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Native title is a weak form of title for a people whose entire existence is locked up in a deep cultural, economic and spiritual connection to the land and landscape. Even this has been eroded by the amendments to the Wik judgment that had consolidated the Mabo decision of the High Court. As a nation, Australia was always a long way behind the other former British colonial states in this regard and is now even further behind the rest of the world. Recent policies that are designed to mainstream Indigenous people into individual engagement with the market, and away from any form of communal governance that might empower them to determine their own destiny, have made this gap even wider.

— John Sanderson
2007 Garran Oration

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2007 GARRAN ORATION

Giving Up on Reconciliation – Is Strategic Surprise Inevitable?

Lieutenant General (Retd) John Sanderson AC
Former Governor Western Australia
Special Advisor on Indigenous Affairs, Western Australian Government

Sir Robert Garran once argued that 'constitutional law is not pure logic, it is logic plus politics'. There is a balance somewhere in the interpretation of this phrase, in this age of globalisation, that resides squarely in the Westphalian concepts of state sovereignty that have stood us in good stead for more than 400 years, especially in the liberal democratic concepts of the working ingredients and relationships of the nation state – who is making public policy, how are the decisions being made, and how is that policy being administered?

I have a particular interest in these questions in my present role as special adviser to the Western Australian government on indigenous affairs, where I find that the legislature has almost entirely abrogated its responsibility for the complex social policy dimensions of the associated issues and left the field to a dangerous amalgam of the executive and the media. The objects of these policies, Aboriginal Australians, have no representation whatever in the way decisions are made and policy is administered. In a sense, the victims are being blamed for the coercive actions against them. They have been selected for this approach on the basis of race and, with few exceptions, the legislature has acquiesced, or capitulated, on the misguided assessment that the issues are not fundamental to the future of their parties or the nation.

On that rather dramatic opening note, let me begin by saying that I have titled my oration, *Giving up on Reconciliation – Is Strategic Surprise Inevitable?* The question comes from the title of a thesis written by a CIA analyst who I

worked with at one stage of my military career. The analyst developed a deep historical analysis of strategic disasters reaching way back into history to show that there had been plenty of warning of most of the causes of catastrophic failure in the affairs of nations, kingdoms and armies. It was simply that the related information had been heavily discounted by those loyal subjects committed to only telling glorious leaders what they wanted to see or hear. An equally sinister revelation in this analysis was the fact that those who had achieved elevated positions by virtue of their contribution to the policies of the state often chose to intimidate and disempower those who offered contrary views.

Some of you might agree there are many contemporary examples of this, but the really significant ones revolved around the nature and intent of fascism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. Their intent was quite explicit in the doctrine and writings of the aspirational nationalists of the time, but few in the establishment wanted to recognise that the capabilities being developed would be catastrophic if those behind them were to seize power.

True, there were a lot of disaffected Germans as a consequence of the way their nation had been dealt with after the First World War and during the Depression, and who were also willing to blame communists and Jews for their predicament. There were also plenty of corporate leaders who were willing to take advantage of the regimentation of the workforce and fore-shadowed access to cheap raw materials. But there remained strong centres of resistance and

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RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The Catholic Lobby: Structures, Policy Styles and Religious Networks

John Warhurst

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This article is about the place of lobbying by the Catholic Church in contemporary Australian federal politics. It builds on some previous attention by political scientists to Catholic political campaigning (eg. Hogan 1978, 1993; see also Byrnes 1993), but it is more comprehensive. Discussion of such lobbying uses various terminology and, like much lobbying, it can be viewed in a normative sense either favourably or unfavourably as democratic or undemocratic. During the parliamentary debate in December 1996 on the anti-euthanasia private members bill introduced by Kevin Andrews, for instance, Nick Dondas (Country Liberal, Northern Territory) alleged that 'the debate has been driven by the Catholic community of this country'. To which his Catholic colleague Tony Abbott (Liberal, New South Wales), alleging that Dondas had blamed the bill on the 'Catholic lobby', responded that 'those comments were beneath him'.¹

Key words: Catholic lobby, public policy, social justice, service delivery

The Catholic lobby so-called, as discussed in this article, comprises the lobbying of the federal political institutions (parliament, government, public service and High Court) by the formal institutions of the church and associated organisations and individuals. This is a limited conception of the lobby, but it captures its main elements at the federal level. There is an extended Catholic lobby, the discussion of which is outside the scope of this article, that might include its operation within the political parties and among parliamentarians. It is common, for instance, to refer to the 'Catholic Right' in the Labor Party and Catholics were prominent in forming the Lyons Forum within the Liberal Party. This extended Catholic lobby might include various Catholic, quasi-Catholic and semi-Catholic organisations such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, the National Civic Council, the Right to Life Association and Opus Dei, to name just a few.

It would also include the considerable Catholic dimension of ad hoc organisations such as the anti-euthanasia and anti-RU486 lob-

bies, as well as the individual lobbying by the three Catholic tertiary institutions: Australian Catholic University (ACU); Notre Dame Australia (NDA); and Campion College (Pearson 2006).²

Among those working within the lobby some are political lobbyists narrowly defined, but most are church bureaucrats, program managers or advocates in society at large, for church causes. This may involve working with the media and with social movements and networks rather than political institutions as such.

The formal institutions of the church comprise the individual Catholic bishops, their collective voice the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and its secretariat based in Canberra, their agencies such as Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA), associated bodies such as Catholic Health Australia (CHA) and, on occasions, certain prominent individual Catholics such as Fr Frank Brennan SJ.³

This article is a study of the pressure group activity of a seemingly powerful Australian lobby group, just as political scientists have

studied other lobbies including the women's lobby (Sawyer and Groves 1994) or the ethnic lobby (Jupp 1993). As such it addresses some familiar themes about political lobbying, such as speaking with one voice. It also explores if and how broader Catholic religious, social and political networks shape that lobby and contribute to its power and influence.⁴

The Shape of Contemporary Australian Catholicism

Australian Catholics make up about a quarter of the Australian population (Dixon 1996). Not surprisingly, such a large community contains within it almost every philosophy, agenda and affiliation found within the larger Australian community. Catholics are extraordinarily diverse, more diverse than is generally realised. They are active, for instance, within each of the political parties and major social movements. They are both conservative and radical. The community is composed of a minority of active, practicing Catholics (15–20%) and a growing majority of 'census', tribal or cultural Catholics loosely defined by their education, family background or informal affiliations.

By some measures, such as number of schools, hospitals and agencies the church is growing. But by many other measures, such as the lower number of priests and religious, the falling levels of regular church attendance and the lessening commitment of its young people to its values, the church is growing weaker (McGillion 2003; Mason et al. 2006).

The long term history of sectarianism and antagonistic inter-denominational relations in Australia still shapes how Catholics see themselves. They are a 'tight-knit' community because of a belief that, born of the Irish-Australian working class, they remain economic and social underdogs. Due to past sectarianism they also remain suspicious of lingering anti-Catholicism in the wider community. In fact, Catholics may never have been disproportionately working class and even if that was the case they are no longer (Brett 2003). Sectarianism did breed anti-Catholicism, and it may still linger in some quarters. The former

prime minister, John Howard's family, for instance, was allegedly anti-Catholic (Jones 2006:416). However, it is not a significant factor in modern Australia.

The more recent history of Australian Catholicism also shapes the present. In particular, this applies to the political and religious history of the 1950s. The church divided at the time of the Labor split into those sections, led from New South Wales (NSW), that chose to retain their close traditional allegiances to the Labor Party and those, led from Victoria that split from Labor and were close to the break-away party, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) (Duncan 2001). Central to the church split was the Catholic Social Studies Movement, later called the National Civic Council, led by the Melbourne activist BA Santamaria. This fault line remains, broadly dividing the Catholic Right and the Catholic Left, and has at times undermined the efforts of official Catholic agencies. Santamaria, for instance, regularly attacked both the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and Australian Catholic Relief for having a leftist agenda and, in the late 1980s, organised a boycott of Project Compassion, their church fundraising campaign (Duncan 2006: 147–148; Whiteley 1989:38–39).

The Labor split not only made life difficult for those Catholics remaining in the Labor Party who suffered discrimination, especially in Victoria (Strangio 2005), it also led to the movement of Catholics into erstwhile foreign territory, the Liberal and Country parties. Catholic parliamentarians and Catholic voters are now fairly evenly divided between Labor and non-Labor in a new way. This new shape of the religious dimension of party politics means that Catholic lobbyists have co-religionists in each of the major parties to work with, and supporters of each side to satisfy within the church.

The clerical-lay divide within the church is a further relevant dimension. Once it was seen as a defining element of contrasting styles within the church (Hogan 1978). Catholicism is a hierarchical church and clerics hold the senior positions. This remains generally the case within the lobby, though the direction is towards increasing lay involvement at the highest levels.

Apart from the bishops themselves, much of the senior church bureaucracy is now made up of lay Catholics.

The church is one of the major non-government providers of education, health and social services. In education it is the major non-government provider and educates 20% of Australian students. In health, the peak body, Catholic Health Australia (CHA) represents 20 public hospitals, 36 private hospitals and 130 nursing homes and hostels. In social services, the peak body, Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) represents more than 70 agencies. Consequently it is also a major employer. In 2005 *Business Review Weekly* calculated that the revenue of the church in 2004 was \$15 billion (Ferguson 2005:47). Furthermore, ranked by gross annual revenue the same study calculated that four of the top five charities and 22 of the top 50 charities were Catholic (Ferguson 2005:50–51). By any measure (and these measures are rough) the Catholic Church, even without its international dimension, is large. *Business Review Weekly* concluded:

The Catholic Church is the wealthiest non-profit organisation in Australia. If it was a corporation, it would be one of the 10 biggest in the country (Ferguson 2005:47).

The Catholic Lobby

The Catholic lobby is embedded in the Catholic community. Its strengths and weaknesses reflect its diversity, fragmentation and disagreements. This observation is not new. In the 1970s Hogan concluded his study of the Catholic campaign for government funding for church schools by recognising:

... the myth of the monolithic Catholic Church. There was no single Catholic lobby; there were many different groups and key personalities (Hogan 1978:258).

The lobby is a broad church. A quick look at the official Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) website demonstrates the breadth of its range of interests.⁵ Statements objecting to plans to extend embryonic stem cell research (ACBC 2006a) sit side by side with the

2006 Social Justice Statement, *The Heart of Our Country: Dignity and Justice for our Indigenous Sisters and Brothers* (ACBC 2006b). Overall, at that time, of the 10 public statements listed for 2006: seven can be categorised as in the social justice tradition of the church, including justice for the Guantanamo Bay inmate, David Hicks; welcoming the withdrawal of the offshore processing (of asylum seekers) bill; urging the withdrawal of the legislation (twice); and concern about the minimum wage under the new Work Choices regime. Three others were in the social conservatism tradition, including support for marriage preparation and support for blocking pornography and violence on the internet.

At the heart of the lobby are the 43 active bishops. Like any federal or state ministry, they are very diverse group of mixed ability. It is sometimes alleged that they are a 'hesitant and unadventurous group', and that therefore the Australian church lacks leadership (Collins 1986:189). Certainly like any set of ministers, their abilities do not always match the job description. They are relatively untrained in political management, generally over-worked, often distracted by crises such as clerical child abuse, and therefore often unable to exercise control over church agencies. Some are shy and many do not enjoy dealing with the media. As Weller and Gratian (1981) imply of ministers, some cannot cope.

At the same time the bishops include a number quite capable of influencing the national debate. The office itself accords status and political access to the occupant. Some are highly educated, often in Rome. Some are well-connected, whether it is with the Centre for Independent Studies and *Quadrant* magazine or with the labour movement and the new social movements.⁶ Furthermore, the limitations and difficulties are now recognised and reforms have been instituted within ACBC to lessen the management load on bishops and increase accountability. Like in government itself, the governance debate continues.

To the extent that the public identification of Catholics has been as pro-Labor the question of the partisanship of the Catholic lobby, real and perceived is very relevant. There has been

a mutual suspicion between Catholics and the Coalition parties, still evident today. This was inflamed prior to the Howard era by Catholic lobbying against Fightback! and industrial relations reform during the 1992-93 election campaign. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Alexander Downer (2003:5), welcomed 'the integration of the Catholic Church into the broader body politic' and 'the end of Labor's attitude to the Catholic Church as a wholly-owned subsidiary' in his Sir Thomas Playford lecture.⁷

The organisation of the lobby is best conceptualised as a loose form of cabinet government without a strong prime minister. The ACBC is the cabinet with the elected ACBC president as the prime minister. The ACBC has an inner cabinet in the form of its permanent committee (largely the metropolitan archbishops) and cabinet committees in the form of Bishops' Commissions (see Appendix A). There are ministers in the form of individual bishops with particular responsibilities, public servants in the church bureaucracy, and departments, advisory boards, and some statutory authorities with greater independence. There are also independent church groups that are effectively like non-government organisations (NGOs).

There is also a form of cabinet solidarity. The bishops stick publicly with the decisions of the ACBC and with each other. They have disliked public division since the 1950s. This means that if a bishop, especially a senior bishop, breaks ranks as has occurred in recent times, his colleagues will be disinclined to take issue with him publicly. Such a convention can be exploited by a determined and powerful bishop (Hogan 1978:254).⁸

However, there are most important differences. Collective responsibility is weaker than in government. Each diocesan bishop is independent within his own diocese and owes responsibility directly to the Pope in the Vatican. The metropolitan archbishops are especially independent (their place in the system is more like a state premier in a federal system). Each diocesan bishop controls his own set of diocesan agencies, delivering services such as education. The national agencies and their boards sit above and across these diocesan agen-

cies with different amounts of coordinating power.

In all the major areas of service delivery the independent religious orders are also major players, operating their own schools, hospitals and charities. Their allegiance to their local bishop is looser than that of diocesan organisations. These orders, 8000 members and 150 leaders, have their own governance structures and their own national body, Catholic Religious Australia (CRA, formerly the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes). CRA representatives are interwoven into the Catholic lobby and sit ex-officio on the boards of Catholic agencies.

Governance at the centre is also weaker in several ways. The elected ACBC president is not necessarily the senior bishop in the eyes of the Australian public and/or the Vatican. Cardinals, such as Cardinal George Pell of Sydney, are regarded as more senior and worthy of appropriate deference (Hogan 1978:254), and they attract more media publicity, but they are not the head of the church (Collins 2006; Warhurst 2006a).⁹ Nevertheless Pell plays a crucial political role. His public disagreements with his colleagues during the 1998 and 2004 election campaigns advantaged the Howard government.

The current ACBC president, Philip Wilson, is the Archbishop of Adelaide, one of the middle-sized archdioceses. The ACBC president is served by a secretariat, headed by a general secretary, though it is in Canberra and is quite small. The general secretary, somewhat like the position of cabinet secretary and head of Prime Minister and Cabinet combined, is the most senior church bureaucrat. Several recent occupants have subsequently been appointed bishops.¹⁰ The agencies are dispersed between Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. Agency directors meet twice-yearly, but share information rather than coordinate activities.

The church bureaucracy is generally limited in size at the national level, often being larger at the diocesan level. It has, if anything, been spread more thinly, as new fields such as the environment and women's participation have been included. Financial stringency and church priorities keep it that way. Some agencies, like

the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) have their own source of funds, such as school levies; Caritas Australia and its associated agencies have a specific appeal. Project Compassion. Some, like CSSA, tender for government contracts. Catholic professionals do some pro bono work. But most agencies rely on the church's general revenue from its parish collections. So lobbying capacity is limited. Each of the main secretariats and agencies are quite small. Great reliance is placed on the singular efforts of directors with very limited resources. This is contrary to the public image of a wealthy church.

The relationship between church bureaucrats and their bishops is an important political factor. Fuelled perhaps by the past actions by bishops in closing down agencies or dissociating themselves from their activities, some critics allege that the bishops themselves often differ from their own agencies and, therefore that the latter should be discounted.¹¹

Is the Catholic lobby anti-democratic as some allege? In the past it has been the subject of suspicion that it is trying to impose minority views on an unwilling majority at the behest of the Vatican (Mayer 1961). Some of this suspicion was not unreasonable given that prior to the Vatican Council in the 1960s the church taught that Catholicism was the 'one true religion' (Byrnes 1993:38). Critics continue to note anti-democratic tendencies in the philosophical lectures of prominent leaders such as Cardinal Pell (Lohrey 2006:40-41). Catholic lobbyists, such as Warwick Neville, note, on the other hand, the demonisation, often by the media, of church attempts to have its legitimate voice heard (Neville 2005).

Public Policy: General Strategies, Tactics and Goals

The traditional strategy of the church in influencing public policy has been to work within its own community and only indirectly within the wider community. The strength of the community for lobbying purposes lay in its size, relative unity, its school system, church media and the high level of weekly Mass attendance.

All of these could be utilised. It could work alone and apply mass pressure.

Political interventions in this tradition could be spectacular. This applied to the World War I conscription debates, the intervention in the anti-communist industrial struggles of the 1940s and 1950s, and the Goulburn education strike of the 1960s.

Over the past 40 years there have been two relevant developments: the traditional strengths of the church have diminished as its belief systems have fragmented and church attendance has fallen dramatically; and the church has increasingly found itself on the defensive and in the minority on matters as diverse as the sexual revolution (at odds with the new social movements) and the economic rationalism revolution (at odds with the New Right).

Strategies and tactics have had to change as a consequence in this modern period (Warhurst 2004). The church lobby has continued to operate within its own Catholic ranks by maximising opportunities to speak to its own constituency, particularly through weekly Sunday liturgies. Some of its agencies do so in very sophisticated ways. As a general rule, to reassure its own faithful, all statements emphasise the biblical and church background to any position its leaders and agencies take in public affairs.

However the church has also had to take its place as one lobby group among many in a pluralist democracy. It has had to consciously marshal its own fragmented constituency, to appeal increasingly to the general public to win political battles, and it has had to learn new techniques such as High Court intervention and media management. The intervention in the debate about wealth distribution through the vehicle of *Commonwealth for the Common Good* in 1992 is a case in point (Warhurst 1993, 1998; Brady et al. 2003).

On that occasion, borrowing from a USA model, the church went to extraordinary lengths to legitimise, strengthen and communicate what it wanted to say about the unfair distribution of wealth in Australia. This involved public consultation within the Catholic community, extensive communication within that community and a valiant attempt to influence both public debate and community consciousness.

The church has also, given the opportunity of the decline of sectarianism and the rise of ecumenism, sought allies. It was admitted to the National Council of Churches of Australia and this has led to some joint action. In a number of fields, such as life issues and social justice, it has lobbied with like-minded agencies from other Christian churches, especially the Anglican and Uniting churches. In 1972 it joined Action for World Development (Thompson 2002:129).

Increasingly, though with some trepidation, it has also joined forces with mainstream lobbies, such as the Australian Council of Social Services, the Australia Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Conservation Foundation, in specific campaigns, and individuals have played a role on their boards.¹²

The goals of the lobbying vary. Different parts of the lobby have different aims. For some the general principles have long been accepted by government. So the lobby's concerns are usually matters to do with the fine tuning of grants and programs. For others their concerns are big picture issues of culture, poverty and human rights, for instance. Their lobbying is for comprehensive change to the government's agenda.

Public Policy: Dynamics and Differences

The public policy issues of concern to the Catholic lobby are necessarily interconnected. Elements of the lobby have their own priorities but they operate within the overall priorities of the lobby as a whole. Catholics are more united, at least at the philosophical level, behind some policies, such as opposition to abortion or support for Catholic schools, than they are behind others, like opposition to a goods and services tax (GST) or the Iraq War.

Abortion and related issues are a special case that has led, in the USA, to considerable internal church debate about whether they should define the whole of its political intervention or whether Catholic campaigning should give equal weight to a range of issues (Byrnes 1993:68–69). In Australia there are echoes of this debate because some Catholics, specifi-

cally in the Right to Life Association (RTLA), elevated abortion above all other issues as a 'disqualifying' political issue (Warhurst 1983). In the 1980s it devoted considerable resources to so-called single-issue politics, though on a non-party basis.

The Catholic lobby as a whole, despite considerable church support for the RTLA, has not taken this position. If it had it would have edged closer to the Coalition parties, because despite the conscience vote mechanism, Labor was seen as less supportive on abortion issues. In July 1984 ACBC expressed its 'great disappointment' to the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, that the Labor national conference had adopted a pro-choice policy, while maintaining its commitment to a conscience vote (Kerr 1985: 100–101).

The dynamics and organisation of the lobby are frequently changing in response to internal church demands and the external demands of governments. The formation of Centacare Australia, for instance, was driven by the position of a national tendering process by the Commonwealth government. There is a potential clash between advocacy and self-interest, the potential for cross-trading, and for one section of the church's self-interest to be endangered by another section's criticism of government.

Changes of government test the Catholic lobby, as they do others. This means adapting to the political colour of the government of the day. The church has sometimes proved quite adept in working with one government and then adapting to changes of government. It can do this by changing those whose job it is to form a relationship with the government. Education has provided some good examples. During much of the Hawke-Keating period, Gerry Gleeson, close ally of NSW Labor Premier Neville Wran, chaired the NCEC. However, during the early years of the Howard period he was replaced by Peter Tannock, Vice Chancellor of Notre Dame Australia, who was much closer to the Liberal Party.

On other occasions the church has suffered from its principal lobbyists being seen to be too partisan. Social welfare lobbying provides an example, again at the time of Howard's

defeat of Keating. The Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission (ACSWC), headed by Reverend David Cappel, had become closely identified with the Labor government because of its opposition to the introduction of a GST. Cappel stood just before the Howard government took office, but this reputation hindered ACSWC's subsequent influence with the Coalition.¹³

There are important structural differences between Catholic agencies. Some, like CHA and NCEC, are able to combine both advocacy and service delivery. This differentiates their contacts with government and, therefore, distinguishes the type of lobbying they undertake. NCEC, for instance, has a myriad of contacts that incorporate it into educational policy-making at both the federal and state level. In 2004 the NCEC had 84 separate representatives on various committees and working groups, most of them with the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) or the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (NCEC 2005:14–16).

Other agencies, like the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJIC) (based in Sydney), the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (Canberra), and the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (ACCER) (Melbourne) are largely or solely advocacy organisations though some of them, like ACCER, have significant practical advisory responsibilities within the church itself. ACSJIC is tied into extensive community networks of a kind that are strong in the larger cities.

Yet others like CSSA have evolved during the last decade. At the turn of the last century ACSWC and Centacare Australia were merged into a single organisation, Catholic Welfare Australia (CWA), in order to strengthen both by linking advocacy and service delivery. CWA was later renamed CSSA during 2006. This is one instance of the considerable institutional change that has occurred. Other instances include the creation of Catholic Earthcare Australia (CEA) in 2002 in order to consolidate the church's advocacy on environmental issues.

There are also considerable differences in style and personality among Catholic lobby-

ists. This point can be exemplified by reference to the main personalities in education on the one hand, and health and welfare on the other. The former are generally insiders and the latter often are relative outsiders.¹⁴ The intriguing question is whether these differences are random or whether, as is more likely, they are the product of the personality necessary to succeed in different types of policy field.

The typical style in education at the national level, since the Goulburn school strike in the 1960s and, perhaps, the Whitlam years, seems to be lobbying from the inside.¹⁵ Catholic education is a large investment, recognised as such by the federal government, and prized by each bishop and their community. The outcome, since the introduction of needs-based federal grants by the Whitlam Labor government, has been bipartisan and growing federal financial support for Catholic schools. The Catholic lobby sees this as justice for parents, but their lobbying is intensely practical.

The typical style in social justice, social welfare, foreign policy and industrial relations is quite different. The approach is to be a public critic and therefore the lobbyists tend to be outsiders. They work hard at building up support within the church and educating church members about social justice. The work tends to be highly political, often involving interventions in election campaigns and alliances with representatives of new social movements. As a consequence many of the justice campaigners have been controversial figures. Governments feel free, in a way they do not in education, to freeze them out almost to the point of ostracism.

The typical style in sexuality and life and death issues is different again. It too is highly political but not so partisan. Within parliament these issues are often associated with non-partisan conscience votes that are open to a different kind of personalised lobbying. It is the one area, too, where the church has initiated expensive legal action before the High Court. The lobbying is generally led by the ACBC itself and its secretariat, though agencies such as CHA have also played a prominent role.

Lobbying for Life

This section and the two that follow sketch particular lobbying in somewhat greater detail. The lobbying for which the church is perhaps best known and by which it is defined in the eyes of the public is lobbying on socio-moral life issues such as abortion, euthanasia and stem cell research (Marr 1999).

Since abortion law reform began in Australia in the 1960s the church has been actively supporting and engaging in anti-abortion lobbying. This lobbying has broadened with the growing public agenda to include opposition to euthanasia and embryonic stem cell research.

The early anti-abortion lobbying involved consistent expression, within and outside the church, of the church's position that life begins at conception (Kerr 1985:88–101). Catholic anti-abortion activism was officially supported, much of it at the state level. Anti-abortion solidarity was extensive within church liturgies. But on other matters, such as IVF, there is considerable unease and much less solidarity within the Catholic community about the official Vatican blanket ban.

This field is the prime example of church lobbying led from the front by the bishops, supported by the ACBC secretariat. Other church elements, such as CHA and RILA play their part. Apart from its frequent statements and interventions ACBC became involved in three High Court cases by applying for standing as *amicus curiae*: *Superclinics* (1995), the *McBain* case (2002) and the *BWV* case (2003) (Brennan 2006; Neville 2005).

There is internal disagreement as to the strategic sense of these expensive forays into the courts: some arguing that the church must stand up for core principles, others arguing that the church is in a no win situation. Eventually the church lost on each occasion.

The church has also lobbied vigorously on each of the four conscience votes in the Commonwealth parliament since 1996: euthanasia (1996–97); cloning and stem cell research (2002); RU486 (2006); and embryonic stem cell research (2006) (Warhurst 2006b). This involved working closely with allied parliamentarians, making submissions to parliamentary

committees and, in some cases, engaging in public campaigns.

In 1996–97 the church campaign had significant allies in other churches as well as support from both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition. The private member's bill of the Catholic member of parliament (MP), Kevin Andrews, passed through the parliament fairly comfortably. The church, working closely with the cross-party coalition supporting Andrews, was on the winning side.

In 2002 the compromise stem cell bill passed in spite of official Catholic opposition, as did the embryonic stem cell bill when the issue was revisited in 2006. In between that period the multi-party private members bill to remove the control of the Minister for Health, Tony Abbott, over RU486 also passed. With Abbott himself at the centre of the debate it was this conscience vote that most revealed the diminishing power of the church on such issues. Several elements of the Catholic lobby, led by ACBC and CHA, worked hard to defeat these bills but were unsuccessful. Furthermore, some Catholic MPs supported the RU486 bill and those that did not were isolated, especially within the Labor Party.

The prevailing trend in policy is contrary to that advocated by the church. Politically it is becoming more isolated, as are its parliamentary supporters.

Calling for Social Justice

The three fields in which the church has been most active in lobbying for social justice have been general social justice, industrial justice and social welfare; others include international human rights and foreign policy.

Catholic social teaching is traced to the papal encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891 (Duncan 1991; Hogan 1993; Warhurst 1993, 1998). Active social justice lobbying dates back at least until the 1940s when an annual Social Justice Sunday and an accompanying public social justice statement were instituted. The statements, initially drafted by Santamaria, were widely distributed. The first series eventually fell foul of the church split in the 1950s. Hogan

(1990) has collected the statements and published them under the title *Justice Now!*

There was a second series produced by a new body, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), from 1973 to 1987. Hogan (1992) summarised their themes, in his collection as *Option for the Poor*. This notion, while it is orthodox church teaching, does convey somewhat of the influence of liberation theology during this period. CCJP's criticisms of government policy in statements such as *Beyond Unemployment* (1979) eventually led to a major falling out with the Fraser government. In the face of government hostility church solidarity disintegrated and the ACBC withdrew its mandate and abolished the agency. This caused considerable, lasting bitterness within the Catholic community.¹⁶

The third start occurred in 1987 with the creation of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC). Since then considerable effort has been expended in drafting social justice statements for the bishops and in marketing them both within the church and publicly through community justice networks.

The new start was launched, under the aegis of the Bishops Committee for Justice, Development and Peace, by the *Common Wealth for the Common Good* inquiry and subsequent statement that took place over five years in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The process included open consultations, written submissions, videos, conferences, and audiotapes directed at the Catholic community. To keep up the momentum Kathryn Greiner, wife of the prominent Catholic Liberal Premier, Nick Greiner launched the draft statement in January 1991. The then president of ACBC, Cardinal Edward Clancy of Sydney, launched the final document at the National Press Club in September 1992. After that, grass-roots parish-based discussion and dialogue continued (Costigan 2003).

The document, couched in very general terms, did make an impact in terms of media and parliamentary discussion and, perhaps, consciousness raising. Nevertheless despite attempts to do so, it failed to win over influential Catholics in the wider community, such as Senator Richard Alston and other Coali-

tion MPs (Warhurst 2006a), journalists such as Frank Devine (Devine 1993; Clancy 1993), or the businessman John Ralph, then president of the Business Council of Australia. This was a serious limitation on its anti-economic rationalism advocacy.

One aspect of Catholic social teaching with a long tradition, drawn from *Rerum Novarum*, has been support for the rights of trade unions. *Common Wealth for the Common Good* expressly makes this point. So too does the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (ACCER) in its major briefing paper questioning the Howard government's workplace relations reforms (2005:21). ACCER, backed by ACBC itself, has been particularly prominent during the Catholic lobby's long-running opposition to these reforms, supporting prominent bishops, such as Kevin Manning and Christopher Saunders, in being critical of the Howard government. Such lobbying has been much more tightly focused than the more general contributions of ACSJC, but not necessarily more effective.

A third arm of social justice lobbying followed, as Marsh (1995) suggests it does for many interest groups, the growing involvement of the church in welfare state provision. This gives such lobbying, now conducted by CSSA, a distinctive character because it represents service providers. Until about 2000, however, the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission (ACSWC) was as a stand-alone church think tank on welfare issues, and was often critical of economic rationalism. It was in conflict with the Coalition over proposals for a GST throughout the 1990s (before and after it won government in 1996) and successfully lobbied for the modification of the GST. As CWA it entered the debate during the 2001 federal election jointly with ACSJC with a guide to Catholic voters entitled *Searching for the Common Good* (Catholic Welfare Australia and Australian Catholic Social Justice Council 2001).

Advocacy and Service Delivery

The three fields in which the church is most thoroughly integrated into public service

Abbott, for instance, has well-publicised informal personal connections with Cardinal Pell that received skeptical publicity during the 2004 election campaign after it was revealed that Abbott had visited Pell recently (Ramsay 2004). There can also be no doubting the closeness of the relationship between Pell and the former prime minister, Howard. They have supported each other when the other had been troubled (Livingstone 2002:438).

There is some evidence of formal bridge-building, or as the Liberal federal director Andrew Robb expressed it, removing 'the barriers we erected for ourselves in 1993' (Marr 1999:225). Under pressure from anti-GST church lobbying in June 1998 the Catholic MP Jackie Kelly (Lindsay, NSW) organised a dinner for 20 Catholic MPs with two archbishops and three bishops in order to open discussion (Cleary 1998). About the same time, according to Catholic MP Christopher Pyne, Liberal federal director Lynton Crosby sought a list of Catholics in the Coalition: 'Lynton said we need people who are able to speak to the bishops, so we had to come up with who the Catholics were' (Rees 2001:42).

The Catholic lobby, like other lobby groups, sees it as its regular business to maintain contacts with ministers and MPs. There is surprisingly little evidence, however, of specific direct connections between the lobby and the Catholic MPs, despite the existence of many connections such as common school, university college or seminary experiences.²⁰ There is, however, symbolic value and a mutual comfort factor when, for instance, a Minister for Education has once attended a Catholic school and therefore probably brings a level of sympathy and understanding for that enterprise. Brendan Nelson is a recent federal case in point. There is not much use of former Catholic MPs within the lobby, although John Fahey, former Minister for Finance in the Howard government, did join the NCEC along with two other high-profile members in 2006.²¹ Indirectly those Labor senators supported by the Shop Assistants union (SDAEA) would be perceived to be part of the Catholic lobby through their connection with its national secretary, Joe De Bryn.²²

There is also not much evidence of cross-party connections between Catholic MPs, as there sometimes are among women MPs, outside of bio-ethical issues where they do occur around conscience votes (but are not solely Catholic). There is just too much partisan antagonism and suspicion, despite common religious networks, for it to be evident in other policy areas.²³

Conclusion

The Catholic lobby is like a coat of many colours. Key figures such as Pell, Harradine, Brennan and several others are well-known. Some important figures are less well-known because of the nature of their lobbying. Some like Doyle and Sullivan have served for many years within the lobby. Others like Gleeson and Tannock have been significant figures in Australian public life for their other contributions.²⁴

What does the Catholic lobby stand for? The Catholic lobby's philosophical positions and political views are often misunderstood. The church is socially conservative on life issues, collectivist on economic matters and quite radical on human rights issues. It is much better known for the first of these. This article, sketching some areas but neglecting others, has aimed to show that any sensible evaluation of the lobby should be conducted on a sectoral basis. The sectors have very different characteristics. In some of them but not others, the lobby represents an institution with a considerable institutional investment to defend and enhance.

How professional are the professional Catholics? At their best Catholic lobbyists are effective across a wide spectrum of approaches to their role. They can draw on the traditional strengths of the church hierarchy, while counting among their number quite a few individuals who know modern lobbying well. However given the overall resources of the church the Catholic lobby has to make do with surprisingly limited resources. It is the old story of trying to do more with less. The demands of the federal government for accountability

are ever-increasing and often unreasonable. It shares with some other lobbies a debilitating fragmentation of effort and is sometimes let down by the foibles of its leaders.

How powerful is the Catholic lobby? There is a notable disjunction here between the lobby's own view of itself and the views of its critics. Some critics exaggerate its power. David Marr, for instance, sees government support for refurbishing cathedrals as 'a measure of the raw power of the Catholic Church in Australia' (1999:217). Insiders, whether they are bishops or professional lobbyists, are more realistic and often frustrated by failures or relative insignificance. The lobby itself is trying to do better. It has renewed emphasis on its solidarity, especially between bishops and their agents. In terms of power, however, it would look around Canberra, Sydney or Melbourne with envy at some other lobbies, including business, unions and the media.

The education sector of the lobby probably is the most successful (Marr 1999:221), but its success at the federal level is not matched in a number of states. On life issues the record is very mixed and includes a great deal of failure (in the High Court, and on conscience votes since 1997 on RU486 and embryonic stem cell research). In social welfare and justice the church is an outsider, and the philosophy of the government of the day is so important in determining any success. Overall the wider Catholic networks do not seem to be very significant per se. On many issues the Catholic lobby is just one voice among many clamouring to be heard, sometimes able to tip the balance, but at other times ignored.

Endnotes

1. House of Representatives, 9 December 1996:8001 (Dondas), 8021 (Abbott).
2. ACU and NDA are represented on the NCEC. The directors of Campton College include Joe De Bryn (chair), national secretary of the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDAEA), and Mary Eason, former federal Labor MP.

3. Appendix A contains a full list of all church structures, agencies and associated bodies.

4. This article is the result of participant observation over almost 20 years and of more recent specific formal research. My involvement began in 1988 with the church consultative inquiry into wealth distribution that led to the statement, *Common Wealth for the Common Good* (ACBC 1992). From 1994–2001 I was a member of the ACSJC and from 2000–2002 I was a board member of CWA (now CSSA). In December 2006 I joined the board of CSSA. I attended the 2006 national conference of the NCEC, Sydney, 27–29 September, and, as a keynote speaker, the 2006 annual conference of CSSA, Canberra, 16–19 October. For the purposes of this article I have specifically conversed with 12 past and present members of the lobby: Rev Brian Lucas, General Secretary, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 19 October 2006; David De Carvalho, formerly of the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and of the National Catholic Education Commission, 27 October 2006; Francis Sullivan, CEO, Catholic Health Australia, 30 October 2006; Rev Joe Caddy, Chair, and Frank Quinlan, CEO, Catholic Social Services Australia, 2 November 2006; John Ryan, formerly of Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations, 9 November 2006; Warwick Neville, formerly of the ACBC Secretariat, 13 November 2006; Kevin Vassarotti, formerly Executive Secretary, of the National Catholic Education Commission, 17 November 2006; John Ferguson, CEO, Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, 21 November 2006 (by telephone); Gerry Gleeson, formerly chair of NCEC, 22 November 2006; Jack de Groot, CEO, Caritas Australia, 23 November 2006; and Monsignor David Cappel, formerly national director of the Australian Catholic Welfare Commission, 31 January 2007. They bear no responsibility for the views expressed in this article. I would like to also thank several of them and the two anonymous referees for this journal for their comments on a draft of this article delivered at the Public Policy Network summer conference, Adelaide, February 2007.

5. acbc.catholic.edu.au, accessed 18 October 2006.
6. Cardinal Pell has excellent networks and is a regular attendee at Quadrant and CIS dinners. He spoke at a Quadrant dinner shortly after taking up his Sydney position, and in August 1999 he delivered the inaugural Acton Lecture for CIS (Livingstone 2002:302, 362).
7. Tony Abbott, in the course of his debates with Kevin Rudd, has also argued that, post-split: 'In Sydney, the church hierarchy continued to regard itself as the religious wing of the ALP' (Abbott 2006:15).
8. This occurred during the 1998 and 2004 federal election campaigns when Cardinal Pell broke ranks.
9. Cardinal Pell stood unsuccessfully for this elected position in 2006.
10. These include Kevin Manning (Pararnattia) and Brian Finnigan (auxiliary, Brisbane).
11. See, for instance, the comments by Frank Devine about *Common Wealth for the Common Good*, and ACBC statements in general: 'To a considerable extent they are the creation of junior clergy and laymen in the conference's secretariat' (*The Australian* 24 May 1993).
12. Robert Fitzgerald, Caritas board member and St Vincent de Paul president in NSW, was an ACOSS president. Fr Joe Caddy, current chair of CSSA, and Fr Peter Norden have served on the ACOSS board.
13. Monsignor Cappel, now Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, has since taken up senior positions with the South Australian Labor government.
14. The chairs of NCEC have included Monsignor Tom Doyle (2001-), Gerry Gleeson (1990-1996) and Peter Tannock (1996-2001). The CEO of CHA is Francis Sullivan and the CEO of CSSA is Frank Quinlan. Past CEOs of CSSA have included Monsignor David Cappel and Toby O'Connor.
15. The style at the state level is often different. In both Victoria and the ACT the church has campaigned very publicly in recent election campaigns against Labor governments (for Victoria, *The Australian* 16-17 November 2006).
16. Many distinguished Catholics were associated with CCJP, including Chris Sidoti, later Human Rights Commissioner.
17. I have written a separate paper on Catholic parliamentarians entitled 'Catholics in Federal Parliament: Politics, Perception and Self-Image' for the 2007 annual conference of the Australasian Political Studies Association.
18. The assumption here is that Catholicism in itself makes a difference to political behaviour. David Marr alleges that it can do so in the case of Catholic judges (Brennan 2006:149-181). Tony Abbott's critics have questioned his ability to divorce his religious beliefs from his responsibility as Minister for Health.
19. In the seat of Adelaide during the 2004 federal election campaign a campaign leaflet of the sitting member, Trish Worth, unwittingly featuring a photo of the Anglican and Catholic archbishops, became an issue because the Anglican archbishop was by that time in disgrace.
20. There are examples of all three types of connections, but there is no evidence of them ever being meaningful in a public policy sense. The Jesuit schooling of many Howard ministers, for instance, appears not to have helped Jesuit lobbyists such as Frank Brennan or Peter Norden.
21. The others were Matt Foley, a former Queensland Labor minister, and Alan Myers QC from Melbourne.
22. They have included senators Mark Bishop (SA), president of the union since 1996, and Jacinta Collins (Victoria).
23. There are occasions where the community of interest is obvious outside of parliament. For instance, Senator Ursula Stephens (Labor), Tony Abbott (Liberal) and former senator

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Brian Harradine are working together on the fundraising committee to support the refurbishment of the Catholic Cathedral in Goulburn, NSW.

24. Gerry Gleeson, after retiring from the NSW Public Service became a director of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and chairman of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, 1998-2004. Peter Tannock has been Vice-Chancellor of Notre Dame Australia since 1993 and was chairman of the Western Australian Football Commission, 1989-98.

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Appendix A

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (November 2006)

- Commissions**
Permanent Committee
Bishops Commission for Administration and Information
Bishops Commission for Canon Law
Bishops Commission for Caritas
Bishops Commission for Catholic Education
Bishops Commission for Church Ministry
Bishops Commission for Doctrine and Morals
Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Relations
Bishops Commission for Justice and Service
Bishops Commission for Liturgy
Bishops Commission for Mission and Faith Formation
Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life
Bishops Commission for Relations with Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders
- Councils**
Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations
Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research
Australian Catholic Disability Council
Australian Catholic Life Council
Australian Catholic Media Council
Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
Australian Council for Clergy Life and Ministry
Board of Catholic Social Services Australia
Caritas Australia National Committee
Catholic Church Film and Broadcasting Advisory Council

Agencies and Offices

- Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting
Australian Catholic Social Justice Council Secretariat
Caritas Australia
Catholic Earthcare Australia
Catholic Enquiry Centre
Catholic Resources Trust
Catholic Social Services Australia
National Committee for Professional Standards
National Tribunal of Second Instance
Office for Clergy and Life Ministry
Office for Employment Relations
Office for the Participation of Women
Pastoral Projects Office
Pastoral Research Office

Networks

- Australian Catechumenate Network
Australian Network of Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinators
Catholic Adult Faith Education Network
National Network for Disability and Spirituality
National Pastoral Planners Network

Organisations having Liaison with the ACBC

- Apostleship of the Sea
Catholic Health Australia
Catholic Mission
Catholic Society for Marriage Education
Catholic Vocations Ministry
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council

Secretariats

General Secretariat
 Secretariat for Caritas
 Secretariat for Catholic Education
 Secretariat for Church Ministry
 Secretariat for Justice and Service
 Secretariat for Liturgy

Secretariat for Mission and Faith Formation
 Secretariat for Pastoral Life

Source:

www.abc.catholic.org.au/org/index.asp (accessed 16 November 2006)

REVIEW ESSAY**Instruction to Deliver: Tony Blair, Public Services and the Challenge of Achieving Targets**

Michael Barber (*Politicos Publishing Ltd, London, 2007, ISBN 1842752103, 320 pp.*)

The Other Invisible Hand, Delivering Public Services through Choice

Julian Le Grand (*Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2007, ISBN 9780691129365, 208 pp.*)

In late January, I came back from several weeks interviewing folk around Whitehall about strategy under the Blair governments. A number of the people I saw recommended these two books. How wise their counsel proved to be. For anyone interested in developments in public management they offer essential, indeed engrossing, reading. Both concern the distinctive challenge confronting contemporary public services. Both explore strategies for reform. Both are clearly written and, despite championing particular approaches, clear eyed in their advocacy. In any case, the deepest added value of these studies lies first, in their case for radical reform – which is grounded in a positive vision of the role and importance of public services – and second, in their identification of the array of possible responses.

The discussion that follows is mostly based on Michael Barber's book, which is by far the more comprehensive of the two. His is simply the best account of the practical dilemmas of modern public management that I have read. These are dilemmas of theory, vision and strategy no less than of leadership, structure and implementation. It draws on Barber's experience in translating into action Tony Blair's election promise to improve public services, in which he was a principal protagonist. In the implementation of Blair's commitment, strategies were progressively imagined, tried and discarded or developed. This reflected an experimentalist or pragmatist approach, which Barber vaunts. In recounting this learning, his enthusiasm, can-do imagination, managerial capabilities and meticulous attention to detail shine on every page.

Above all, this is an account of the new domestic challenge to contemporary governments. This arises from the intersection of three partially independent imperatives. First, middle class trust of state services needs to be secured. Second, these same public services need to be reconfigured to accommodate a new diversity in citizen demands and expectations. Third, efficiency and productivity need to grow to combat rising costs. Any one of these would be formidable. Together, these imperatives create a performance and service challenge that is transformative: 'The enabling state as proposed by Blair requires ... first recognition ... that modern societies are diverse – in culture, ethnicity, lifestyle and aspiration. Whereas under the Attlee settlement after 1945, universal also meant uniform, in the twenty-first century only public services which respond to this diversity can be universal ... In addition if they are to be universal, modern public services have to be so good that growing numbers of people who can afford the private alternative still chose them ... Blair's central political insight in domestic policy is the recognition that the public services can improve the lot of the disadvantaged only if they also appeal to the middle classes' (pp.126-128).

If this cannot be achieved, a minimal (US style) state will grow in appeal with unacceptable consequences for social cohesion and equity. 'The public services of the second half of the twentieth century would become in the new century private and paid for through insurance or at the point of use, with the residual public services becoming a mere safety net for those who could not afford anything better. This

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