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
2007 GARRAN ORATION

Giving Up on Reconciliation – Is Strategic Surprise Inevitable?

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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 recognize 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 foreshadowed access to cheap raw materials. But there remained strong centres of resistance and
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The Catholic Lobby: Structures, Policy Styles and Religious Networks

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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 (e.g. 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 unavourably, 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'.

Keywords: 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 Catholicism 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 lobbies, as well as the individual lobbying of the three Catholic tertiary institutions: Australian Catholic University (ACU); Notre Dame Australia (NDA); and Campion College (Pearson 2006).

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 individuals such as Fr Frank Brennan SJ.

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 (Sawer and Groves 1994) or the ethnic lobby (Jupp 1993). As such it addresses some of the unspoken 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.5

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, preaching Catholics (15–20%) and a growing number 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 decreasing 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 force and modern Catholic 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.5

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, the 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 1978:23).

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.6 Statements objecting to plans to extend embryonic stem cell research (ACBC 2005a) 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 2006).

Overall, at that time, of the 10 public statements listed for 2006: seven can be categorised as in social justice tradition of the church, including justice for the Guantamano Bay intern, 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 unavant-garde group" and that therefore the Australian church lacks leadership (Collins 1986:189). Certainly 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 Well and Grottan (1991) 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 accrues 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. 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.1

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 distanced 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).2

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 agencies with different amounts of coordinating power.

In 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 (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; Wartush 2006). 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 state capitals. The ACBC president is served by a secretary, headed by a general secretary, though it is in Canberra and is quite small. The general secretary, somewhat like the position of the Prime Minister and Cabinet combines, is the most senior church bureaucrat. Several recent occupants have subsequently been appointed bishops.3 The agencies are dispersed across 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, growing 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 media 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, render 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 effort 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.4 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 in 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 1 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 fragmentated 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 (Wartush 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 consider and 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 (Wartush 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 the church’s self-interest and the moral and political benefits of a society that is both pro-choice and pro-life. This has involved 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 lodged 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 lobby's, 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.22

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 church. The church is the body, at least at the philosophical level, behind some policies, such as opposition to abortion or support for Catholic schools, than they are behind others such as opposition to goods and services tax (GST) or the Iraq War. Abortion and related issues are a special concern 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 1993:65-69). In Australia there are echoes of this debate because some Catholics, specifically in the Right to Life Association (RTLAs), elevated abortion above all other issues as a one issue (Waters 1983). In the 1960s 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 RTLAs, 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 organization 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 imposition 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 group the church's self-interest to be endangered by another section of 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 there was then, as now, a huge gap between 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 Macquarie University, 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 provided an example, again at the time of Howard's defeat of Keating. The Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission (ACSWC), headed by Reverend David Cappo, had become closely identified with the Labor government because of its opposition to the introduction of a GST. Cappo stood down 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 CIA 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 incorporates 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 (ACSOC) (based in Sydney), the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (Canberra), and the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (ACCR) (Melbourne) are largely or solely advocacy organisations. The ACCER's activities are mainly represented in their lobbying, although some of them, like the ACCER, have significant practical advisory responsibilities within the church itself. ACSJC 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 Unionism and Welfare (CWA), in order to strengthen both personnel and advocacy. CWA was later renamed CSSA in 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 to consolidate the church's advocacy on environmental issues.

There are other considerable differences in style and personality among Catholic lobby's. 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 Gough Whitlam school strike in the 1960s and, perhaps, the Whitlam years, seems to be lobbying from the inside. 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 Liberal government, has been bipartisan and government, seeking federal financial support for Catholic schools. The Catholic lobby sees this as just 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 other like-minded 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-parliamentarian conscience votes that are open to different kinds of personalised lobbying. It is one area, too, where the church has initiated expensive legal action before the High Court. The lobbying is generally led by the ABC itself and its secretariat, though agencies such as CIA 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 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 structures. 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 RTLTA 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: Superlineirs (1995), the McEvoy case (2002) and the BVW case (2003) (Brennan 2006; Neville 2005).

There is internal disagreement as to the strategic sense of these expensive forays to the courts: some arguing that the church must stand up for core principles, others arguing that the church is in a 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.

3. The second 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, was passed through the parliament fairly comfortably. The church, working closely with the cross-party coalition supporting Andrews, was on the winning side.

4. In 2003 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.

5. 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 faced to the papal encyclical, Rerum Novarum, issued in 1891 (Doncan 1991; Hogan 1993; Warhurst 1993, 1998). Active social justice lobbying dates back at least until the 1960s 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 Options 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. 10

The third start occurred in 1987 with the creation of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSC). 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 (BCJDP), 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 popes’ Communications, 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 13 years’ of 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 Coalition MPs (Warhurst 2006a), journalists such as Frank Devine (Devine 1995; Clancy 1993), or the businessmen 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 (ACER) in its major briefing paper questioning the Howard government’s workplace relations reforms (2005:21). ACER, 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 ACSC, 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 Council (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. At CWA it entered the debate during the 2001 federal election jointly with ACSC 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
delivery are education, health and social services. Of these education is the largest.

The church set up a separate privately funded school system in the 19th century. It came under severe stress in the 1950s because of population growth following large scale Catholic immigration. Subsequently the "state aid" debate took off in the 1960s when the Menzies government began federal funding of private, including Catholic, schools, with the support of the DLP but with Labor opposition. At much the same time the Council for the Defence of Government Schools challenged unconstitutionally the constitutional basis for federal government grants to church schools (Hogan 1984: 8-9).

Since then, despite considerable sympathy in Catholic education circles for the type of needs-based education funding espoused by Labor since the Whitlam government, the Catholic lobby as whole, fearing the influence of secular education unions within the party, has maintained some caution about accepting Labor's enduring commitment to Catholic schools. There has always been Catholic voices wishing to speak up for Labor, beginning in 1972 with Archbishop James Carroll of Sydney, once described loosely as "one of the few friends of the Labor hierarchy" (Freudenberg 1977:30). However, at key intervals - at the 1972, 1983 and 2004 elections - the most powerful church voices have chosen to stay out of the fray and to avoid allegations of sectarianism by endorsing the claims of the elite Protestant private schools (for 1983 see Hogan 1984:1).

For more than 30 years the church has benefited from needs-based recurrent funding under both Labor and Coalition federal governments. While it has not yet achieved its aim of federal funding to Catholic schools of 60% of the total cost of educating a student in a government school it 'recognises and appreciates the very significant increases in Australian state and territory government funding to Catholic schools over the past 40 years' (NCEC 2004:10). In 2004, at the initiative of the government NCEC conducted successful negotiations to enter the federal government's new socioeconomic status (SES) funding system, with an increase of $360 million in recurrent grants, and a guarantee that no school would lose funding over the 2005-2008 quadrennium (see NCEC 2004).

The church has been able to do this because of the closeness of relationships with government at the bureaucratic and ministerial levels, and because of the support for Catholic schools is a win-win situation for church and government. Successive church leaders have included the current chair, Montreal Dion Doyle, who has lengthy experience of making and administering, have been particularly well-placed to understand the intricacies of government policy and to negotiate quietly and effectively with the federal government. For instance, Prof Peter Tannock, 1996-2001, was a member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission from 1974-80 and its chairman from 1981-85 under the Fraser and Hawke governments. His predecessor from 1990-96, Gerry Gleeson, had been head of the NSW Premier's department, under Labor's Neville Wran, from 1977-85. The church also has a long tradition in health care, through its hospitals and other health care facilities set up by religious orders. CHA is an agency more at arm's-length from the ACBC national Catholic Welfare Committee than it used to be, and it also plays a considerable role in the church's lobbying on life issues because it represents the health service deliverers. In the 2004 federal election campaign the Australian Catholic Parliamentary Committee of CHA, Francis Sullivan, was prominent as the architect of Medicare Gold, the extended free hospital care for the aged policy adopted by Labor as one of its key new initiatives. Sullivan had been in discussions with both sides of politics about the concept.

The direct involvement by the church in professional social welfare, as distinct from charitable work, is funded directly by the sector and by volunteers, is the most recent of these three fields. It dates only to the 1930s and 1940s and now operates under the name Centacare. The National Catholic Welfare Commission (later to become the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission) was formed only in 1957 (Usher 2002). Speaking with the authority of a service deliverer it took part in public debates about the privatization of government services and was an important voice in challenging the commitment of the Coalition parties to a GST throughout the 1990s (Warburton, Brown and Higgins 2000).

Centacare and other church welfare agencies run by religious orders have been among those faith-based agencies that have participated in the delivery of the Howard government's Job Network services, despite some disapproval from bishops who believed such services were properly the work of government (Brennan 2000). There was considerable anxiety within the church about the tension between fulfilling its mission and taking extensive government funding (Usher 2002). The issue of "Who pays the piper calls the tune" continually worried those who put a priority on the church maintaining its critical voice. In August 2006, CSISSA decided not to participate in the financial care management measures under the new Welfare to Work legislation on the grounds that they are "unduly harsh measures and we don't want to be confused as administrators and policemen of poor government policy" (Quinlan 2006).

The Catholic Lobby and Catholic Parliamentarians

A final consideration is the question of the particular interaction between Catholic lobbyists and Catholic MPs: their co-religionistism. To what extent do common values and networks give the relationship a special character? To what extent does the church expect Catholic MPs to adhere to church teaching? This has been an issue in the US from the time John Kennedy ran for president in 1960 until the present day (Brennan 2006). In a famous statement of his position on 12 September 1960 Kennedy tried to deflect the issue: 'I am not the Catholic candidate for President, I am the Democratic party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic' (Dallal 2003:227). At the time of the 2004 presidential election, with a pro-choice Catholic, John Kerry, as the Democrats' candidate, the American bishops became embroiled in the campaign after some bishops threatened to refuse communion to pro-choice Catholic political leaders, including Kerry (Brennan 2006:50-63; Timmaty and Bacon 2004; Gurr 2004). The American bishops set up a taskforce on Catholic bishops and Catholic politicians. There is no Australian equivalent, though inevitably some Australian bishops and MPs have taken positions on the issue (Zwarte 2006).

One possible model for church lobbying is a close relationship of the kind that was entered into between Senator Brian Harradine (Independent) and the Jesuit order priest Father Brendan Lynch, at the time of the Wilcannia-Nowra debates (Brennan 1998, 2006). On that occasion Harradine, once an advisor to ACBC on indigenous affairs, worked closely with Harradine on the tactics and strategies necessary, as Harradine saw it, to avert a race-based election. He earned front-page condemnation as a 'professional Catholic' and 'muddling priest' from former prime minister Paul Keating for his trouble (Keating 1998).

That relationship was unusual. Harradine himself was a well-connected, pivotal figure well versed in Catholic social teaching. Over the past 10 years, apart from Harradine, Kevin Andrews (Liberal) has been the MP closest to the lobby. In 1996-97 there was considerable coordination of the anti-racism campaign, involving the bishops and certain Catholic MPs. Andrews and his wife also maintained formal membership of the bishops' Family Working Group. The Greens' Senator Chris- tine Milne was formally associated as an adviser with CEA Australia, while he was set up in 2002, prior to her entering the Senate in 2005 (Rue 2006:31). Earlier, Fred Chaney (Liberal) and Michael Tate (Labor) were members of the CCIP before it was disbanded in 1987.

There is plenty of contact between bishops and MPs at local electorate functions, as both are local dignitaries. There are probably some friendships too, but not much in the way of serious policy discussions. Much of the contact is just superficial photo-opportunities. The lack of more serious relationships is probably the fault of both sides.

Some MPs maintain more serious informal relations with church leaders, just as Archbishop and state premiers sometimes do. Tony

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There is some evidence of formal bridgebuilding, 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 Lynne Crosby sought a list of Catholics in the Coalition: "Lynne said we need people who are able to speak to the bishops, so we had to come up with who the Catholics were" (Rees 2001:43).

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. 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 2006.11 Indirectly those Labor senators supported by the Shop Assistants union (SDA/EA) would be perceived to be part of the Catholic lobby through their connection with its national secretary, Joe De Bruyn.22

Conclusions
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 Tannoch 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, a collectiveist 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 countering 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 high self-own view of itself and the views of its critics. Some critics exaggerate its power. David Marr, for instance, said government support for refurbishing cathedral 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 1999:231), 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, Chai, and on conscience votes, collectiveist 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 countering 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 high self-own view of itself and the views of its critics. Some critics exaggerate its power. David Marr, for instance, said government support for refurbishing cathedral 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.

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Quinnan, F. 2006. *Catholic Social Services Refusal to Police 'Harsh' Govt Policy." Eureka Street 29 August.


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 Aboriginals 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

Council for Australian Catholic Women
- Council for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations
- Australian Catholic Marriage and Family Council
- National Catholic Education Commission
- National Liturgical Council
- Natural Family Planning Board

**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
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 of 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 choose 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