Moore
In Victoria there is a renewed debate about privatisation, centred around the Kennett Government’s proposal to privatise the SECV and the State Labor Opposition’s claim that this is against the public interest. The argument is put that, properly implemented, privatisation is in the public interest and that those opposing it are supporting narrow sectional interests. (March 1995)

ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUNDERS

Diversity versus Uniformity by Brian J. O’Brien
A look at a new analytical device, the ‘East-West effect’, which could reform environmental policies so that Australia can achieve sustainable development without the present loss of international competitiveness. (May 1995) $8.00

Greenhouse: Facts and Fancies by Brian Tucker
Significant uncertainties remain in understanding the timing, magnitude and geographic distribution of the enhanced greenhouse effect and its probable consequences. Biased selection from the highly-variable climate record over past decades has been used by well-intentioned, and less well-intentioned, pressure groups to boost both sceptical and alarmist prejudices. This has confused public opinion, and has induced something akin to panic reaction from some government policy-makers. (November 1994)

The Precautionary Principle: The Greatest Risk of All by Ron Brunton
The precautionary principle is currently enjoying great success among environmentalists and bureaucrats. In this Backgrounder, Ron Brunton argues that the precautionary principle embodies faulty ideas about the appropriate response to scientific uncertainty. (May 1994)

IPA Backgrounders listed above are available individually for $5 (inc. P&H) unless stated otherwise. Ensure that you receive IPA Backgrounders, including Environmental Backgrounders, as soon as they are issued by subscribing now ($80 per year). Write to IPA, Ground Floor, 128-136 Jolimont Road, Jolimont, Vic. 3002; or phone (03) 654 7499 to pay by credit card.
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