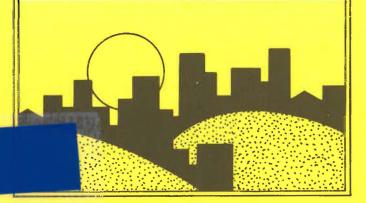


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URU Working Paper No. 14 August 1989



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Series Editors: Shelley R. Schreiner & Clem Lloyd



METROPOLITAN PLANNING 2: SOCIAL COSTS AND BENEFITS

Following the success of its metropolitan planning conference in February 1988, which focussed on the metropolitan plans of Australia's major cities and instruments employed in metropolitan planning, the Urban Research Unit held a follow-up conference on February 7-8, 1989. The emphasis in the second conference was on the social costs and benefits of metropolitan planning.

The liveliest debate of the two days concentrated on the relationship between urban consolidation and metropolitan planning, with several metropolitan planners providing timely reviews of the present context of urban consolidation in their cities. There was general agreement that not enough is known about the incidence of urban consolidation and there is a role for some sort of national review. In his paper, Ray Bunker of the School of the Built Environment, SAIT argued that urban consolidation is best expressed and implemented through careful local planning, making more effective use of urban space and informed by metropolitan guidelines and state government initiatives. Pat Troy of the Urban Research Unit criticised the presentation of urban consolidation in 'black and white' terms, calling for more realism in the debate and warning of inflated expectations that had been 'assiduously cultivated' for the consolidation option. The papers of Bunker and Troy, together with a comment by Richard Cardew of Center for Environmental and Urban Studies, Macquarie University, are printed in URU Working Paper No. 11.

In a thematic paper on 'Economic Rationalism and Social Objectives', Peter Self of the Urban Research Unit concluded that there was no necessary conflict between metropolitan planning and the basic criteria of welfare economics. Everything depended on how far metropolitan planning can maximise total individual welfare through satisfying wants that the market cannot meet, and distributing welfare more equally. He urged Australian planners to break the bonds which had been forged by a 'potent brew' of special interests and narrow ideology which both restricted the role of planning and directed it into inegalitarian channels. The Urban Research Unit plans to publish Self's paper early in 1990.

Andrew Parkin of the Discipline of Politics, Flinders University, examined the relationship between social justice strategies and metropolitan planning, taking account of the strategies evolved over the past two years by the Cain, Bannon and Hawke Labor Governments. He cautioned against a cynical

interpretation of these strategies which were limited but could provide the opportunity for a fruitful relationship with metropolitan planning. A successful partnership would need to emphasise a productive synthesis between 'planning' and 'management', recognise the inevitability of conflict of interests, and develop a social justice philosophy linking 'efficiency' and 'market exchange' to ultimate outcomes that were socially just. Parkin's revised text is reproduced in this *Working Paper* (No.14).

Deborah Foy (Social Justice Unit, SA Dept of Premier and Cabinet), and Sue Crafter (SA Urban Lands Trust) used a range of data drawn largely from fringe growth areas of Adelaide to explore to what extent the needs of women are incorporated into urban planning and what impact urban planning has had upon women, particularly the questions of mobility and accessibility. They concluded that many conventional mechanisms of planning imposed a particular burden on women and low-cost households, requiring planners, urban designers and engineers to adopt different values and approaches to urban development, particularly in new areas.

In her paper on 'Metro Planning and Environmental Planning and Assessment', Donna Craig of Macquarie University Law School, argued that important problems had emerged with approaches and methodologies applied in environmental impact assessment and these were becoming increasingly evident in the role of EIA in decision-making. The role of both EIA and social impact assessment in metro planning should be directed to improving basic awareness of environmental planning, providing better access to it and improving the quality of decision-making in a technical and participatory sense. In a review of the current state of planning education in Australia, Stephen Hamnett of the School of Built Environment, SAIT, concluded that the recent history of planning education comprised courses which had grown by accretion, with an almost inevitable sacrificing of depth for breadth. Graduates had acquired a 'fragmented educational experience' without the 'enduring educational skills' which would allow them to develop as 'professionals' or 'researchers' in later years.

Final papers considered aspects of transport. Peter Spearritt of the Urban Research Unit concluded that contemporary metro-plans were based on a 'depressing' belief that they had no alternative but 'to make way for the car.' If metro-plans were to strengthen public transport and create more efficient cities ways had to be found of restricting or redirecting car use. Will Sanders of the Urban Research Unit looked at airport planning, using the troubled Sydney airport as a case study. He found encouraging evidence of

improved performance in the Sydney experience based on the poor record of airport policy and planning around the world over the past 40 years.

The Urban Research Unit plans to produce further papers from the 1989 Metro-Planning Conference in its 1990 series of *Working Papers*.

Clem Lloyd Urban Research Unit



ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates the implications for metropolitan planning of the Social Justice Strategies launched since 1986 by the Cain, Bannon and Hawke Labor governments. The philosophies and goals of the Strategies are (perhaps inevitably) imprecise, but their administrative/implementation structures have some clear characteristics and assumptions:

- consensus-based;
- non-expansionary in funding;
- universalist rather than welfare-oriented;
- managerialist;
- an exercise in public-sector coordination;
- budget-focussed; and
- limited in opportunities for community participation.

The paper argues that there are important unresolved tensions and dilemmas embedded within these characteristics.

The Strategies have had little opportunity to make an impact on metropolitan planning in either Victoria or South Australia, although it has been possible to interpret recent planning initiatives in the new 'social justice' terminology. The paper argues that the potential for a fruitful relationship is probably better than in most other areas of public-sector activity. The Strategies as intended, and 'metropolitan planning' as it has evolved in Australia, share some important characteristics such as:

- attempting public regulation of private market outcomes;
- seeking a compatibility between efficiency/growth and equity/justice;
- pursuing the 'public interest' amid a plurality of conflicting interests;
- · coordinating public-sector activity; and
- balancing the 'capital investment' and 'human service' aspects of public policy.

They also face similar dilemmas:

- what balance between centralised and localised structures?
- what balance between participatory and managerial modes?

The paper acknowledges that these are difficult tasks and dilemmas. It cautions against a cynical interpretation of the undoubtedly limited Social Justice Strategies, and suggests, for the reasons suggested above, that metropolitan planning would be an appropriate early focus for the Strategies. A partnership between the Social Justice Strategies and metropolitan planning initiatives would need to emphasise:

- a productive synthesis between 'planning' and 'management';
- the inevitability of conflicts of interest; and
- the development of a social-justice philosophy which links 'efficiency' and 'market exchange', both inevitable and often desirable criteria, to ultimate socially-just outcomes.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIES¹

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INTRODUCTION

This paper evaluates the implications for metropolitan planning of the Social Justice Strategies launched in the past few years by the Cain, Bannon and Hawke Labor governments. The paper first discusses the political context which has given rise to the Strategies, and then suggests a number of common administrative and implementation features which, it argues, leave unresolved some important tensions and dilemmas. Though the Strategies have as yet had little opportunity for direct impact on metropolitan planning in either Victoria or South Australia, the paper argues that the potential for a fruitful relationship is probably better here than in most other cases of State government activity. This is because the Strategies share with metropolitan planning some important perspectives, administrative approaches and value conflicts. Probably the most significant of these involves the need to develop a philosophy of social justice which explores the degree to which notions of 'efficiency' and 'market exchange' can be accommodated within a larger conception of socially-just ultimate outcomes.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Three Labor governments—the Cain government in Victoria, the Bannon government in South Australia and the Hawke government at the national level—have launched Social Justice Strategies since mid-1987. Before the defeat of the Unsworth government in March 1988, there were moves in

¹ This paper is a revised version of that delivered to the conference, Metropolitan Planning in Australia 2: Social Costs and Benefits, in February 1989.

New South Wales to follow suit. A Social Justice Strategy has recently been foreshadowed for the Australian Capital Territory, and there have been exploratory moves in Western Australia in 1989.

Though it must be said from the outset that the Victorian initiative seems significantly in advance of the others in many respects, there are some strong similarities across the three extant Strategies. The similarities can be explained by the common pressures on Labor governments in the political, economic and social context of the late 1980s and by the sharing of ideas, experiences, documents and personnel between the governments.

These Labor governments have been noteworthy for their dedication to economic recovery and sound public-sector management. The consequent emphases on economic investment and public-sector restraint have meant that the Labor governments of the 1980s are quite explicitly and deliberately different from those of the 1970s. To the extent that the Hawke government draws on the Whitlam experience, it is probably as a salutary model to be avoided. To a lesser extent, the Bannon administration distances itself from the Dunstan era in South Australia (Parkin and Jaensch 1986). The contrast is probably most marked in terms of the primacy of economic policy in the 1980s.

As has been commonly observed, however, this leaves the Australian Labor Party with a problem. It remains a party with a platform and a core of supporters for whom social reform is a high priority.

There are several ways to express how this political context gave birth to the Social Justice Strategies. The first would follow the officially-expressed story: that, after several years of necessary attention to economic fundamentals, emphasising economic recovery and growth rather than patterns of distribution, the stage was reached when these Labor governments could resume their interest in questions of social equity and redistribution. The 'success' of the policies of economic stabilisation and development, in other words, could underwrite a renewed attention to social justice.

A second interpretation examines the role of party factions. Quite clearly, the Left faction within the A.L.P. has always been the least comfortable with the economic policies of contemporary Labor governments (particularly in Canberra) and has attempted on many occasions either to moderate those policies or to ensure that they have an ultimate purpose in promoting social equity. Some members of the Centre Left faction, while generally prepared to support government economic policy, have also been anxious to provide a social-policy counterbalance. The Social Justice Strategy is thus a rare instance of an item on the Left agenda elbowing its way into government policy.

Victoria, where a Social Justice Strategy was instituted earliest, appears most integrated into overall government planning and is most closely identified with the party leader, is also the State with the strongest Left representation within both the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary Labor Party. It also has an influential 'Independent' group, including Premier John Cain, which is analogous to the Centre Left. In South Australia, where the Centre Left dominates the Labor Party within Parliament and Cabinet, with the Left sometimes matching it at State Conferences, the introduction of a Social Justice Strategy took a little longer. It was to an important extent the product of the drive and energy of a maverick Minister for Health and Community Welfare (John Cornwall); the Premier John Bannon (who has been formally non-aligned in factional terms although strongly supported by the Centre Left), has been rather less publicly identified with the Strategy than in his Victorian counterpart.

The Hawke government's Social Justice Strategy can be interpreted as the outcome of an inter-factional deal. Although the 1986 A.L.P. National Conference had unanimously passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a National Social Justice Strategy, little happened until pressure within Caucus led to its introduction in return for the abandonment of a proposed official inquiry into the distribution of wealth in Australia.

A third interpretation would find a motivation in electoral pressures, and in particular the evidence of declining Labor support in traditional Labor strongholds. This declining support is explained in part by the differential impact of economic policies such as declining real wages and high interest rates, but it has also been widely interpreted (correctly or otherwise) as reflecting distaste for Labor's alleged 'abandonment' of reformist and redistributive policies. In this context, the Social Justice Strategies offer opportunities for Labor governments to look, and even act, like 'real' Labor governments.

All three interpretations have degrees of validity. Cynical observers might be particularly excused for regarding the early stages of the Hawke government's strategy—which led to the production of glossy booklets extolling Labor's achievements in matters of social justice, with little attention given to grappling with the strategic and conceptual issues—as largely a propaganda exercise. On the other hand, the April 1989 national Economic Statement delivered by Treasurer Paul Keating is striking in its adoption of social justice terminology in describing major policy initiatives (Keating 1989, especially Attachment A). The Victorian publications have been fairly consistently thoughtful and open. In South Australia, the instigating Minister, John Cornwall, is no longer in Cabinet and, while he claims some successes for the SA strategy, has argued that "the State Government's understanding of Social Justice is distorted to some extent by pervasive pragmatism" (Cornwall 1989: 17).

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIES—SUBSTANCE & STRUCTURE

While none of the official Social Justice Strategy documents devote much space to discussing philosophical abstractions, there does appear to be an acceptance across the three launched Strategies of a common family of elements which constitute 'social justice' in public policy terms (*see*, for example, Victoria 1987: 13; South Australia 1988: 1-3; Salvaris 1988: 12). The consensus seems to be that 'socially just' policies promote the following ideals:

- 1. a more equitable distribution of resources among citizens;
- a more equitable degree of access to public services and programs;
- greater opportunities for participation by citizens in decisionmaking processes; and
- 4. the protection of basic democratic rights and freedoms.

To the extent that it is possible to trace the intellectual pedigree of these elements, they represent a distillation of recent social science scholarship in Australia, most notably that associated with the Australian National University's Social Justice Project (for example, Troy 1981; Macintyre 1985; Troy 1988).

There are clearly important philosophical dilemmas embedded within and between these elements, embracing as they do some notable dualisms: equity of access as well as equity of outcome, individual rights as well as collective provision, citizen participation in decision-making as well as fairly strong prescriptions for what constitutes appropriate decisions.

There are also important questions begged, the most important of which is the relationship between a 'social justice strategy' and the 'economic strategies' which Labor governments have heretofore been following. This is the crucial balance which needs to be struck. The closest any document goes to acknowledging the dilemmas here is a paragraph from a consultant's report sketching out the framework for a Strategy in the Australian Capital Territory. Michael Salvaris, who has also had involvement in the Victorian Strategy, notes that there are

... real and often valid disagreements in government and the community about the underlying values of social justice, the emphasis which should be placed in particular areas and the most appropriate approaches (one conspicuous example is the reliance on economic growth as a means for social justice).

[Salvaris 1988: 24]

The Strategies have also developed some interesting commonalities in the assumptions and administrative structures established to guide their

implementation. It is useful to describe these under the headings which follow.

1. Consensus

While the documents discuss inequities within society, and foreshadow policy changes to redress disadvantage, there is little reference to the consequences for the present *beneficiaries* of maldistribution or injustice. The South Australian document, on its first page, asserts the doubtful proposition that "it is to the detriment of all if some members of the community are disadvantaged or discriminated against" (South Australia 1987: 1). The political attractiveness of consensus assumptions are obvious; as this paper will later argue, however, they impose serious and almost certainly damaging constraints.

2. Limitations on Public Spending

It is common feature of each of the Strategies that they are *not* primarily vehicles for expanding public spending. Rather, they are largely concerned with the principles which govern spending at its present levels. The Victorians express it this way:

In the long term ... the Strategy is more concerned with changing the way existing funds are allocated than with adding to total spending [Victoria 1987: 9]

The South Australian language is as follows:

It is not so much a question of finding extra money for new services but part of the continuing task of reordering programs to comply with the changing needs of government and the community. [South Australia 1988: 6]

The 1986 A.L.P. National Conference resolution was in similar terms:

Conference recognises that the implementation of a social justice strategy is not necessarily dependent on the provision of net additions to resources, rather the fundamental goal of social justice revolves around more equitable distribution of government resources and services.

A notable and salutary attempt contrary to this philosophy was made, at a very early stage in Strategy development within his Department, by the South Australian Minister, John Cornwall. In an apparent, somewhat naive attempt to test and build public support for a radical measure, he briefed a journalist on what was then an embryonic proposal for a tax on property transactions, the proceeds of which would fund social-justice initiatives. The reaction in the media, on the talk-back radio shows and, quickly, within the State Cabinet was eminently predictable: the possibility of such a 'Robin Hood Tax', as it was dubbed by the media, was emphatically quashed by the Premier within a matter of days.

3. Beyond Welfare

The documents pertaining to the Social Justice Strategies are quite explicit that the Strategies are not intended as mere supplements to 'welfare' programs. In philosophical terms, the Strategies are intended to be distinguished by their focus on structural causes of injustice and disadvantage, and on related preventative measures:

Over a ten-year period, the Strategy aims to attack long-term, institutional causes of social injustice. It is not just a short-term band-aid approach to welfare. [Social Justice News, May 1988: 2]

In administrative terms, the Strategies are to apply across the entire public sector, not just in welfare agencies or even just in human-service programs. In South Australia, for example, an explicit decision was made to move the Strategy's administrative base out of the Department for Community Welfare, under whose Minister it had been initially nurtured.

4. Public Sector Management

Although arguably the restructuring of opportunities, processes and outcomes in the private sector would do most to enhance overall social justice, these Strategies are emphatically instruments of public-sector

management. The actors whose behaviour they directly attempt to alter are the agencies of the public sector itself, and the means employed are consistent with the values and language of the newly-prominent managerial approach to the public sector. This approach stresses the explicit articulation of agency goals, clear measures of performance, specific attribution of costs to particular programs, cross-sectoral coordination, and so on.

In South Australia, the introduction of the Social Justice Strategy was argued to quite consistent with the new management reforms introduced following the Guerin Report (South Australia 1985):

The South Australian Government is committed to an ongoing process of public administrative reform. The principles of efficiency and effectiveness, equal opportunity and sound financial management have characterised public sector activity in the past few years. ... The Social Justice Strategy naturally follows on these initiatives in that it, quite simply, aims for efficiency and effectiveness in the management and distribution of government resources in relation to the needs of the community that it serves. [South Australia 1988: 18]

Exemplifying this approach in Victoria is the document *Performance Indicators and the Social Justice Strategy*, published by the Social Justice Strategy Unit (Victoria. Dept of Premier and Cabinet 1988). The document provides guidance to agencies in the preparation of program objectives, and priorities and performance measures in terms consistent with social-justice goals.

5. Coordination and Devolution

Consistent with the 'whole of government' intentions, each of the Social Justice Strategies is administratively based in the central policy-coordination agency: the Premier's Department in Victoria and South Australia, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canberra and, foreshadowed in the Salvaris consultancy document, the new Chief Minister's office in the Australian Capital Territory. Without this central

bureaucratic location, the Strategies would surely have lacked the legitimacy for the cross-portfolio scrutiny which their mission demands.

At the same time, the Social Justice Units are not large, and are envisaged as facilitators and coordinators of activity which is strongly agency-based. Typically, each agency has been required to nominate a senior officer to take responsibility for Strategy implementation within the agency and to liaise with the Social Justice Unit. What has been asked of each agency, at this early stage of implementation, is some sort of accounting for their programs and budgets using social-justice criteria and an analysis of the social-justice impact of proposed new initiatives. As this becomes routinised, rolling strategies within each agency, subject to annual review and modification, can be envisaged.

6. Budget Orientation

These emphases lead inexorably to a primary focus on government Budgets. It is commonplace to observe both that the Budget has long been the principal de facto tool of overall government management and coordination, and that budget processes—because of their inertia, incrementalism and fragmentation—are notoriously difficult to direct towards coherent goals. The Social Justice Strategies constitute another of the recent attempts to impose some sense of overall purpose on the Budget. In the end, agency initiatives become translated into budget bids, suggested changes in public activity become disputes over budget reallocation and strong statements over government intention are taken seriously when they produce budget outcomes.

In this process, the Social Justice Units have tried to assert themselves as legitimate central-agency scrutineers of budget submissions and allocations. They have established this legitimacy at least to the extent that each of the Strategies has published analyses of the annual government budget as expressed in social-justice terms (for example, South Australia 1988; Keating 1989: Attachment A).

Perhaps the existing model closest to that envisaged for the Social Justice Units is that provided by the Offices of Women's Advisers to the Premier. In South Australia at least, this model—which also involves, among other things, the publication of an annual budget analysis—was explicitly considered in the process of Strategy formulation (see also Sawer 1988).

7. Consultation Within Limits

While the administrative apparatus emphasises public-sector management, some of the Strategy objectives emphasise community participation. The priority given to the management side of this dualism is clearly apparent. The document which launched the Victorian strategy programmed "consultation" as an activity for "stage 3", after both "implementation" and "further development of the strategy" (Victoria 1987: 68).

Some opportunities for public consultation and discussion have been initiated. Victoria is the most advanced in this direction, with its initiatives including some readable literature (such as a Social Justice Strategy information kit) and a series of regionally-based seminars. In South Australia, a Consultative Committee representing several influential nongovernment organisations has had a chequered history, remaining largely on the periphery of Strategy development.²

Perhaps mindful of these unresolved difficulties, the Salvaris report on the foreshadowed A.C.T. strategy strongly emphasises community participation (Salvaris 1988). Although there might have been grounds for optimism in this regard if a new Strategy were linked with the introduction of self-government to the Territory, the uncertain outcome of the 1989 A.C.T. elections has left the future of the Salvaris proposals unresolved.

² In the interests of full disclosure, it should be noted the present author chaired this Consultative Committee for a twelve-month period.

A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

It is too early for a fair evaluation of the significance or effectiveness of any of the Social Justice Strategies. There are certainly many problematic elements, among which would be the following.

First, as this paper will emphasise in more detail below in the particular context of metropolitan planning, the consensus assumptions severely limit the analytic rigour of the underlying philosophy of social justice.

Second, some critics would question the acceptance within the Strategies of constraints on public-sector expenditure. A vitriolic criticism along this line has been made by Beilharz:

This already makes a mockery of pretences to social justice, because any serious interpretation of the project has to acknowledge that someone has to pay for it—social spending has to be increased, not decreased. ...'[S]ocial justice' [here] in fact means 'targeting'. [Beilharz 1987: 397]

While Bettina Cass (1989) has recently defended the better 'targeting' of benefits as consistent with a social-justice perspective, it is true that she explicitly links this to an expansion of public expenditure.

Third, can the Strategies in fact move beyond 'welfare'? Salvaris (1988: 26), in his A.C.T. report, argues that the three extant Strategies "are still essentially welfare focussed". This is not only a reflection on the difficulties of evangelising among unsympathetic non-welfare agencies; it also follows from some of the carefully chosen early initiatives. In South Australia, for example, the immediate priority has been identified as focusing "primarily on the needs of the most disadvantaged people in the community" (South Australia 1987: 1), an objective hardly inconsistent with those of a welfare agency. This has been followed in practice by emphasising programs, both existing and foreshadowed, which ameliorate the undoubted disadvantages suffered by select social groups. Indeed, the combination of budgetary parsimony with redressing relative disadvantage can easily lead to selectivist/residual assumptions about social policy. It is noteworthy that the

major Hawke government document on social justice highlights the way in which the government has better targeted its old-age pension and Family Allowance expenditure (Australia 1988: 23), and seems oblivious to the possibility that this might sit uneasily with universalist assumptions about social justice.

Fourth, are Social Justice Strategies really compatible with the new managerialism? The Victorian *Performance Indicators* document is impressive in its adaptation of managerial principles (such as clarification of objectives and measurability of outcomes) to social-justice goals. Yet, Yeatman has expressed well the tensions—involving both opportunities and constraints—between the value-conscious pursuit of ideals, such as social justice, and the ethos of public management:

Many public servants ... are interested in value-oriented debates concerning what policy objectives should be and the process of their implementation; that is, they have what we might term substantive commitments.

... These public servants conceive their work in terms of substantive professional commitments which cannot be reduced to technical performance-for-results criteria. To an extent, [they] can employ [these criteria] precisely in order to ensure that policies are rationally scrutinised and subjected to some kind of rigorous policy evaluation.

... However, the substantively-oriented public servants are inevitably on the defensive in relation to the dominant cultural force within public bureaucracies: the ethos of professional management.

... The technical flexibility, curiousity and openness of the professional public managers are extraordinary. These virtues encourage the hope that they might be placed at the service of our welfare as a community. The problem is that the technical orientation of public managers can be used for any set of value commitments. In this respect the professional managers are relatively indifferent to which ends their technical services are given. They are teleologically promiscuous.

[Yeatman 1987: 349]

This framework helps in the interpretation of Pusey's findings about the strong support shown by Senior Executive Service officers in Canberra to values which emphasise public-sector efficiency, market exchange and limited government (Pusey 1988).

In this regard, it is particularly relevant to note how public enterprises are being increasingly expected to measure their performance in terms of 'return on investment' and of cost-benefit analysis. To the extent that this leads to an appreciation of where costs and benefits really fall (and sometimes they are found to be regressive), some of these changes may not be without positive social-justice implications. Inevitably, however, they can be linked with 'user pays' pricing principles, and become a way of further differentiating the so-called 'commercial' operations of government from so-called 'welfare' operations, quite contrary to the intention of the Social Justice Strategies.

Fifth, can a small Social Justice Unit, even if centrally located, really make an impact on agency behaviour and on budgetary allocations? Where grand changes like the introduction of program budgeting have, in some interpretations, only marginally affected resource allocation, what can a small Unit achieve? Even the modest additions to expenditure attributed to the Social Justice Strategy in the 1988 South Australian budget are candidly admitted to include "a number of projects [which] were already the subject of government decisions and others [which] would possibly have gone ahead in the absence of a distinct social justice strategic approach" (South Australia 1988: 19). Likewise, the South Australians acknowledge the difficulties ahead in educating many agencies:

The first of these reports [from agencies detailing social-justice plans] ... reveal widely varying responses from agencies. Some Departments illustrated a clear understanding and commitment. Others were less helpful. ... Unfortunately, some agencies have interpreted the pursuit of social justice as another marginal or band-aid measure requiring identification of special 'community' programs, with budgets generally carrying on unchanged.

[Fallon 1988]

A healthy scepticism about the Social Justice Strategies is thus probably wise. Cynicism would, however, be unfortunate. This paper will argue that there are opportunities opened up by the Strategies which are worth pursuing.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING AND THE SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIES

What has been the impact of the Social Justice Strategies on metropolitan planning agencies? Here, the paper focusses on Victoria and South Australia. There is no evidence that the advent of a Social Justice Strategy in Canberra has altered the Hawke government's unwillingness, in contrast to its Whitlam-led predecessor, to take a direct interest in urban policy issues.

In both States, the major metropolitan-planning strategic documents which have appeared in recent years have been produced in advance and/or independently of the Social Justice Strategy processes. What the Strategies have asked of metropolitan planning agencies is mainly to explain those documents using the language and concepts of social justice. In both States, this seems not to have caused too much difficulty; the metropolitan planning agencies are not included among the recalcitrant Departments which are considered by the Social Justice Units to need educating.

The second issue of Victoria's Social Justice News (May 1988) features an analysis of the Cain government's Metropolitan Policy as revealed in Shaping Melbourne's Future which, it argues, "complements the Social Justice Strategy in a number of ways". The analysis proceeds to discuss specific policy measures which are designed to promote such objectives as "cheaper housing", "better access to employment opportunities for people in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs" and "giving priority to human service delivery in areas where there are concentrations of groups with special needs".

In South Australia, the Department of Environment and Planning's submission to the Social Justice Unit is identified as among those which "illustrated a clear understanding and commitment...[with] detailed reports on what they are doing, hope to do and are planning to do" (Fallon 1988).

Clearly, at this early stage, little more could be expected. What is the future potential?

There are good grounds for suggesting that the partnership between metropolitan planning agencies and the Social Justice Strategies should be among the most productive and mutually advantageous within the public-sector arena. This is because the two sub-fields share a number of important philosophical assumptions and structural characteristics.

1. Public Regulation of Private Outcomes

First, both represent attempts through the public sector to monitor and modify private market outcomes. Metropolitan planning, since its professional inception, has faced the dilemma of facing powerful private economic interests and strongly market-oriented principles of development. 'Planners' have long had to balance their attempts to direct urban development according to *a priori* principles against the imperatives of responding to, and providing the necessary public infrastructure for, private initiatives. Many critics would suggest that the latter overwhelms the former in practice.

One response to this problem has been to eschew the idealism of grand metropolitan plans in favour of 'urban management' in the sense of a more flexible, short-term and project-oriented mode of public sector urban regulation (Neutze 1988; Mant 1988). While 'master plans' are perhaps justifiably criticised as inflexible and unhelpful for the everyday governance of metropolitan change, it is also easy to envisage the flexibility of urban management degenerating into *ad hoc* responses to day-to-day market pressures without regard to longer-term social goals.

It would be valuable on both sides to translate this 'planning versus management' debate in the urban studies literature into wider policy arenas. It is true that grand 'master plans' are much rarer in other areas of social policy, or at least they are not capable of so simple a rendering as is a multicoloured map of an envisaged metropolis thirty years hence. The 'management' style—coping with the problems in education, housing, childrens' services, Aboriginal affairs, and so on as they arise, with occasional injections of new ideas and fads—is much more the norm. One of the espoused purposes of the Social Justice Strategies is to introduce longer-term outcome-oriented planning into such policy areas.

2. Efficiency/Growth versus Equity/Justice

As a corollary to its attempt to straddle the public/private divide, both metropolitan planning and the Social Justice Strategies attempt to seek some balance or compatibility between, on the one hand, objectives stressing 'efficiency' and 'economic growth' and, on the other hand, the enhancement of other social goals like 'equity'.

It is common for metropolitan planning agencies to identify three sorts of goals. In his recent discussions about the Sydney planning process, Wilmoth describes them as follows:

economic efficiency, especially cost-effective infrastructure provision and employment growth;

social equity, especially access to jobs and services and improved social developments in new areas;

environmental quality, especially protection of air and water quality, reservation of open space and conservation of heritage.

[Wilmoth 1988: 2; emphasis added]

Such objectives are, of course, often in conflict with each other. Protection of environmentally-sensitive areas may reduce land supply, increase housing costs and decrease social equity. Using 'artificial' inducements to affect the location of employment and investment, in pursuit of social equity goals, would not be cost-effective in strict economic-efficiency terms.

The history of metropolitan planning in Australia can be interpreted according to the changing balance between such objectives. Most commentators seem to acknowledge that efficiency considerations have been generally paramount, with some finding this to be particularly true of recent years: "At the metropolitan level", suggests Hamnett (1987): 186), "... planning in the mid-1980s appears to lack explicit commitment to interventionist policies in pursuit of social and spatial goals". On the other hand, Alexander's work in particular (while not disagreeing with this general proposition) gives credit to metropolitan planning, and especially the 1948 Cumberland County plan, for real equity advancements in Sydney (Alexander 1981, 1986).

In the interests of candid assessment, it is necessary to note that this does not exhaust the number of other metropolitan-planning policies 'successfully' implemented in terms of their original goals, including goals of social equity. It should be remembered, for example, that 'slum clearance' and the construction of modern multi-storeyed flats for low-income tenants were supported by the well-intentioned social reformers of the 1950s. There is a general consensus now that the outcomes have done little to advance the cause of social equity.

Stretton (1988a, 1988b) has recently suggested, in effect, that 'urban consolidation' may be today's equivalent. The current debate about the benefits and costs of urban consolidation—involving disagreements or uncertainties about its impact on housing prices, its relative cost to public-sector agencies, its differential effect on various social groups and its relationship to household preferences (Bunker 1987)—is hauntingly similar to the debate which should have been held about slum clearance in the 1950s.

The kind of balancing act described here for metropolitan planning reflects, in microcosm, an enduring dilemma for public policy. The Social Justice Strategies, in this context, have emerged as the latest standard-bearers for the social-equity goals.

3. The Search for the Public Interest

The consensus-based conceit of the Social Justice Strategies has often found its counterpart in consensual assumptions within the urban planning profession. Despite their common protestations that they seek some sort of 'public interest' outcome, both metropolitan planning and the Social Justice Strategies must manage what are essentially situations of conflict between a plurality of interests. The costs and benefits of public-policy action are inevitably distributed unevenly across society. The same applied to public-policy inaction: doing nothing also leaves an array of winners and losers.

Zoning, that ubiquitous tool of the urban planners, is a classic example. In welfare-economics terms, zoning can be justified as an attempt to minimise the negative externalities arising from urban development. The problem here, as with most cases of market externalities, is that externality effects are not uniformly negative or positive. The effects are typically negative for some interests and positive for others. The construction of a block of flats in a neighbourhood of detached houses may well impose greater traffic congestion, noise, intrusions into privacy and ultimately lower property values on the other households. On the other hand, the landowner, the developer, the occupants who are able to live in the new flats and householders in neighbourhoods where these flats are *not* being built are presumably beneficiaries of the development.

Likewise, the feminist critique of suburbia points out how particular spatial arrangements commonly promoted by planning—in this case, the separation of residential activities from employment and social facilities—often negatively affects immobile isolated women.

In this regard, again, the Social Justice Strategies and the metropolitan planning agencies have much to learn from each other.

4. Coordination Within the Public Sector

The initial self-limitation of the Social Justice Strategies to what are essentially attempts to coordinate public-sector agencies also has its

counterpart in metropolitan planning. In both cases, there is a resigned sense that if the public sector cannot even develop a consistent and coherent approach of its own, what is the point of grander goals?

One of the ironies of public-sector metropolitan planning is how commonly it has been undermined by the behaviour of other public-sector agencies. The bureaucratic fragmentation of urban administration into separate agencies for highways, housing, education, hospitals, development control and so on has made overall planning difficult.

Over time, metropolitan planning processes have tended to become increasingly centralised in an endeavour to create a greater coordinating capacity. The most notable success made possible by this centralisation has been the ability to better program the various physical infrastructure investments and land releases necessary for urban development (Wilmoth 1987).

The Social Justice Strategies are starting at this point. At the very least, they want to offer a consistent and coherent 'whole of government' approach to public policy. Unlike the metropolitan planning agencies, the Social Justice Strategies are advantaged by having secured an administrative location in central coordinating agency. This is another reason for encouraging close liaison between the two spheres particularly, it might be noted, in Victoria where the most advanced Social Justice Strategy coincides with what has been, according to Logan (1987), one of the least centralised or coordinated metropolitan planning systems.

Balancing 'Capital Investment' and 'Human Service' Cultures

A particularly important divide within State governments has been between the 'hard' capital-investment, public-works agencies and the 'soft' humanservice agencies. The 'hard' agencies have tended to be the preserve of engineers and accountants (and a large blue-collar labour force), to use impersonal commercial and/or bureaucratic criteria for service delivery and performance measures, and often charge user fees. The 'soft' world of the human services—which tend to employ professional, social-science-trained service deliverers, to serve less precise social goals, and are usually funded from general revenue is much different (Martin 1985).

This divide confronts the Social Justice Strategies in their attempts to provide a 'whole of government' approach and to eschew a welfare-based marginalism. A cogent example is the pricing and client-service practices of electricity authorities. An Electricity Commission which tries to cover its costs in an efficient manner and which, as a consequence, adopts particular tariff structures and cuts off non-paying customers, is acting according to conventional accounting and engineering principles. Such actions, however, violate principles of social justice conventionally accepted within human-service agencies.

At other times, this divide manifests itself in a somewhat artificial budgetary divide between the 'capital' and 'recurrent' State budgets. There is a familiar story of investment in capital works, driven by public-works agencies and sometimes induced by Commonwealth funding, creating recurrent service-delivery problems expected to be picked up by the human service agencies.

What metropolitan planning agencies can offer to the Social Justice Strategies is a long history of trying to bridge this divide. They too have often been criticised (Gans 1968) for emphasising the capital-investment side of the divide, regarding their task as the planning the physical infrastructure of cities. None the less, there is also a long history of attempts, from the Garden City concepts onwards, to inject social criteria into the urban planning process. Recent examples include attempts systematically to address the planning of social infrastructure investments in new suburbs.

6. What Balance Between Centralisation and Localisation?

There are a number of other precarious chasms which the Social Justice Strategies are trying to bridge, and with which metropolitan planning agencies are familiar. The competing claims of centralisation and localisation form one of these.

The Social Justice Strategies, as outlined above, have been conceived as strategic instruments of State government resource allocation. They also face, however, a long social-reform tradition, often expressed in submissions from non-government organisations and sometimes finding its way into Strategy documents, which stresses the virtues of localised community-based programs.

Metropolitan planning has experienced a similar tension. It is most commonly expressed as a debate about the degree to which planning and development decisions ought to be devolved from State or Metropolitan planning authorities to local government. The two sides of the argument are familiar (see Parkin 1982: 48-52). Advocates of localisation stress its potential for detailed responsiveness to local needs, the opportunities which it provides for consultation, and the encouragement of diversity and productive innovation. Centralists point instead to economies of scale, the interdependence between localities in a metropolitan system, the consequent inevitability of spillover effects from local planning decisions, the need for a consolidation of public authority to act as an effective counterweight to powerful private interests and, probably above all, the necessity for an inter-locality redistribution of resources.

Logan's study of local planning in Melbourne illustrates the trade-off. On the one hand, local Councils did seem to produce distinctive approaches which reflected some of the social characteristics and needs of their areas:

In some middle-income suburbs there was an obvious urbandesign approach to planning, a concern for aesthetics evident in conservation policies or detailed involvement in design for particular projects. In some less affluent suburbs, a social-welfare approach was evident with land use policies strongly influenced by concern for low-income groups, migrants or the elderly. In another case, a low-income suburb, the emphasis was on efficiency in corporate management for the entire range of local government functions. [Logan 1986: 187]

On the other hand, inequalities between the various localities were also apparent:

[I]t is predominantly the low-income suburbs where planning departments are understaffed and therefore could be expected to have fewer resources for policy development and public consultation. Clearly, in the more affluent suburbs, there are large numbers of residents, with an advanced understanding of the way the planning system works, who are able to exert pressures... [Logan 1986: 187]

7. What Balance Between Participatory and Managerial Modes?

A related dilemma is the appropriate balance between participatory and managerial modes of public decision-making.

Debate about the advantages and disadvantages of public participation in urban planning has formed a disproportionately large part of the general literature about citizen participation in public-policy formulation. It was the perceived inadequacy of various aspects of urban policy—notably freeway development and inner-suburban redevelopment—which induced the formation in the 1960s and 1970s of local resident action groups. Many social reformers would argue that such local-level mobilisation make a positive contribution to a socially-just society in its widest sense (Hain 1975). On the other hand, others on the Left (Sandercock 1978, Walzer 1970) caution about the limits of participation: the unrepresentative nature of participants may produce regressive outcomes, as the protection of gentrifying suburbs while working-class neighbourhoods are bulldozed will attest.

The past decade has seen something of an erosion of the procedures permitting or requiring public consultation, many of them instituted as a result of earlier public pressure. 'Fast track' planning approvals for major new developments have become common, while limitations on third-party appeal rights are foreshadowed as part of moves to encourage urban consolidation.

The 'centralisation/localisation' and the 'managerial/participatory' dilemmas are, of course, closely related. Australian urban government, of which metropolitan planning is one aspect, has characteristically operated through centralised State-level bureaucratic organisations. I have argued elsewhere (Parkin 1982; 1984), that this can have some unintended advantages in terms of producing some better degrees of equality in service-delivery outcomes. This is in part because common taxing and pricing policies over large jurisdictions can produce redistributions from less advantaged to more advantaged localities. It is also because the routines and programs adopted by organisations often impose uniformities of delivery standards. As a result, Australia almost certainly displays lesser degrees of systematic inequalities in public services between richer and poorer area than in comparable countries.

Centralised, managerial styles of government can, however, be brutally indifferent to local needs. It is for this very particular Australian reason—because of our 'talent for bureaucracy' (Davies 1958: 1) and of our centralised mode of governance—that the Social Justice Strategies, themselves aimed at central management, are of particular interest and significance.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE MARKET

This paper has argued that there is potential for fruitful relationship between the Social Justice Strategies and metropolitan planning. An alliance with the Social Justice Strategies may well provide planning agencies with some sense of ultimate purpose towards which to direct their latter-day excursions into 'urban management'.

Thus far, the paper, like the official Social Justice Strategy documents, has avoided an exploration of the competing philosophies of social justice. The complex realities and democratic juggling-acts of modern government will always make public policy fall short of pristine philosophical ideals. None the less, the juxtaposition of the Social Justice strategies with metropolitan planning does highlight some key philosophical issues. What would assist

the common purpose of these two governmental spheres is an exploration of a social-justice philosophy which comes to terms with 'efficiency' and 'market exchange' criteria. The experience of metropolitan planning shows that this is an issue which the Social Justice Strategies cannot really avoid.

The issue is really at the core of the debate among philosophers of social justice. At one extreme, there are those (such as Nozick 1974) who would regard almost any interference in the voluntary exchange between individuals as a violation of 'justice'. Even here, it should be noted, the criteria for justice—individual liberty above all else—are 'nonmarket': market exchange is a means, not an end in itself.

Two of the more celebrated 'mainstream' contemporary philosophers have been John Rawls (1972) and Michael Walzer (1983). In many ways, they represent contrasting philosophical traditions. Rawls develops an abstract theory of justice, insisting upon the social-contract device of an ahistorical agreement among asocial individuals on general, procedural rules. Rawls, as is well known, argues that the principles which would emerge would, first, secure individual liberties and, second, judge the appropriateness of the distribution of resources and opportunities according to the extent to which they most favoured the least advantaged.

Rawls has been criticised for providing a cogent rationalisation for market-induced inequalities (see, for example, Troy 1981: 15-16). It is true that 'trickle-down' theories about the diffusion of wealth through the market fit nicely into the Rawls model; if a market economy ultimately works to maximum possible benefit of the least advantaged in the community, then Rawls' principles are satisfied. However, that distributive outcome—which critics of the market deny is the case—is the crux of the matter. Rawls' prescriptions in fact demand radically more progressive outcomes to those presently prevailing. He is explicitly open on the question of whether a socially-just regime presides over a capitalist or socialist society.

Walzer contrasts with Rawls by insisting on a socially-based approach to a philosophy of justice, rooted in real societies with real histories and real social structures. More explicitly than Rawls, he wants to limit the 'spheres'

in which market exchanges can justly operate. Social justice, he argues, requires different distributive principles in different spheres of life, according to the 'social meaning' accorded by those societies to those spheres. Yet here too Walzer concedes the appropriateness of market transactions—and even differential market-produced outcomes—provided that they do not produce unjust dominance in other spheres.

From an Australian perspective, an important contribution to this debate has been Wilenski's writings on the notion of 'efficiency', in which he wants to recognise its virtues but as means towards the fulfilment of other metaprinciples (*see* especially Wilenski and Goodin 1986).

The point here is that the leading contemporary philosophers of social justice constrain, limit and interpret but do not jettison principles of market exchange and efficiency.

Correspondingly, it is worth remembering the considerable scope for public regulation permitted even under fairly strict, but honest, theories of economic rationalism. The notion of market failure—under conditions of natural monopolies, imperfect information and unpriced externalities—arise from the axioms of free-market economics itself. The market failure arguments have been particularly cogently applied to justify the intervention of urban planners (for example, Moore 1978), probably because cities so often feature the basic contributing elements to market failure: constant externality effects exacerbated by the density of human interaction, natural monopolies due to large scale and the economies which flow from it, and all sorts of 'prisoner's dilemmas' wherein the interests of nobody are served by the aggregation of individual market-driven decisions (for example, Davis and Whinston 1965).

CONCLUSION

For reasons of these philosophical commonalities, as well as for the other more immediate reasons noted earlier, the Social Justice Strategies and the metropolitan planning agencies have much to learn from each other. Close cooperation between the two spheres would carry mutual benefits. Ultimately, it might even be possible to envisage a central Social Justice agency itself assuming the task of metropolitan planning—or indeed planning in any area of government activity such as economic development, environmental management or human-service delivery. Such a prospect, however, goes far beyond the scope of the current Strategies.

In the meantime, social reformers should regard the Social Justice Units as bridgeheads within State administrations. They should insist upon continuing strong commitment to the Social Justice Strategies. They should also be sanguine about their limitations, and seek to come to terms with the real possibilities for progressive social change within a mixed economy and a democratic society.

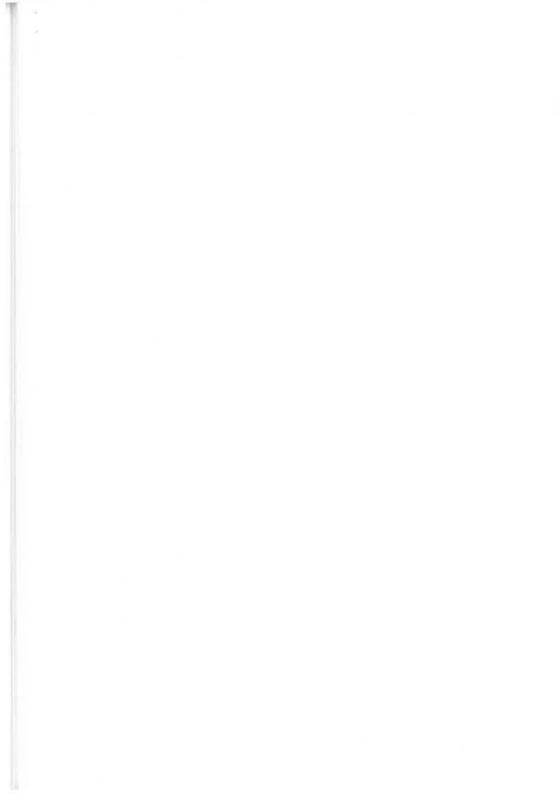
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