



## CHILD PROTECTION IN THE NEW MILLENIUM

BY JUDY CASHMORE

Following the 'discovery' of 'battered babies' in the 1960s and the exposure of child sexual assault during the 1980s, arguably the concern of the 1990s and beyond has been the inadequacy of the child protection system and its failure to improve the circumstances of those who have been the subject of reports of abuse and neglect. The scrutiny of the child protection system intensified during the mid 1990s with inquiries such as the Wood Royal Commission in New South Wales and the Forde Inquiry into residential care in Queensland, as well as extensive media coverage of the deaths of babies and children which were not prevented by the involvement of the child protection system.

Throughout this period, increasing numbers of children were reported to the State statutory child protection authorities because of concerns about their safety and welfare, increasing the pressure on the system. What are the reasons for this increase? There are several likely explanations: increasing community awareness of child maltreatment; the introduction of mandatory reporting in most States; changing and broadened definitions of abuse; and an increased incidence of various social problems



*"The aim is to shift the emphasis from a forensic investigation of allegations of abuse or neglect to a broader assessment of whether a child or young person has suffered harm or is likely to suffer harm."*

such as family violence, substance abuse, and poverty and social disadvantage, often in combination, which increases the risk of compromised development for children. In particular, as awareness and concern about child abuse has increased, the definitions and interpretations of what is abusive has broadened from the 'battered babies' described by Henry Kempe and his colleagues (1962) to the physical abuse of children of all ages, to neglect and failure to thrive, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. More recently, definitions of abuse have been extended to include exposure to domestic violence as its effects on children's social and emotional development

have come to be understood.

At the same time, concerns about the pressures on the system and the inappropriateness of a forensic investigative response for many notifications or reports about parental incapacity have led to a number of changes in policy and practice. Some of these are now reflected in recent child protection legislation (for example, in the ACT, Queensland and NSW). These include changes in the definitions of abuse and neglect, the development of differentiated response models including structured risk assessment tools, the establishment of central intake processes, a focus on family

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### FEATURE

Judy Cashmore discusses recent developments in policy, legislation and service provision concerned with child protection.

EDITOR ♦ TONY EARDLEY

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## STAFF AND VISITORS UPDATE

KAREN FISHER has become a Senior Research Fellow and CATHY THOMSON a Research Fellow. We congratulate them both.

DR NATASHA POSNER has joined the Centre as a Senior Research Fellow, with particular responsibility for the evaluation of the Department of Veterans' Affairs Home Care Program. Most recently Natasha has been lecturing in medical sociology in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Queensland.

MELISSA ROUGHLEY is our new Business Manager, having previously been Corporate Services Manager at Greening Australia.

ROSITA LANG has joined the SPRC as Office Manager. Rosita previously held a similar position at the Centre for Advanced Numerical Computation Engineering and Science at UNSW.

JACQUELINE TUDBALL joins us as a Research Officer, working initially on projects within our Department of Family and Community Services research program. Jacqueline comes to the Centre from the Australian Institute for Family Studies.

JUDITH ECCLES is working with the Centre temporarily while on a visit from the UK. Judith has been working in the Institute for Employment Studies at Sussex University.

DENISE THOMPSON has also rejoined the Centre for a short period to work on the EnAct project for the NSW Department of Community Services.

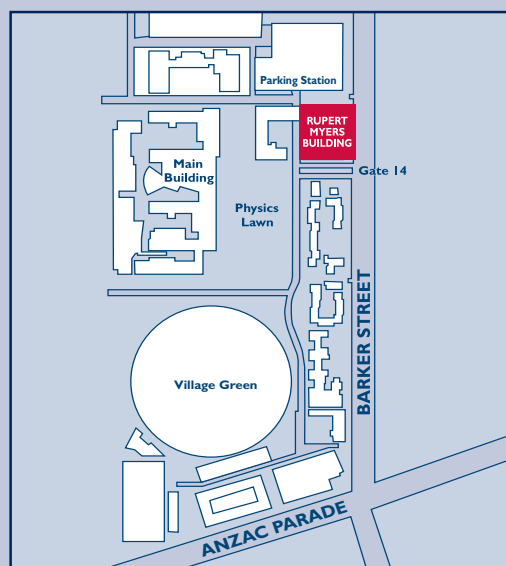
Three new Research Scholars have begun their studies at the Centre. LYN CRAIG is co-registered with the School of Social Science and Policy and is supervised within the SPRC by Michael Bittman. She has an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) and her thesis topic is in the area of social policy and comparative fertility. ROGER PATULNY is supported by a UNSW postgraduate grant and is co-registered with the School of Sociology. His thesis is currently entitled 'How Much Is Enough? Working-Life Plans and the Consequences for Employment' and his SPRC supervisor is also Michael Bittman. NICK TURNBULL rejoins the Centre as a PhD student supported by an APA. He is co-registered with the School of Sociology and his thesis is entitled 'Rhetorical Constructions of the Individual in Australian Politics'. His SPRC supervisor is Sheila Shaver.

KELLY HAND has transferred her studies to La Trobe University in Melbourne.

## THE SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

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

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

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY SHEILA SHAVER

There is now a strong consensus against 'passive welfare'. This consensus is a key term in support for welfare reform in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, and in moves to replace so-called passive forms of support with new provisions framed in terms of reciprocal or mutual obligations of state and citizen.

Noel Pearson has made the case against passive welfare more tellingly perhaps than anyone else. In *Our Right to Take Responsibility* (Noel Pearson & Associates, Cairns, 2000) he makes three charges against passive welfare payments: they are the tokens of a 'gammon' economic relationship of transactions lacking reciprocity; they enact a mode of governance that aims to manage marginalised groups at minimal cost; and they effect a mentality that fosters lack of responsibility in the recipients of its false benevolence. Pearson's argument is very specifically addressed to indigenous people and indigenous politics, and even more specifically to the needs and circumstances of the people of the Cape York Peninsula. He makes no claim to generalise it beyond these particular circumstances. If the types of solution he advocates are particular to indigenous communities, his critique nevertheless has far wider application. Rightly, it has found a far broader audience on both right and left of politics.

It is salutary to remember that other conceptions of welfare have been as attractive in their moment as passive welfare is unattractive in this one. Three come to mind.

- *Welfare as a social right of citizenship.* On the coming of the British welfare state, T. H. Marshall argued that welfare support, along with education

and personal social services, were an affirmation of the equal status and dignity of citizens who were unequal in class and economic position. Social protection from poverty in unemployment, disability and old age was a citizen's due. Marshall believed that the purpose of modern welfare was to enable those in need of help to remain full participants in the social community. The present notion that welfare recipients must be forced to participate is an odd reversal of Marshall's vision. In Australia welfare rights have always been contingent ones. Unemployment benefits have always required their recipients to seek work. While payments to mothers, sole parents and other carers have not been activity tested in quite the same way, they have always carried strong normative expectations. Such expectations are most visible in the payment of child benefits directly to the primary carer.

- *Welfare as compensation for diswelfare.* In the 1970s Richard Titmuss argued that welfare served to compensate those who are adversely affected by economic growth and social change. There is some irony in attaching opprobrium to welfare as a 'gammon' economic relationship in the present period, when the cold war is over and global capitalism is all there is. The global era has seen the gap between the winners and losers in its economic transformation widen steadily. In Australia, there are presently some six or seven unemployed persons in competition for every vacant position.

- *Welfare as gift exchange among*

strangers. Titmuss also argued that welfare was part of a system of redistribution among citizens according to need, with the dominant form being redistribution over the life cycle and between generations. He likened this to the exchange of gifts in simpler societies, and saw it as vital for social integration. In contrast with the philanthropy of the past, he saw modern welfare arrangements as institutionalised sharing of need and risk. Rather than requiring something in return, he invited citizens to ask, 'Who is my stranger?' The trust and good will assumed in this vision cannot now be taken for granted. There is instead a demand for 'my' stranger to return the gift, in symbolic form at least, and to do so visibly and immediately.

None of these past visions speaks to the popular wisdom of the present that to get something for nothing is harmful to the recipient. Pearson makes a powerful case that the substitution of welfare for a place in the real economy has been deeply destructive for the people of Cape York. Those who advocate a new paternalism such as Lawrence Mead argue something similar. Yet present policy little offers welfare claimants little that might represent a genuine alternative to 'passive welfare'. If the market is to be the measure, the reciprocity of mutual obligation and work for the dole are impoverished versions of exchange. The exchange of the market is an exchange of things of equal value in the eyes of those making the trade. There is no equivalent symbolism at the heart of mutual obligation, but a mean demand to render a sign of recognition that a return is owed.

strengths and cooperative decision-making, and increasing recognition of the importance of early intervention and prevention.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT, AND DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSES

The definitions of 'abuse' and 'neglect' in recent legislation in NSW and Queensland now focus on 'harm' and 'risk of harm'. The aim is to shift the emphasis from a forensic investigation of allegations of abuse or neglect to a broader assessment of whether a child or young person has suffered harm or is likely to suffer harm. While a forensic approach tries to determine whether acts of commission (abuse) or omission (neglect) have occurred, an assessment approach is more concerned with whether parents are able to protect their children and meet their needs. The NSW legislation also opens the door to parents and children and young people asking for assistance without needing to be labelled as 'abusive' or 'abused'. At the same time, it also establishes a higher threshold for legal action and care orders.

The second major change across Australia has been the development of various models of differentiated response to manage the pressure from the increasing number of notifications and to assist 'gatekeeping' (Tomison, 1999). Western Australia was the first to go down this track in 1995, separating incoming reports into 'child concern' reports and 'child maltreatment allegations'. While allegations of maltreatment continued to receive a forensic investigation, child concern reports are referred for assessment and the provision of services to manage the problems that prompted the report, such as parents' inability to cope and to parent adequately. This and similar approaches relying on structured risk assessment at intake has resulted in a drop in the number of officially recorded 'child maltreatment' cases in a number of States (eg, Western Australia,

Victoria, South Australia and NSW). In the absence of adequate resources, however, this has not necessarily led to the provision of better services for children in need, especially in multi-problem families.

The purpose of structured risk assessment tools is to assist workers to identify children in high-risk circumstances, to determine what services are necessary for the child and the family, and to document the basis for decisions and provide for some consistency of response. Several States (South Australia, the Northern Territory and New South Wales) have also introduced central intake teams to improve response consistency. As Tomison (1999) points out, however, risk assessment tools, while helpful, are no substitute for professional judgment, experience, adequate training and proper supervision. They also cannot eliminate errors altogether. While structured decision-making tools may force workers to consider a range of risk factors, assessing risk is 'inherently probabilistic' and relies on using statistical and actuarial models of risks associated with particular *groups* to make decisions about the likely future risk of harm to *individual children* in particular circumstances. Because any such predictions are invariably imperfect, even by experienced workers assisted by risk assessment tools, some errors in decision-making in such difficult areas are inevitable.

Such difficult decision making is also affected by political and moral considerations which determine where the threshold is set - whether it is more important to err on the side of safety and remove some children from their parents unnecessarily or to err on the side of keeping children and young people with their families wherever possible, with the risk that some may be left in unsafe circumstances. Certainly the history of unmet needs and the abuse and neglect of children in care clearly demonstrated in various inquiries here and overseas does not encourage the unnecessary removal of children from their parents. Nor does the increasingly severe shortage of people willing

and able to care for children and young people who cannot live with their parents.

## OUT-OF-HOME CARE

The major problem besetting all child protection and out-of-home care systems in Australia is the difficulty of finding appropriate carers. The children and young people entering care are now likely to be more disturbed or troubled, and their challenging behaviour and experiences make them unsuitable for many foster families, especially when the carers' own children are still living at home. While some foster care payments have increased, they do not provide payment for the carers' time and do not compensate for the full costs of caring for these children. In addition, many foster carers do not receive other forms of support needed to help them care for children with very difficult behaviour. In a number of cases, children are placed with carers because there are no other options. When these arrangements break down, they leave a legacy of pain and resentment for both the child and the carer.

There is now increasing reliance in Australia and elsewhere on relatives to provide care for these children. While this may be because they can provide the most appropriate placement, in many cases it may be because there are no other options. With the move away from group residential care in all states and territories and the closure of a large number of residential units, often because of the inadequacy of care they provided, the range of placements is now quite restricted and in particular, there is a general shortage of specialist residential services for the most difficult to place children and young people. As Bath (2000) and various articles in the media have pointed out, this has resulted in patching together complex and very expensive care programs for some children and young people. In some cases, this involves accommodating children and young people in motels with several full-time workers at costs of up to \$100,000 to \$300,000 per year

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per child. Apart from their expense, such schemes do not meet the child's long-term needs for stability, education and mental health treatment.

One of the underlying problems here, despite the increasing recognition of the need for various agencies to take some responsibility and provide services for such children, is the inadequacy of services for children and young people who do not 'fit' within the education and health systems. For example, while the public education systems in each state generally make some provision for the special needs of children in care and those at risk, they generally do not cater appropriately for the numbers of children and young people, including those in care, who are excluded from schools and even from pre-school and child care because of their difficult behaviour. Similarly, it is very difficult to find appropriate services and treatment for children with mental health issues. The landmark Western Australian Child Health survey in the mid 1990s found that only about a third of the children and young people with mental health problems who were considered to need professional help actually received any treatment. In the longitudinal study of wards leaving care in NSW, a number of young people had contemplated or even attempted suicide but not received any mental health services. Nor had many of them received adequate dental care (Cashmore and Paxman, 1996).

On a more positive note, the needs and vulnerabilities of young people leaving care have increasingly been recognised and the responsibility of state governments, especially in NSW, for these young people has been extended in recent legislation and service provision.

## EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

Perhaps the most promising developments over the last decade are the shift to a family support approach to child protection and

the focus on prevention and early intervention. Both involve a proactive rather than a reactive approach.

The family support approach focuses on the value of working with families and building on their strengths, not just focusing on their problems. It recognises that some parents need additional support and services to meet the needs of their children. Where there are concerns about a child's safety, welfare or well-being, families are encouraged to find their own solutions so long as they meet the needs of the child and overcome the concerns. This may involve using alternative dispute resolution processes such as family decision-making conferences to allow families to find solutions that will ensure that the child's needs are met and avoid the need for more intrusive child protection interventions.

Arguably the most significant and substantial development involves the recent and rapid emergence of prevention and early intervention policies and programs. The commonsense notion that prevention is better than cure is now backed by accumulating evidence of the long-term negative impact on children's development of early exposure to violence and inadequate care and nurturing. In addition, it has become clear that child protection services have not been able to handle the demand or meet the needs of families. In particular, the emerging research on the effects on babies' and children's brain development and the long-term consequences and costs has focused attention on the need for early intervention. The aim of intervening early in life and early in the pathway to problems is to promote the health and well-being of children and young people and prevent the development of various behavioural and mental health problems. These include drug and alcohol abuse, juvenile crime, risky sexual behaviour, violent and aggressive behaviour, depression and youth suicide.

This has led to a range of strategies at both State and federal levels to support families with children and to build stronger communities and social capital.

These include programs such as the Commonwealth's Stronger Families and Communities strategy, Families First in New South Wales, Strengthening Families in Victoria, and the Good Beginnings home visiting program throughout Australia. The common aim of these programs and strategies is to focus on early childhood development, to provide support for all families with children and particular assistance for families with problems and children in need.

Such developments can only be sustained by the provision of adequate resources at all levels. This will come only with community support and the understanding that the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people is an investment in and the underpinning of the 'clever' country and the social fabric of the community.

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*Dr Judy Cashmore is a psychologist and an SPRC Honorary Research Associate. She is a member of a number of government and non-government committees on child protection.*

"The commonsense notion that prevention is better than cure is now backed by accumulating evidence of the long-term negative impact on children's development of early exposure to violence and inadequate care and nurturing."

# FROM THE PROJECTS

## **YOUTH HOMELESSNESS: CASE STUDIES OF THE RECONNECT PROGRAM**

Reconnect is a comparatively new program of the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) which aims to develop capacities for early intervention into and prevention of youth homelessness in local areas. This research, conducted on commission from FaCS, looked at the development of Reconnect programs in four areas. It was particularly concerned with how services for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are linked together at the local level; how different types of service, such as youth and family mediation, education services, income support, supported accommodation services, and care and protection, work together in assisting young people; and how Reconnect providers perform their roles as service providers and builders of community capacity. In comparing Reconnect programs in four different areas, the research also considered differences in service network development that might reflect differences in the time they had been operating and their location in different states, in rural and regional and metropolitan areas.

Reconnect providers use a range of family oriented approaches, often involving mediation and counselling, to young people at risk of homelessness. The research report notes a range of issues and problems in the provision of support and the development of community capacity. Generally, however, the picture was positive. The research found Reconnect services to have become well integrated in the local service networks, and in their turn to have done much to integrate first-to-know agencies such as schools into

those networks. The comparative dimension of the research suggests that time, place and distance matter for the development of effective service networks. Networks were less well developed in the case of both the rural area and the newly established Reconnect services included in the study. State government services also matter, with Victoria's innovative school-focused youth worker program particularly effective in facilitating early intervention contact between services.

*Ceri Evans and Sheila Shaver*

## **UNSW RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAM (URSP) GRANTS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS ARC SMALL GRANTS)**

Staff at the SPRC have been awarded three grants from the URSP for 2001.

### **COST SAVINGS OF PREVENTIVE COORDINATED CARE**

This grant has been awarded to Karen Fisher, Peter Saunders and Kate Norris. The project tests the argument that decisions to fund preventive human service programs can be made in terms of cost savings. The distinction between net benefits to society and financial savings accessible to a program is important to avoid policy decisions that result in under-funding programs. It illustrates an inappropriate interpretation of economic analysis in policy decision making. Cost benefit analysis will be applied to longitudinal service usage data from a coordinated care trial (1997-99) to measure cost savings. The outcomes will inform Commonwealth and State resource decisions about preventive human services.

*Karen Fisher*

## **CARERS AND SERVICE NON-USE: UNDERSTANDING WHY CARERS DO NOT TAKE UP SERVICES**

The major part of care enabling disabled and older people to remain at home is provided by informal carers. Services can assist carers to continue to support people at home. However, many carers do not take up services. To date, studies explaining reasons for service non-use have had to extrapolate from data about service users. The aim of the study is to investigate why carers who do not use services, especially those who have an evident need for services, do not take them up. This study will use the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers to identify the carer characteristics associated with service non-use. The study will also test a typology of service non-use developed in previous research to assess whether it is a useful tool for understanding why carers do not take up services. The project will be conducted by Cathy Thomson.

*Cathy Thomson*

## **GEOGRAPHIC ESTIMATES OF NEED: A CASE STUDY OF DISABILITY PREVALENCE**

To apply 'needs-based' funding models, it is necessary to know the extent of need in different regions. This project is developing theoretical and empirical models to test the imputation methods used to estimate regional need when direct data are not available. In particular, the project is examining the extent to which different underlying causal relationships may lead to bias in simple imputation methods. These issues will be explored via an examination of the geographic distribution of disability in Victoria.

*Bruce Bradbury and Kate Norris*

# NEW PUBLICATIONS

## MORALS AND POLICY: PUBLIC DUTY AND PRIVATE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EMPLOYMENT TO RETIREMENT TRANSITION

Sheila Shaver and Merrin Thompson

SPRC Discussion Paper  
No. 113

The period of welfare state restructuring has seen a resurgence of concern, in both policy and

popular opinion, with the balance of rights and duties attached to claims for community support. Curiously, contemporary debates about 'welfare reform' have had little to say about economic support in retirement. This paper is concerned with how policy for the transition from employment to retirement figures in a changing discursive landscape of social policy citizenship. Examining the views of a group of Australians in mid-life, it draws out and compares the meanings of entitlement, rightfulness, merit and deserts they attach to the age pension and occupational superannuation, the requirements, duties, and obligations

they think are attached to such benefits, and how they believe these benefits and their financing should be shared among Australian citizens and workers. This evidence suggests that there are interesting continuities of political culture in the rights and duties seen as associated with welfare support in working life and in retirement. The basis of these continuities lies in common emphasis on the moral duties that accompany a social right to support from the public purse, and the social privileging of self-provision over 'dependency' on the public purse. These parallels suggest that some of the values, principles and

*Continued on page 8*

## NEW SPRC PUBLISHING STRATEGY AND WEBSITE

Thank you to all the Newsletter subscribers who replied to our readership survey. This indicated that the Newsletter continues to be of considerable interest and use to readers. We may, over time, be amending the format somewhat, to respond to views expressed in the survey. It is also clear that although many readers can and do access publications on the internet, the hard copy formats for the Newsletter and Discussion Papers remain popular and we will be continuing these for the time being.

We are, nevertheless, consolidating and developing both our presence on the internet and our electronic publishing capacity. In support of this we have redesigned the Centre's website ([www.sprc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au)). Please take a look. This is an ongoing process and further developments will take place over the next few months.

Our hard-copy Reports and Proceedings and Research Resource Series have now been discontinued, although back copies of many of the reports are still available and are listed on the website. A new series of Reports, downloadable in .pdf format, is now starting and will provide an outlet for the results of much of our commissioned research projects. The Newsletter and Discussion Papers will continue to be available in .pdf format as well as hard copy.

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# NEW PUBLICATIONS

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sentiments associated with mutual obligation are carrying over to retirement income provisions, with at least potential consequences for the transition from employment to retirement. To date, however, these parallels are too limited to suggest a reshaping of retirement provision in the image of mutual obligation.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE AND THE PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY IN VICTORIA**

*Bruce Bradbury, Kate Norris and David Abelló*  
SPRC Report 1/01

Governments are relying increasingly on needs-based funding mechanisms to administer funding for a wide range of services. The example considered in this SPRC Report is the funding of non-institutional services for people with severe or profound disabilities in the regions of Victoria. The report is based on research undertaken for the Victorian Department of Human Services, DisAbility Services.

Direct evidence of the prevalence of disability in small regions is

unavailable. It is therefore necessary to estimate prevalence indirectly using other sources of information on the relation between the characteristic and its observable predictors. In addition to funding based upon demographic factors, higher disability service funding might be allocated to poorer regions based on the fact that poorer households tend to have a higher probability of disability. A key methodological challenge in doing this is to specify correctly the causal model determining income, location and disability, as mis-specified models can lead to biased estimates.

The report first presents evidence of associations between disability and socioeconomic disadvantage using a comprehensive review of the literature and analysis of the ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 1998. This evidence is clear: people with severe or profound disability are significantly more likely to suffer socioeconomic disadvantage.

The implications of this association for service funding in Victoria are then examined. The allocation of service funding across the regions is examined, rather than the level of service funding in each region. The association is probably due to causal links in both directions, though separate identification of these is difficult. In general,

however, we would expect that more disadvantaged regions will have more disabled people and (other things constant) a greater need for disability services. Based on this argument, data from the 1996 Australian Census are combined with those from the 1998 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers in a simple modelling framework to provide indirect estimates of the relative prevalence of disability in each of the nine Victorian regions. Suggestions are made as to how this information might be used to best target future allocations of growth funding to the different regions. A key suggestion from the modelling is that the relative funding in two metropolitan areas be reduced, because they are relatively socioeconomically advantaged and, given the model's assumptions, will have fewer people with disabilities residing there. The limitations of the modelling method used are explained in the context of the causal relationships between disability, disadvantage and location.

The report is now available on the SPRC website. Research into geographic estimates of need will be ongoing, made possible by a UNSW University Research Support Program grant (see page 6).



## **NATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY CONFERENCE 2001**

# **COMPETING VISIONS**

**4-6 JULY 2001 UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY**

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

Professor Anna Yeatman, Macquarie University, Australia  
Professor David Ellwood, Harvard University, USA  
Dr Don Weatherburn, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

### **FORUM SESSIONS**

- Welfare 'Poison' or Welfare Autonomy: Rethinking Indigenous Social Policy
- 'From Neurones to Neighbourhoods': The New Debate on Early Intervention and Child Development
- Friend or Foe? The Participation Concept in Welfare Reform
- Social Entrepreneurialism and the New Role of NGOs
- The Spatial Distribution of Inequality: How to Address Regional Grievances?

### **CONTRIBUTED PAPERS**

*These will be presented in the following streams:*

- 1 Employment, Unemployment and Mutual Obligation
- 2 Social and Economic Inequalities
- 3 Families, Young People and Children
- 4 Retirement and Ageing
- 5 Indigenous Social Welfare
- 6 Welfare Reform, Community Partnerships and the Third Sector
- 7 Issues in Service Delivery
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