SOCIAL SERVICES, COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY. A PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROVISION AND USE OF CHILD CARE.

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Except where otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis is the result of original research by the author.

Abstract

The Federal government in Australia has become increasingly involved since World War II, in the development of social policy initiatives through the provision of social services. By promoting social services, as distinct from measures designed to redistribute income, successive Federal administrations have sought to redress the problem of poverty which has become a prominent social and political issue in Australia since the late 1960's.

The Federal Government, particularly under the Whitlam Labor Administration between 1972-75, adopted the premise that by improving the access of the poor to social services and promoting community participation in social service delivery, there would be greater participation in the decision making process and greater equality of opportunity in the Australian community.

This study examines the effectiveness of this strategy through an analysis of Federal sponsorship of community child-care services. These services have an established history of community participation and have also been the focus of specific Federal policy initiatives designed to improve social and economic opportunity among those most in need.

To assess the effectiveness of this strategy, a literature review of developments in the provision of Federally sponsored community-based child care services between 1972 and 1984 is presented. A household survey of child care use and need provides an opportunity to examine the actual impact of Federal child care programs on 330 families with pre-school aged children. A case study describing the emergence and development of a community association and its efforts to gain access to child care services is used to highlight a number of central issues surrounding the promotion of the notion of 'community' as a strategy for the delivery of services to families with special needs.

Data presented in this research suggests that major problems exist for the proponents of social policy initiatives which focus on the promotion of community social service provisions. In the case of Federally sponsored child care programs, the services provided appear to have had little impact on promoting greater equality of opportunity among families with pre-school aged children.

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CHAPTER 1

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Social services and 'community'.
A strategy for equality.

1.1 Introduction

Throughout Western industrial society two issues have been of major concern to theorists and practitioners of social welfare: the widening gap between the wealthy and the poor and the associated increase in social alienation felt by underprivileged members of society. How to reduce inequality and assimilate alienated groups and individuals back into the wider social fabric are questions which have occupied a central place in the debate over the role of the state in promoting the welfare of its citizens [Marx and Engels (1848), Tonnies (1887), Durkheim (1897), Weber (1924), Tawney (1931), Parsons (1951), Titmus (1958), Friedman 1962), Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965), Mishra (1981)].

To achieve equality British Social Democrats, notably R.H. Tawney (1931), argued that the state had a responsibility to become directly involved in the provision of social services in key areas such as Health, Education, Transport and Housing to bring about what Tawney called '<u>the strategy of equality</u>'. By making these services universally available the poor would benefit by the addition of a social income to that already received from the sale of their labour. Social services would relieve many of the handicaps which constrained the development of the poor, thereby making provision for greater equality of opportunity within society (Crosland, 1956).

In addition to mainstream services such as health and education, services with a specific focus, such as care for the aged, for children, ethnic groups, youth, women and the handicapped were also implicit in 'the strategy of equality'.

While increased government sponsorship of social services was seen as a solution to the problems of inequality, encouragement of citizens to become involved in community social service provision was also viewed as a major step towards achieving greater social harmony and reducing alienation (Beveridge, 1948). The amalgamation of 'community' with social service delivery became an important strategy in the pursuit of equality and the reduction of alienation in many countries after World War II, notably in North America, Great Britain and Australia.

This research seeks to examine the effectiveness of 'the strategy of equality' in an Australian context. Special attention is given to the promotion of community-sponsored social services by the Federal Labor Government between 1972-75, as a means of securing greater equality and social cohesion within Australian society.

One service, the provision of child care to pre-school aged children, has been singled out for study. This service has a history of voluntary and community involvement and, over

the past decade, has featured prominently in the debate over the effectiveness of the community model of social service delivery as a means of promoting access to services and achieving greater equality (Alexander, et al, 1980).

In this study, the question of who gets access to child care services is examined against a background of child care policies which have emphasised the need to ensure that children from families with special needs receive priority of access. The relationship between policy statements, policy implementation and the reality of who actually uses government-subsidised community child care services is examined in a household survey of the child care needs and usage patterns of 330 families with children under school age (under 5 years old). Through this survey, and a case study of the operations of a community association and its efforts to secure child care services for its members, the suitability of the community model of social service provision as a means of reducing inequality is examined.

1.1.2 Geographers and inequality

The emergence of poverty as a major social and political issue in the late 1960's provided the impetus for a reassessment of the role and research directions of geographers (Johnston, 1983: 158-200). In the post-war period geographers had mainly confined their research

interests to positivist quantification of locational, time and spatial aspects of economic activitiy: Isard (1956), Berry (1959), Chisholm (1962), Haggett (1965), Baskin (1965).

For some geographers, such as Kasperson (1971), Harvey (1973), and Zelinsky (1970) the preoccupation with 'positivist-based spatial-science methodology' (Johnston, 1983: 162) contributed little to the understanding of major social problems. What was required in the views of several geographers writing in the early 1970's, was a more relevant approach to social issues if geographers were to be seen as effective contributors to social debate.

Proponents of the new geography were divided in their approach over how best to tackle major social questions, particularly issues of poverty and inequality. Liberal geographers, led in the United Kingdom by Smith (1973), Chisholm (1971), and Eyles (1973) proposed interventionist strategies aimed at ameliorating the worst excesses of poverty. Those with a more radical perspective such as Peet (1971), Folke (1971), and Harvey (1973) argued that answers to poverty and inequality could only come from initiating major structural change within capitalist society.

In keeping with the social democratic tradition of reforming capitalism (George and Wilding, 1974: 62), most governments in the 1960's were more receptive to the interventionist approaches offered by liberal geographers than their more radical counterparts. For liberals, the relevance of geography to the problems of inequality lay in its potential for defining and explaining the geographical incidence of poverty. The early 1970's saw a proliferation of studies concerned with the spatial perspective of social well being; in the United States (Smith, 1973), in Britain (Knox, 1975) and in Australia (Logan et al, 1975). These studies were primarily concerned with developing indicators which could be used to measure the spatial distribution of individual or group welfare.

By drawing the attention of policy makers to areas of deprivation, geographers demonstrated that their work had significant social relevance. However, explanation of inequality as a spatial process soon gave way to explanations of inequality as a social process. Geographers strived for greater recognition by describing the spatial form of inequality, and also by seeking to explain why it occurred (Smith, 1977, 1979; Coates, Johnston and Knox, 1977; Cox, 1979).

Geographers in the latter part of the 1970's became increasingly aware of the influence of access to power, of participation and of factors associated with the division of labour in shaping inequality. The broadening of the geographical perspective also extended to methodology. Humanist geographers argued for a more normative approach to the description of social issues. Ley and Samuels (1978) saw the need to recognise the value of subjective analysis in geographical research, given that not all human activity could be objectively measured.

In dealing with social issues in the 1980's, the geographer is now less constrained by 'positivist-based spatial-science methodology'. Increasing recognition is being given to the need for research which recognises the complexity of social issues and does not attempt to confine analysis to the perspective of a single discipline. In this study inequality is presented as a complex social problem. Inequality frequently has a spatial form which is often intimately associated with economic conditions. These conditions have social consequences which have political and administrative ramifications which, in turn, are often philosophically derived.

Description of these six facets of inequality form the basis of discussion in this study. The successful integration of these facets into a meaningful and useful

explanation of inequality is the challenge which this study undertakes. That this challenge has arisen stems from a fundamental geographic question about access to services, namely, 'who gets what, where, and how?'

1.2 Equality, social services and community. Social democtratic perspectives in welfare provision.

The views expressed by the social democrats were largely in response to the perceived rigidity of classical Marxist and Liberal prescriptions about the role of the state in the promotion of social welfare in capitalist industrial society. In the Communist Manifesto (1848) Marx and Engels sought equality for all, rather than equality of opportunity, through a radical redistribution of the ownership of means of production. 'Palliatives' or social policies were seen as ultimately useless, for they 'delayed the collapse of capitalism and prolonged the misery of the proletariat' (Room,1979:2). In the same year that Marx and Engels were promoting the notion that state intervention in capitalist society was irrelevant, John Stuart Mill (1848) argued for a different kind of minimised state intervention in laissez faire capitalism. Unlike Marx and Engels who foreshadowed the demise of capitalism, Mill urged that if capitalism was to advance there should be only minimal intervention by the state in the 'natural order' of the market place.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century it became clear that neither classical Marxist nor Liberal views on the role of the state was in the ascendancy. The proletariat had failed to overthrow the bourgeoisie and the natural order of the market place forced governments to intervene increasingly on behalf of labour in order to relieve 'misery' and 'social disorder' (Tawney, 1964; Marshall, 1965). In this context ideas about the social democratic state began to flourish. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, social democrats argued for a wider role for the state in determining the relations between capital and labour. Two of the most prominent writers on the relationship between the state and capital were Weber and Durkheim, both of whom published during the 1890's and early 1900's.

> Weber in particular was concerned to emphasise the positive role of the state as an agent of life chance distribution, as an instigator of societal change and as a promoter of social integration, and saw social policies as central to this role...(Room 1979:35).

The British social democrats, building on the issue of state intervention, were influenced by the Fabian socialists whose early advocates were R.H. Tawney (1931), Webb (1948), and later Marshall (1967), Titmuss (1968) and Crosland (1974). Of these writers, George and Wilding comment:

> The socialist writers about the role of the state in welfare occupy a substantial area of middle ground between the reluctant collectivists and the marxists. At the boundaries, the divisions between this group and their neighbours are sometimes blurred. Trespassing is quite frequent. There are however, obvious differences. The socialist stress on equality differentiates this group quite sharply from the reluctant collectivists, so too does their more positive attitude to the possibilities of government action. They differ from the marxists on the other hand in believing that capitalism can be transformed peacefuly into socialism. (George and Wilding 1976:62)

Central to the argument of state intervention in transforming capitalism was, and is, the goal of achieving equality in society. Equality is important to the social democrat for four reasons: it promotes social unity, social efficiency, social justice and individual self realisation (George and Wilding, 1976). While allowing for some differences in incomes based on individual ability (Crosland, 1974), the social democrat was primarily concerned with providing a more equal distribution of opportunity. To this end the provision of publicly funded social services was fundamental in overcoming inequalities.

For Tawney (1931) a 'strategy of equality' could be achieved through 'The extension of social services and progressive taxation...trade unionism and industrial legislation and securing...all profit above a minimum rate of interest.' (1931:119). Of all these strategies, Tawney's argument for increased state intervention in the provision

of social services had a far reaching impact on the social policy initiatives of many western industrialised countries in the years following World War II, notably in Commonwealth countries. Redistribution of wealth through social services was a much more attractive proposition for many governments than tackling the more complex problem of redistribution of income.

Concomitant with the emphasis on social service provision as a 'strategy for equality' was concern by social democrats over the importance given by capitalism to individual market exchanges as the primary means of communication within society. To counter the ideology of a society based on individual rights, socialists adhered to the objective of promoting fellowship:

> By fellowship the socialist means co-operation rather than competition, an emphasis on duties rather than rights, on the good of the community rather than on the wants of the individual, on altruism rather than on self help. (George and Wilding 1976:66)

Concern with the demise of fellowship and community was not restricted to social democratic thought in the twentieth century. Nisbet (1953) and Plant (1974) point to the alarm expressed by both radical and conservative critics of industrial capitalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One of the most notable conservative

critics was the German philosopher Ferdinand Tonnies who, in his publication 'Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft' (Community and Society) in 1887 drew attention to the insecurity and disintegration of society under capitalism. The central cause of this disintegration, according to Tonnies, lay in the segmentation of society through the division of labour.

In contrast to disintegration and insecurity, Gemeinschaft embodied the values of traditional rural society which dealt with a 'whole man' and not one labelled by occupation status specifically for the purposes of market exchange. Shared values within the community ensured minimal conflict, a position reinforced by the lack of physical and social mobility. 'Community' as proposed by Tonnies was static, orderly and posed little scope for social mobility; however, it offered the prospect of belonging to a haven which would insulate the citizen from 'personal alienation' and 'cultural disintegration' (Nisbet 1953:3).

Not all commentators on the changing nature of industrial society mourned the passing of the notion of community. Many opponents of traditional society; Grotius, Hobbes, Hume and Bentham (Plant 1974:8-34) were antagonistic to the concept on the grounds that it imposed the social and moral values of a feudal society. Despite criticism of the conservative communitarian view on how social relations

should be organised, the notion that community provides a shelter from the alienating forces of the market place has maintained its appeal, particularly for social democrats, who are concerned with the reform of individual market relations into fellowship and community.

1.3 The emergence of community social service strategies in Australia

In Australia the social democratic tradition found expression through the policies of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) which since its formation has been concerned about the redistribution of wealth. However it was not until the 1960's that the party began seriously to consider the prospect of pursuing social policy initiatives which sought to bring about redistribution through a program of income support, provision of social services and the promotion of community development programs. These initiatives were prompted by the 'rediscovery' of poverty in Australia highlighted in studies by Brown (1963), Mendelsohn (1964), Appleyard (1965) and Henderson (1966).

Labor's commitment to social services marked a radical departure from previous social policies which, since Federation (1901), had focussed on income support schemes (Kewley, 1975). The major social policy developments in Australia from the early 1900's until the 1960's are outlined in appendix 1. In this chapter it is sufficient to

note that until World War II Federal intervention in the provision of social services was minimal, with heavy reliance being placed upon charitable and philanthropic interests to provide services to the needy. (Roe, 1976; Jones, 1982). The preoccupation of organised labour with the right to work rather than with the right to support (MacIntyre, 1983), coupled with the attitude that responsibility for the provision of personal social services; the care of children, the aged, the sick and the handicapped, was part of the domestic vocation of women (Summers, 1975), provided little incentive for the Federal government to extend its role in the provision of social services. The progress that was made in the development of social policy mainly concentrated on income support in the form of pensions and allowances to the non-working population; mothers, children, the aged and war widows (Kewley, 1975:3-165).

In the period following World War II the Federal government, particularly under the National Welfare Scheme of the Chifley Labor government (1943-1949), became strongly committed to the provision of supplementary income maintenance measures. Maternity allowances, family allowances, funeral benefits, pharmaceutical and hospital benefits and, for the first time, unemployment benefits were seen as important means of promoting more united social standards throughout the community (Watts, 1983).

Following the defeat of the Labor government in 1949 by the Liberal Party led by R.G. Menzies there was little change in Federal social policy initiatives. The provision of income support incentives were still perceived as the primary function of the Federal government, although throughout the 1950's and 1960's, the Menzies government slowly expanded its commitment to subsidising community-sponsored services, particularly in the areas of Home Nursing and Homes for the Aged (Kewley, 1975).

Menzies saw a major role for voluntary organisations in providing social services which were 'beyond the provision by government'.

> We have been greatly impressed by the old people's welfare work which is being done by voluntary organisations. They have directed attention to human problems which are above and beyond the provision by government. (R.G. Menzies, 1963:7).

Whereas both conservative and labor governments in the post-war years primarily saw their role as providers of income supplements to a population with relatively high levels of employment, the changing social and economic conditions in the 1960's stimulated debate on how best to tackle poverty and increasing levels of social alienation (Wentworth, 1969). This debate was fuelled by social policy developments in America, Great Britain and Canada, where community action and social services were seen as new

solutions to growing social and economic problems. Community action could use local initiative to solve the problems which bureaucrats had failed to come to grips with. Community action would help to give power back to the people, foster a sense of community spirit, assist in reducing feelings of alienation and allow individuals to participate in the planning process (Loney, 1983).

Whereas traditional welfare assistance had concentrated on income transfers:

> Community action was concerned above all with the reoganisation of local services into an integrated plan to attack the roots of social deprivation. (Marris and Rein 1972:225)

In 1963 when President Kennedy launched his 'War on Poverty' it was to be based not on the redistribution of income but on extending opportunities to the poor through job training, work experience and community organisation. In Great Britain the Seebohm Report (1968) recommended a similar strategy for the alleviation of social and economic problems.

Although Australians had to wait until 1972 before community development programs became important social policy issues, two groups of professionals, urban planners and social workers, helped to establish a basis in the

1960's for extending Federal welfare responsibility into the area of non-income social service provision. However, the solutions of urban planners and sociologists to the problems of unplanned growth and deprivation in Australian cities developed somewhat independently.

The physical urban planners devoted their attention to the spatial form of the city and the problem of access to services (Jeans and Logan, 1961; Harrison, 1966; Stilwell and Hardwick, 1973) and the 'external effects of locational decisions' which gave rise to unequal opportunity in access to social and economic infrastructure among urban residents (Neutze, 1965). Planning for a more equitable distribution of urban infrastructure; transport, shopping facilities, schools, hospitals and other social services was seen as highly desirable (Troy, 1966).

While urban planners were concerned with the locational aspects of urban infrastructure, social workers were promoting the need for community organisation in order to facilitate welfare provisions at the local level. Interest by social workers in community organisation dated back to the 1930's. Lawrence (1965) claims that interest stemmed not so much from demands by communities themselves for services but from social work method which enabled social workers to puruse welfare programs in a more organised manner. For social workers, 'community was a method for

establishing a progressively more effective adjustment between the social welfare needs and the community welfare resources within a geographic area' (Friedlander, 1955; cited by Lawrence 1965:186-87). Throughout the post war period and especially during the 1960's the term 'community' was increasingly popularised by social workers to focus attention on areas with specific welfare problems (Vinson, 1967, 1970; McLelland, 1968).

Despite general support for the idea of community development among professional social workers, there was no organised community movement in Australia as had been established in the United States or Great Britain. At the Federal level there was little government support for an organised community development program as distinct from growing support for the role of voluntary agencies in the provision of social welfare services (Lawrence, 1966). Community development projects during the 1960's were limited in number and scope (Halliwell, 1969; Mune, 1973).

1.3.1 Labor's strategy for reform

Concern felt by planners and social workers for the crisis facing Australian urban dwellers began to receive much more political attention in the latter part of the 1960's. Prompted by his personal experience of living in the western suburbs of Sydney (Oakes, 1973) and from his

association with concerned academics, the leader of the Australian Labor Party, E.G. Whitlam, pushed urban issues into the political arena.

> Increasingly a citizen's real standard of living, the health of himself and his family, his children's opportunities, opportunities for education and self improvement, his access to employment opportunities, his ability to enjoy the nation's resources for recreation or culture, his ability to participate in the decisions and actions of the community, are determined not by his income, not by the hours he works, but where he lives. (Whitlam, 1972:7-8)

Implicit in Whitlam's speech was the view that access to social infrastructure, in addition to income-earning capacity, was a major determinant of people's welfare. Reform could be achieved by locating social infrastructure in areas of need. In developing his electoral platform for Labor's bid for government in 1972, Whitlam proposed that 'the inequalities imposed by the physical nature of the cities' could be dealt with by a two-pronged attack.

First, he proposed that a Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) would be established to promote co-ordination and community development, and protect the national estate. Second, to complement the work of DURD, a statutory authority, the Social Welfare Commission (SWC), would be established to review the government's social policy initiatives. In addition to its policy role, the SWC

was to implement the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP) which was to develop at a regional level, 'a nationally co-ordinated framework of integrated patterns of welfare services, complementary to income support programs'. (SWC:1973)[1]

> ...when the AAP is fully operational, community-based voluntary welfare services will be fostered and stimulated with generous support so that the services provided and the organisations providing them are related to, and are identified with, the community in which they operate. (Hayden, 1973:1238)

The Labor Party entered the 1972 national election with the first major proposals since Federation to alter the emphasis in the provision of welfare support. Previously, emphasis had been given to the provision of support for the destitute, the aged, children and the unemployed in the form of income supplements. Now the Labor Party proposed to embark on an ambitious program of support through the provision of public infrastructure, not only to traditional non-working welfare recipients, but to working families as

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1. Although much of Labor's community development rhetoric was directed through the AAP (SWC 1973, 1974, 1975) the program is not discussed in this research. The AAP was abolished in 1976 by the Liberal Country Party Coalition (LCC) and only provides limited scope for the analysis of the community social service provision in a contemporary context. The Children's Services Program has been selected as the focus of study because it has been operating continuously since 1972. As such, it allows for a more detailed analysis of the issues behind the use of community social service strategies by successive federal governments since this date.

well. Labor intended that the urban poor would experience increases in their 'real urban income' through planned interventions initiated by DURD and the SWC. The underlying strategy was that inequities in opportunities available to individuals and families could be redressed by attacking the 'physical inequalities imposed by the city'. Increasing the 'real urban income' of the poor through improving their access to 'positional goods' would provide greater equality of opportunity.

Although no reference to the concepts of 'real urban income' and 'positional goods' can be found in the pre-1972 policy statements of the Labor Party, Patrick Troy, one of the architects of the DURD strategy, claims that these concepts were implicit in the objectives of Labor's program of urban reform at the time. (Troy, pers.comm 1983) Public reference to 'real urban income' was not made by DURD policy makers until late 1975 when the concept was explored in a paper presented to a Parliamentary Housing Enquiry.

> Real urban income is to be regarded as the determinant of that subject of overall welfare which derives from the quality of urban life in toto. It is strongly influenced not only by the distribution of money income and wealth, but also by all other policies which distribute urban and social services through the community and it is therefore central to the ideas of social and physical planning in the urban environment. (Priorities Review Staff, 1975:190)

The second notion, that of 'positional goods', was put forward by Hirsch in 1976. Hirsch argued that the positional status of individuals and communities within society was linked to their access to public or social goods which conveyed social and economic advantages. Hirsch was particularly concerned with the contradiction of attempting to use positional goods with a social value to promote equality of opportunity when there were marked disparities in the material and personal resources of individuals. The apparent lack of recognition given by Labor strategists to this contradiction is one of the principle concerns of this thesis and is taken up later in this and subsequent chapters.

1.3.2 The Children's Services Program (1972-75)

In October 1972 the Australian Labor Party won office after 23 years in opposition and the way was now clear for Whitlam's strategy for social reform to be implemented. In the discussion which follows attention is focussed on the development of one of Labor's major community social service strategies, the Children's Services Program, a community funded program designed to provide child care services to parents with children under the age of 5.[2] For Whitlam, child care services were an integral part of his strategy for achieving equality and in his election speech he promised to establish a Pre-Schools Committee to oversee the development of pre-school and day care-centres.

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2. For a discussion on the emergence and development of child care services from 1788-1972 see appendix 2 .

> We will make pre-school education available to every Australian child because pre-school education is the most important single weapon in promoting equality and in overcoming social, economic and language inequalities. (Whitlam, 1972:4)

In keeping with the view that inequality had a spatial form and could be dealt with by improving physical access to services, Whitlam proposed that the Committee should 'ensure that pre-school centres are located, staffed and equipped on the basis of need'. Whitlam was also concerned with the issue of compensatory education and, as Matthews and Fitzgerald noted:

> It was important to provide pre-school education for all not only because everybody should have access to the same standards of educational provision, but also because pre-school education could compensate for poor home backgrounds and thus bring everybody up to the same level, giving all an equal start in life. (Matthews and Fitzgerald, 1975:12)

This view was inspired by the Head Start Program of pre-school education developed for American children with disadvantaged backgrounds as part of Lyndon Johnson's 'Great Society'. (Burdon and Burdon, 1980)

For Whitlam, day care was of lower priority than pre-school education. This attitude was reflected in his limited reference to the child care needs of working women in his policy speech (Whitlam, 1972). Of the two political parties, the LCPC appeared to be more prepared to support

the needs of working women, primarily in the cause of improved industrial relations. On the other hand, the Labor Party was more interested in promoting greater equality of opportunity through educational reform, a view consistent with its social democratic principles.

The decision to establish an Australian Pre-Schools Committee to investigate and recommend on the possibilities of universal pre-school provision was marked with controversy from the outset. Supporters of day-care services, particularly the Women's Electoral Lobby, saw the Committee as being unrepresentative of broader child care interests.

When the Committee's report, 'Care and Education of Young Children' (1973), was released it was attacked for its lack of attention to the child care needs of working parents (ACOSS 1974). In response to intensive lobbying by womens' groups (Dowse, 1982), recommendations were made that the report should be reviewed by the Social Welfare Commission (SWC) and Priorities Review Staff (PRS) before the government became committed to the report's proposals. In 1974 the SWC and the PRS produced reports which recommended that instead of focussing on pre-school provision, child care options be developed to meet a range of needs, particularly those of single parents and working mothers, and that priority be given to assisting those most in need.

The recommendations of the SWC, PRS and the Australian Council of Social Services, which argued for the establishment of a special commission for the 'under fives' (ACOSS 1974), were accepted by the government. In September 1974, Lionel Bowen, Special Minister for State, announced the establishment of an Interim Children's Commission. After almost two years of Labor in office and considerable controversy, the establishment of a Children's Commission appeared to offer capacity for developing an integrated and planned approach to the allocation of Children's Services. The Commission was to be responsible for administering all existing commitments in the area of child care and pre-schools. Bowen noted at the establishment of the Interim Commission that:

> ...the program will break down the false dichotomy between child care and pre-schooling. The sad fact is that up until now pre-schooling, originally intended by us as an important aid in removing or modifying inequalities of background, environment, family income or family nationality, has primarily benefitted children whose mothers can afford to stay at home. Not only has this situation put children from less privileged environments at even greater disadvantage, but it has created a harmful distinction between the mother at home and the mother at work. (Ministerial statement, Lionel Bowen, 1974:4)

In order to implement the objectives of the Commission, State-level Consultative Advisory Committees were established to administer Children's Services. These

committees were to consist of government agencies, local authorities, voluntary organisations, consumers and representatives from the Children's Commission. Funds were to be allocated through the States to priority areas. In practice, the decision to allocate funds to the States considerably slowed down the momentum of the program. Some of the Committees were slow in being established and State regulations with regard to licencing of child care centres hindered the rapid deployment of resources (Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1982:83).

Although the Labor Government had an Interim Children's Commission in place in January 1975, its operations were not proceeding as intended. State Committees impeded development, and attempts to develop services in priority areas were beset by problems of community participation. In 1975 the SWC, in line with its intention to identify priority regions, ranked every Local Government Council in Australia according to child care needs (SWC:1975). To assist in developing projects in areas of need the Interim Commission appointed catalysts to 'stimulate community members to initiate and accomplish improvement in services for their children' (Picton and Boss, 1981:69).

The performance of catalysts, who primarily consisted of community activists with little formal training, was variable (Tierney, 1977). In some States there was

antagonism to their interventionist role by state government departments which had traditionally administered Children's Services. Some catalysts complained that the only community interests which they could mobilise were those who expressed 'ambivalent attitudes about working women and migrants', two priority groups in the Commission's program.

Despite Labor's intention of promoting a planned community approach to the allocation of child care funds, and giving priority to those most in need, most of the funds allocated from 1972-75 were allocated to state-sponsored pre-school programs. Of the $45 million allocated to children's services in 1974-75, $32 million went to pre-schools (Sweeney, 1982:17). As stated, pre-schools were generally acknowledged to service the needs of middle class families in which the mothers could usually afford to stay at home. In this context the community or submission model had favoured the interests of those families whose child care needs were arguably less pressing. Picton and Boss noted that 'there was a feeling that both the Project Care report and the Government had overestimated the capacity of powerless groups of low socio-economic status to organise themselves'(1971:69).

It is possible that had the Children's Commission been able to pursue its program, a more planned and integrated approach towards the development of Children's Services may have prevailed. However, Labor lost office in November 1975 and the incoming Liberal Country Party Coalition under Prime Minister Fraser embarked on major changes in the Child Care Program.

1.3.3 Changing direction. Social policy and children's services (1975-1983)

The Governor-General's address to the new parliament in February 1976 laid the foundations for the Fraser Government's approach to social policy issues:

> The Government's long term objective is to prevent the growth of centralised bureaucratic domination in Australia, and the increasing dependence of individuals on the State...As part of this approach the Government will place great emphasis on directing welfare assistance to those in real need. Unless there is a concentration on those in real need, schemes of assistance do not provide maximum possible assistance to the disadvantaged and become excessively costly... To achieve its objectives... there will be a major direction of resources away from government towards individuals and private enterprise... Historic reforms will be made to reverse the concentration of power in the Federal Government and increase the autonomy and responsibilities of Local and State Governments. The Government believes that there must be more scope for community and individual initiative if people are to solve their problems sensitively and with rational use of resources.' (Governor-General's Speech, February 17, 1976:12-13)

The Governor-General's speech heralded a number of important departures from Labor's social policy initiatives. Whereas under Labor the State was perceived as having a collective responsibility for its citizens and an obligation to intervene on their behalf, the LCPC downgraded the responsibilities of the State and upgraded the rights and obligations of the individual and the community. Under Labor, universalist principles governed attitudes towards the provision of welfare services; under the LCPC, selectivist policies focussing on those with special needs gained ascendancy.

Like the Labor party, the LCPC also sought to use the concept of community to pursue its social policy objectives, but for different ideological reasons. Whereas Labor attempted to develop a planning partnership with community organisations, the LCPC planned to return much of the responsibility for welfare programs back to the community. Nowhere was this more evident than in the government's new directives on the future development of child care services.

> The provision of pre-school education should not be seen as exclusively the responsibility of government whether State or Federal. We would work with State and Local Governments, with voluntary and independent organisations and associations who have contributed so much in this field...In this context the Liberal National Country Party sees local government as a focus for service delivery, since welfare

> services provided at the local level are more responsive to users' needs and wishes. Voluntary associations also are seen as vital contributors to welfare and play a major part in permitting diversity and choice for individuals and groups in the community. (Coleman, 1976:222)

With the establishment of the Office of Child Care (OCC) in 1976, the Children's Services Program, as it officially became known, underwent significant diversification. Under Labor, the principal programs were based around pre-schools, centre-based day care and an emergent family day-care scheme, the LNCPC expanded the program to include a range of family and child related welfare activities also catering for school aged children.[3] In the area of day care, the family day care (FDC) scheme was promoted as a major alternative to centre-based care because, in the government's view, it provided:

> ...personalised family type care, was flexible, quickly established and there was an assurance that government funds are not expended on projects which may prove to be poorly located or become redundant when the population age groupings change. (Department of Social Security, 1979:2)

The reduced costs of providing family day care were a critical element in this emphasis. In 1981 the cost of subsidising a child in FDC was estimated to be $400, while the comparative costs for centre-based day care were around $1 100 (Spender, 1981:4).

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3. See appendix (3) for a full description of the types of child-care services funded by the Office of Child Care.

During the latter part of the 1970's reducing the cost of government operation became a major preoccupation of the Fraser government. The LNCPC initiated two reviews into the status of the Children's Services Program, the Program Effectiveness Review (1979) and the Review of Children's Services Program, the latter producing the Spender Report (1981). Both were aimed at examining ways in which the CSP could be made to reflect the government's policy of reducing public expenditure and increasing opportunity for private enterprise in service provision.

Although neither of the reviews was publicly released, the Spender Report became widely available to child-care organisations concerned with developments within the CSP. It was the widespread unauthorised circulation of the report's recommendations which provided a focus for feelings of antagonism and frustration which had been developing in almost every section of the child-care movement (Burns, 1979, Cox 1978, Stamp 1980, Davis 1982). Among its more controversial recommendations were the use of government funds to subsidise private child care, the introduction of a means test to determine eligibility for the use of subsidised care and the abolition of the Child Care Act.

Reaction against the Spender Report acted as a catalyst for a range of grievances over the LNCPC handling of the CSP. On a philosophical level, the Government's emphasis on child care as the responsibility of the family was attacked on the grounds that the family was not always able to cope with the needs of children. Further, the interests and rights of children were best served if society took a collective responsibility towards their care and development (Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1982:46-52). The emphasis on the family was seen as a step back to the residual notion of limiting the State's responsibility to servicing those most in need while the market took care of those 'able' to afford to pay for services.

Opponents of residualism saw the Government's special needs policy as dividing the Children's Services Program into three components. Firstly, Government-sponsored child care would become the domain of low income users and 'like the old charity nursery in the past', they would stigmatise users and gradually be allowed to deteriorate through lack of funding. Secondly, for the majority of child care users, those who fell between low and high income earners, the onus for child care would fall upon the community and women in particular. Lastly, the wealthy would be the sole users of high quality commercial care. This division of quality and type of care was described as being 'regressive and divisive' (Grimes, 1981).

For those women who saw child care as a right and not a privilege, the emphasis on family responsibility, funding cutbacks and the inroads of family day care over centre-based care were viewed as a major setback in achieving equality in the home and in the workplace. Sweeney and Jamrozik (1982) have noted that while women's labour was in demand, both Liberal and Labor governments were prepared to support the provision of children's services to a limited extent. However, with the onset of the recession and rising unemployment amongst youth, unmarried women and men, the lack of commitment to children's services is seen by some women as a deliberate attempt to force women with children out of the workforce and back into the home (Brennan, et al. 1980).

1.4 Perspectives on social service delivery and community management

With the defeat of the LCC in May 1983, the election of a Labor government gave rise to hopes among child-care groups that children's services would again become a significant component in the overall development of social policy in Australia. While Labor has promised a significant expansion in child care facilities and a move towards a more planned approach to service allocation favouring the most needy, the full extent of its commitment remains unclear. This is especially true concerning the role it perceives community groups as playing, in identifying needs and allocating resources.

From the evidence presented in this chapter it is clear that both political parties have experienced difficulty in directing services to those most in need, using a community management approach. In recent years they have also found it more difficult to win community support for the implementation of special need provisions, given the almost universal demand for government-sponsored child-care services. For Labor in particular, the apparent failure of one of its key community social service programs to produce any significant redistributive effects is cause for concern for the proponents of community social service strategies.

Two fundamental assumptions appear to have shaped Labor's approach to the use of community social services in its desire to bring about greater equality in Australian society. The first was referred to by Troy earlier in this chapter, in which he described the importance attached by the Whitlam government to the positioning of services in areas of need where inequality was perceived primarily as the product of locational considerations.

Painter (1979) takes up this issue in a critique of the urban perspective on public policy which prevailed among Labor strategists in the 1970's. He argues that the foundations for the development of urban services were laid by professional 'urbanists'. The 'urbanists' were less concerned, in his view, with solving relatively discrete

problems which were often localised and political in nature, than with developing rationalist administrative models which proposed universal urban solutions to disparities in access to services. For Painter, the urbanists were essentially apolitical, concerned with imposing a theoretical model as a kind of blueprint, rather than with adjusting and shaping action according to political circumstances. Politics was sometimes seen by urbanists as an obstacle, composed of 'vested interests' and 'irrational forces'. Painter argues that this combination of ideological and technocratic zeal is a fatal one in many urbanists, as it tends to separate the urban policy process from the realities of urban politics (Painter, 1979:341).

The rigidity of the professional 'urbanist' perspective is also highlighted in the apparent lack of attention given to the way in which differences in the material and personal circumstances of individuals affected access. It is interesting to note that the emphasis given to positional goods by Troy, at the time a leading figure among Australian professional 'urbanists', is different from Hirsch's broader treatment of the subject. Whereas Troy used Hirsch's concept within a locational planning framework, that is, positioning services in areas of need to increase real urban income, Hirsch emphasised the influence of individual 'starting handicaps' in determining access to positional goods.

> The concept of equal opportunity, or equality at the starting gate, is not much less question begging when applied to education than when applied to life chance in general, the central ambiguity being which starting handicaps on individuals and families are to be removed. Hirsch, 1977:5

Hirsch's comments raise significant questions as to the effectiveness of social policies which seek to equalise opportunity through the physical provision of services, but fail to take into account individual handicaps, whether they be material or personal. Although services may facilitate an 'equal start', an equal finish is most unlikely.

Troy's apparent attempt to equate 'positional goods' with the location of services, is further evidence of the urbanist preoccupation with the spatial form of access, which, as both Painter and Hirsch point out, can also be governed by factors of a political and personal nature. While Painter may have overemphasised the 'apolitical' nature of the urbanists, their concern with the locational determinants of access could possibly be explained by what Johnston (1983) referred to as a preoccupation with 'postivist-based' spatial science methodology which prevailed in urban research at the time. Had more normative approaches to the problem of researching been given greater credence, the 'locational solution' of urban planners may have been somewhat moderated.

The second assumption in Labor's strategy, one which is also held by the LCC, is the belief in community management

as an effective means of achieving its social policy objectives. The following discussion is limited to describing the ideological assumptions behind reformist and conservative notions of community within a contemporary social policy context. A more critical analysis of these approaches is presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

The growing interest in western industrial society over the past decade in community development is attributed by Pinker (1982) to the revival of the populist and romantic traditions of communitarianism. Pinker argues that discontent with the administrative tradition in social welfare, typified by 'a continuous trend towards centralisation and increasing reliance on administrative and professional expertise', led to a revival of communitarian welfare philosophies. However,

> the idea of basing social policies on community networks has drawn support from two conflicting ideological perspectives, and it is interesting that the two sides support it for totally incompatible reasons. (Pinker, 1982:18)

The ideological perspectives referred to by Pinker are described as institutional and residual versions of the communitarian approach to social policy development. The institutional approach basically embodies collectivist principles of social responsibility (George and Wilding, 1976), but differs from mainstream collectivist ideology in that it incorporates populist sentiments in which the state

is seen as the 'main source of injustice and inequality'. In order to avoid the excesses of the state, institutional communitarians perceive the community development movement as 'the ideal framework in which local communities could be mobilised into political pressure groups to obtain a massive increase in statutory resources.'

The residual approach is more in line with the traditional anti-collectivist approach to welfare provision which embraces the romanticist notion of individual rights and the 'veneration of the innate wisdom of ordinary men and women and their natural sympathy for democracy'. Under this system, altruistic volunteers in community organisations would be largely responsible for welfare provision and 'would generate a sufficient volume of informal care services to justify drastic cuts in statutory funding' to allow the state to concentrate on developing the private sector.

Pinker rejects both these approaches as effective social policy measures. He claims that in both arguments 'the concept of community is sanctified, attributed with qualities which it does not possess, and treated as the remedy for problems which originated in the inadequacy of community provision for welfare'. On this last point Pinker argues:

> Formal systems of social service delivery developed because the informal networks of mutual aid in local communities were manifestly incapable of meeting the kinds of personal need which arise in complex industrial societies. It is a romantic illusion to suppose that by dispersing a handful of professional social workers into local communities, and by allocating welfare grants to a variety of ad hoc user groups, we can miraculously revive the sleeping giants of populist altruism. In any case altruism is not enough. The most deprived local communities possess neither the resources nor the political means to secure the additional resources that they would need in order to tackle either structural problems or the hard core of their individual personal problems that, in large part, is why they are so deprived.' (Pinker, 1982:12-13, Emphasis mine)

Pinker's critique of the communitarian approaches to social service provision has particular relevance to the central theme of this thesis, namely the degree to which the most deprived communities and individuals can benefit from community programs of resource allocation. In the following chapters the focus of debate centres on one question. Does the action of actually positioning services within geographic reach of 'the community' ensure that those most in need will have equal opportunity in utilising services? Or, as Hirsch suggests, are those handicaps which are often associated with deprived individuals and communities so limiting that their access to services will be severely restricted?

To facilitate an understanding of the problems confronting policy makers in the implementation of child care programs, the chapters which follow provide an empirical framework for the analysis of who the major beneficiaries of government-sponsored child care services are and, secondly, are concerned to identify factors of a public and personal nature which help or hinder household access to child care. In addition, an analysis of the operation of a community association and its efforts to secure child care services for its members is also presented. This analysis provides an opportunity to review the applicability of the community management model as the major mechanism for allocating child care services. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology adopted for implementing the household survey and describing the community management process.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology and study areas

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted for the household survey of child care use and need. It also describes the approach employed in analysing community management and the delivery of child care services in a community association representing low-income families.

The principal objective was to carry out a household survey which would provide data on three fundamental issues: the need for child care services, access to them and the allocation of services among families with children under school age. The intention was to use household data on needs and access to establish a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of Federal Government child care programs. In short, the survey sought to examine the extent to which actual needs for child care among different families were met by government-sponsored child care services.

2.2 Selection of Study Areas

The reasons for selecting separate study areas stemmed partly from intent and partly from problems of survey design described later in this chapter. Since the primary intention was to focus on the comparative use and need for child care among households, there was clearly an advantage in selecting areas which reflected variation in levels of service provision and differences in the social and economic status of households. The suburbs of Melba and Charnwood

in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the city of Queanbeyan, New South Wales (NSW) were chosen to highlight these differences (Figure 2.1).

2.2.1 Melba-Charnwood

The suburbs of Melba and Charnwood were selected in anticipation that child care use and needs among households would reflect the interests of middle income families. Two suburbs were chosen to ensure that sufficient numbers of households with pre-school aged children would be available to survey. As indicated in Table 2.1, only 2 per cent of the population was unemployed with over half of those in employment occupying professional and administrative positions. Almost two-thirds of households (65 per cent) were in the process of purchasing their homes and approximately half (48 per cent) had annual incomes of $18,000 or more.

2.2.2 Melba Flats

The intention was to draw all ACT households from the Melba-Charnwood area, but, because the majority of single parents were found to live in one area, the Melba Flats Housing Estate, the estate was treated as a separate study area (Figure 2.1). The social and economic proflie of the residents of Melba Flats contrasted sharply with the wider Melba-Charnwood area (Table 2.1). The estate had a high proportion of low-income families, single parents and

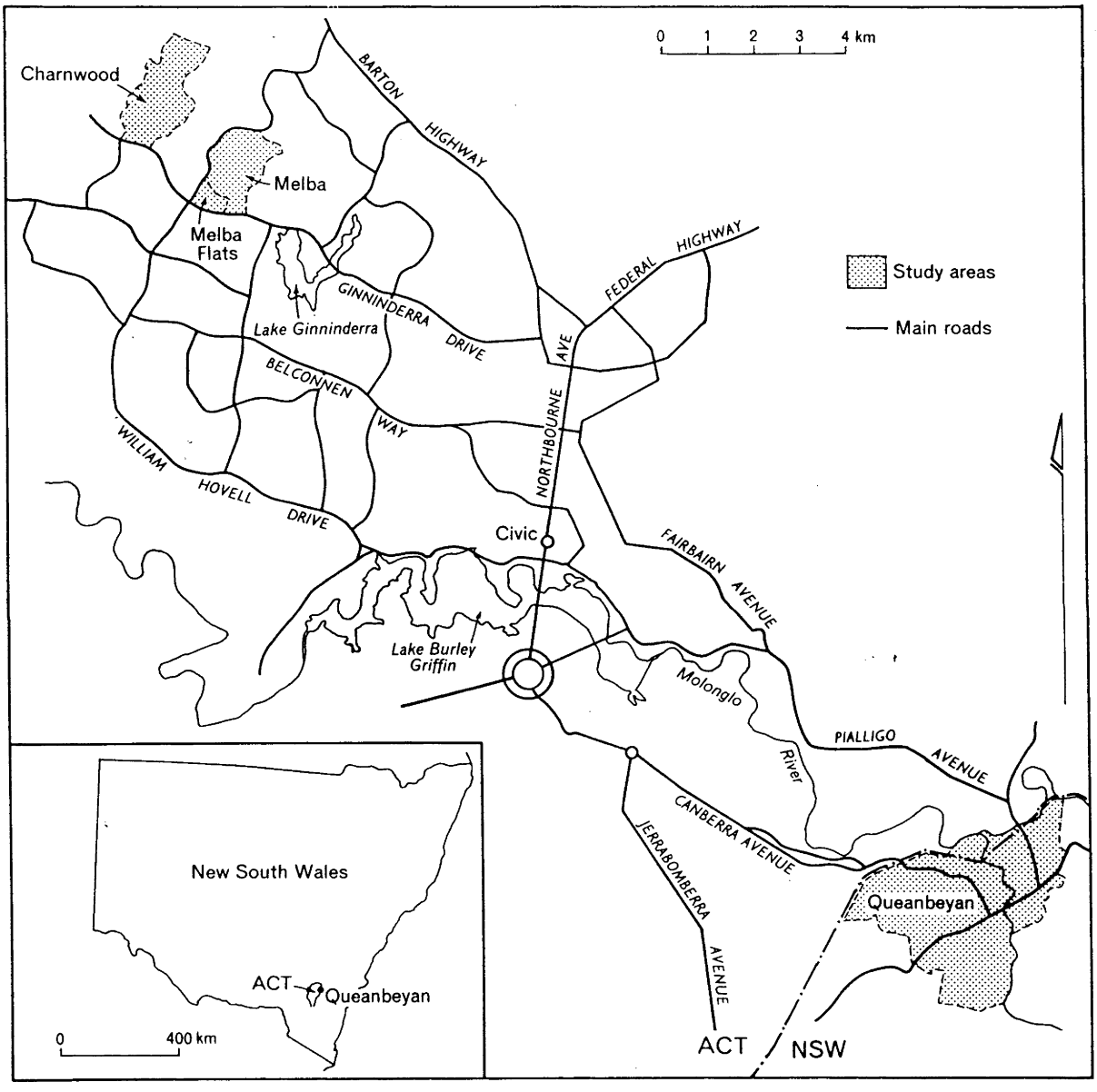


FIGURE 2.1: LOCATION OF STUDY AREAS

TABLE 2.1 : DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY AREAS

Characteristics		Melba-Charnwood	Melba-Flats	Queanbeyan
Total Population		7218	908	19383
Head and dependants only				
Males		32	6	54
Females		224	125	412
Number of Children 0-4 years		975	178	1736
Per cent population unemployed		2	14	4
Occupation Status				
Per cent in:	Professional employment	16	9	7
	Administration (Clerical)	39	31	25
	Tradesman	16	21	30
Occupancy Status				
Percent households:	Owner	11	0	23
	Purchaser	65	0	26
	Tenant - Housing Authority	8	100	8
	Tenant - Other	5	0	36
Family Income				
Per cent earning:	$10,000 or less	17	76	36
	More than $18,000	48	4	23
Tertiary or trade qualifications per cent of population.		36	15	22

(Source: ABS, 1981 Census)

unemployed persons. For reasons which will be described in the discussion on the household survey, the single-parent household population was restricted to those surveyed in Melba Flats. As such, the survey findings in Melba Flats need to be seen as those for a welfare housing estate, rather than being representative of the use of child care services by single parents in a wider suburban context.

2.2.3 Queanbeyan

Queanbeyan presented an obvious contrast to the middle class suburban landscape of Melba and Charnwood. Queanbeyan households experienced higher rates of unemployment, had fewer people in professional and administrative employment, had fewer tertiary and trade skills, had lower family incomes, and were more likely to be tenants in the private rental market (Table 2.1). Because of these differences and their likely relationship to child care needs and the use of child care services by households, Queanbeyan was included as the third major study area.

2.3 Study areas and the development and provision of child care

2.3.1 Child care services in the ACT

Unlike the states, the ACT was a major recipient of Commonwealth assistance to child care services, particularly kindergartens, in the years immediately following World War II. By 1961 57 per cent of pre-school aged children in the

ACT were attending kindergartens. In neighbouring NSW the figure was only 2.7 per cent (Walker, 1964:200). The role of politically influential women in Canberra, notably the wives of senior public servants and politicians, had much to do with the ACT's privileged position (Dixon, 1981). In 1982 Canberra's special position as a major recipient of Commonwealth funds for child care was still maintained (Table 2.2).

TABLE 2.2 : DISTRIBUTION OF COMMONWEALTH EXPENDITURE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES OTHER THAN PRE SCHOOL, 1981-82

State	No. of 0-4 year olds	% of 0-4 year olds	Amount of Commonwealth funds	% of Comm. funds	Commonwealth expenditure per 0-4 year old
N.S.W.	394 268	35	15 081 000	32	38.25
Vic.	296 656	27	12 018 000	25	40.51
Qld	172 067	15	7 827 000	17	45.49
S.A.	93 357	8	3 938 000	8	42.18
Tas.	33 484	3	1 869 000	4	55.82
N.T.	14 192	1	1 130 000	2	79.62
A.C.T.	22 551	2	1 613 000	3	71.53
Total	1 130 861	100	47 355 000	100	-

Cited in Brennan (1983:27)

Although the ACT only accounted for 2 per cent of the total 0-4 year population in Australia in 1981-82, Commonwealth expenditure on child care services other than pre-schools amounted to almost $72 per child (Table 3.2). In comparison, NSW with 35 per cent of 0-4 year olds only received $38 in Commonwealth subsidies per child. Next to the Northern Territory, children in the ACT are the recipients of the highest Commonwealth child care subsidies in Australia.

At the time of the survey child care services in the ACT were administered by a range of government, community and private child care organisations. There was no central co-ordinating authority which planned the overall development of child care. The administration of publicly funded child care services was shared between the Office of Child Care (Department of Social Security, DSS), the Early Childhood Unit (Welfare Branch, Department of the Capital Territory, DCT) and the ACT Schools Authority which is responsible to the Minister for Education.

The major services which these agencies finance and administer within the Belconnen Service Region including the suburbs of Melba and Charnwood, are shown in Figure 2.2

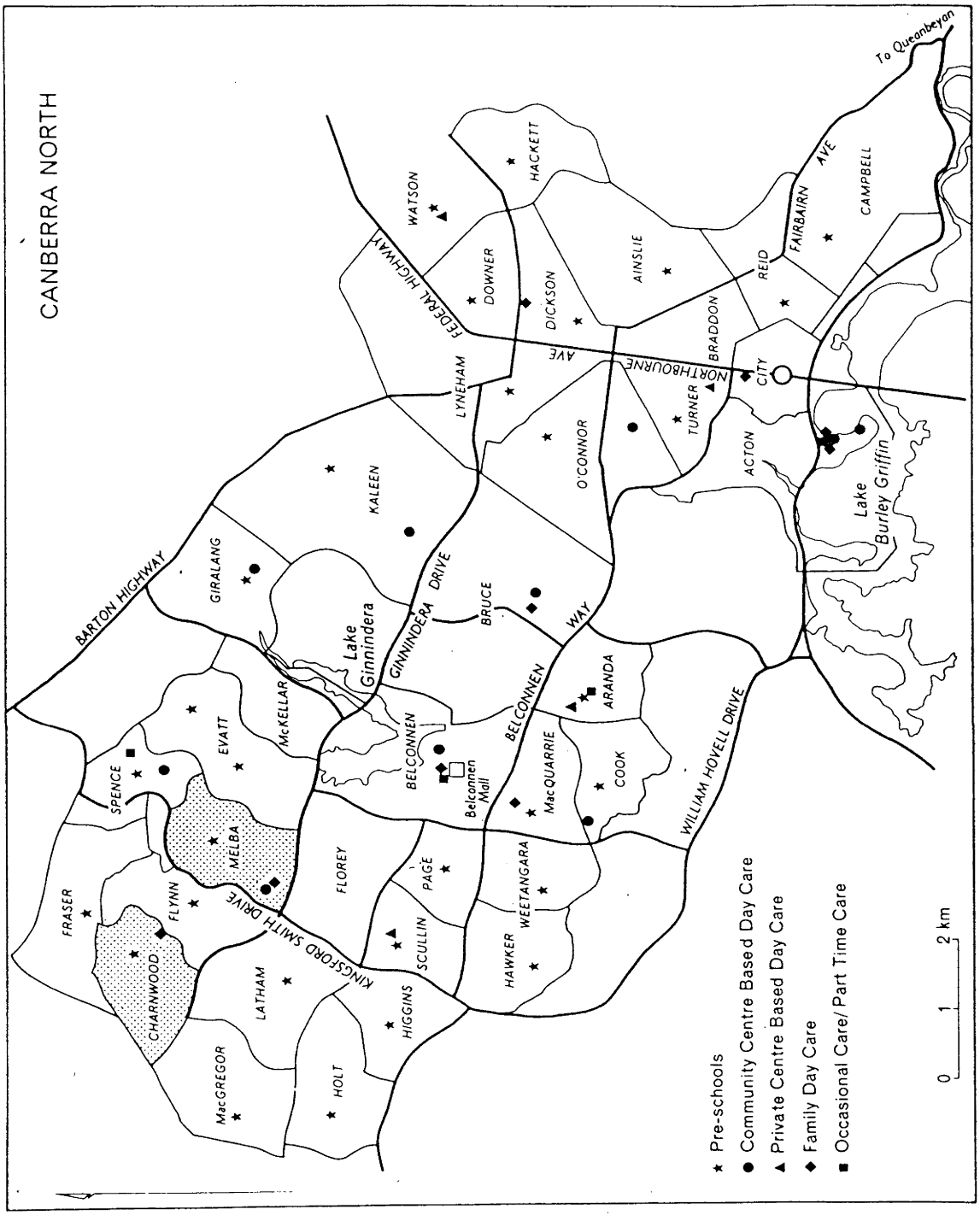


FIGURE 2.2: BELCONNEN SERVICE REGION

Table 2.3 details the respective levels of service provision by service type within the Belconnen region. Belconnen's comparative advantage over Queanbeyan in licenced child care places is immediately apparent. Although, within the Belconnen region there are proportionately more children per place for centre-based day care and occasional care than for other licenced services.

TABLE 2.3 : LICENCED CHILD CARE PLACES AVAILABLE IN THE BELCONNEN AND QUEANBEYAN SERVICE REGIONS

	Belconnen[1]		Queanbeyan[3]	
Total Population 0-4 years	10,730		1736	
Licenced Services	Places	Children/ Place	Places	Children/ Place
Centre Based Day Care (Private and Community Sponsored)	480	22.35	35	49.6
Family Day Care - Government Sponsored	675	15.89	66	28.9
Occasional Care	220	48.77	25	69.4
Pre-School (Four year olds only)[2]	2103	1.06	65	5.3

Source: 1. Child Welfare Branch, Department of the Capital Territory (1983)

2. A.C.T. Schools Authority (1983)

3. Department of Youth and Community Services, Queanbeyan (1983)

The Office of Child Care, through its regional office in the ACT, is primarily responsible for administering services which are funded under the Child Care Act within the broad guidelines of the Children's Services Program.[1] The Early Childhood Unit (DCT) is the central licencing authority for all registered child care services and the Schools Authority administers the pre-school program. Funds for child care come from three sources: firstly, block grants provided for pre-schools through the Schools Authority; secondly, other children's service programs funded through the Office of Child Care and thirdly, the Community Services grant administered by the Department of the Capital Territory. The Community Services grant accounts for only minor assistance to child care and is part of a broader program of community development funding.

In addition to the three departments administering services there are four active children's service associations representing child care interests. The ACT Family Day Care Association, the Australian Early Childhood Association serving pre-schools, the ACT Play Group Association and the Canberra Association of Community Based Children's Services, the latter covers occasional and day care interests. Since the publication of the Spender Report (1981) the Canberra Association for Community Based

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1. For a full list of child-care services funded by the Office of Child Care see appendix 3 .

Children's Services has been particularly active. This group is part of a nation-wide movement concerned to improve child care services (see Chapter 5). Although it serves as a rallying point for a diverse range of child care interests, the Early Childhood Association is not represented. The absence of this Association effectively maintains the traditional division between care and educational interests within the children's services movement described in Appendix 2 .

2.3.2 Child Care in Queanbeyan

The first service to be established in Queanbeyan was the Harris Park pre-school in 1951. Compared with Canberra, Queanbeyan's late start and its low levels of service provision (Table 2.3), reflect the long-term neglect of child care by the Commonwealth throughout New South Wales (Table 2.2). Queanbeyan has a Regional Early Childhood Services Adviser responsible to the Department of Youth and Community Services. The adviser's primary responsibility is to ensure that licencing regulations are adhered to and to assist in the overall development of childrens' services within the area. This second objective provides the adviser with greater scope for co-ordinating the development of services and, to this end, a Community Welfare Advisory Committee has been established to examine a range of community needs including those of child care. This

Advisory Committee, formed in 1982, is intended to act as a channel for community interests and offers the prospect of integrating child care services and developing a more rounded view of child care needs than the disparate array of government departments and community agencies attempting to coordinate child care in the ACT.

Although most child care services located in the ACT are within 20-45 minutes travelling time by car from Queanbeyan, a survey in May 1981 revealed that relatively little use is made of centre-based sessional and day care facilities. Canberra services were asked to record the number of Queanbeyan residents who used child care over a two-week period. Figure 2.3 illustrates that service use by Queanbeyan residents was mainly restricted to South Canberra, with the majority of users seeking care at the occasional care centre near the Woden shopping centre.

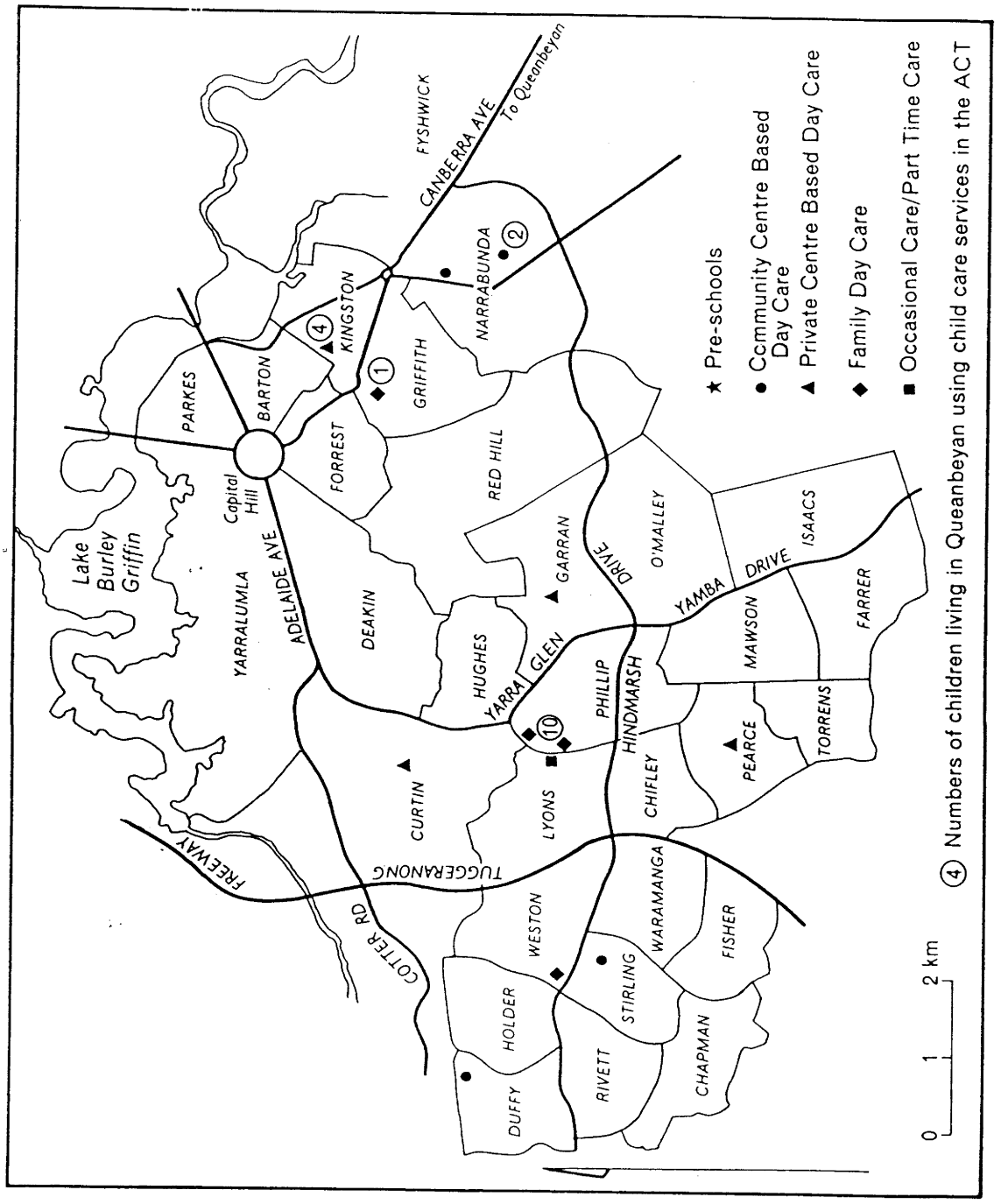


FIGURE 2.3: USE OF SOUTH CANBERRA CHILD CARE SERVICES BY QUEANBEYAN RESIDENTS

2.4 The household survey

2.4.1 Selection of household types

Three household types were selected for analysis; single-parent, two-parent single-income and two-income families with pre-school aged children. These household types were chosen because they represent different dimensions of the need for child care among families and, as such, provide scope for comparative analysis of the need for, and access to, child care across a range of social and economic situations. In addition, single-parent and two-income families are also rated as priority groups in the allocation of government-sponsored child care services and present an opportunity to examine the relationship between government policy objectives and actual use of services among these households.

2.4.2 Establishing a survey population

Developing a sample framework which would identify households with children under school age proved to be a major problem in the research design. To develop a representative sample for each family type a total population for each of the three groups needed to be identified. National census data (ABS, 1981) provided information only on households with dependents, but without

indicating the number or percentage with children under 5 years. The only available statistics on type of households with children under school age come from the Child Care Survey conducted by the Bureau of Statistics.[2] This survey, although primarily designed to provide information on child care arrangements for children under 12 years, can be disaggregated to enumerate families with children under school age on a state-by-state basis. However, because it is a 2.5 per cent sample of households with dependent children under 12 years, the use of state-wide figures to estimate a survey population within specific urban communities was considered to be an inappropriate method.

Assistance in identifying families with children under 5 in Melba, Charnwood and Queanbeyan was sought from Community Health Centre Clinics in the ACT and Queanbeyan. All children born in Australia are registered on clinic cards and clinic sisters, either through home visits or clinic attendance, see almost all of them. With the informed help of clinic sisters it was anticipated that an estimate of the numbers of children under school age living in the study areas could be made and, through their personal knowledge of families, households could be differentiated into the three family categories chosen for study. In June 1981 negoitiations were undertaken with clinic sisters in

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2. The Australian Bureau of Statistics, Child Care Arrangements Australia, June, Catalogue No. 4402.0. (1981)

both study areas and arrangements were made for access to their records. Clinic records for the years 1978-1981 were divided into the three major family types and aggregate figures were produced for a survey population by family type and area (Table 2.4).

TABLE 2.4: CLINIC ESTIMATES OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH PRE-SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN.

Family Types	Clinic Populations		
	1. Melba-Charnwood	2. Melba Flats	3. Queanbeyan
Single Parents	15	33	49
Two Parent Single Income	457	*	749
Two Parent Two Incomes	161	*	381
Total Number of Families	633		1157
Number of children aged 0-4 years by Clinic Records	834	33	1446
Number of children aged 0-4 years 1981 Census	1153	178	1736

Source: 1. Melba-Charnwood: Melba and Charnwood Health Centre Clinic Records 1978-1981. Courtesy of the A.C.T. Health Commission.

2. Melba Flats: Melba Health Centre Clinic Records 1978-1981. A.C.T. Health Commission.

3. Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan Community Health Centre Clinic Records 1978-1981. New South Wales Department of Health.

* No data collected.

During the compilation of the survey population clinic sisters drew attention to problems associated with the accuracy of clinic records as a measure of the total 0-4 year old population. The main problem in their view was that, although records for 0-1 year olds were reasonably accurate, the data for 2-4 year olds were questionable. In their experience, most children attended clinics only up to the age of 2 years and were not seen again until they reached school age (5 years). Consequently, clinic sisters were able only to estimate the number of 2-4 year olds resident in the study areas. The movements of families who had either left or taken up residence in the study areas could not be traced unless they had children under 2 years, in which case, they would normally be recorded on current clinic cards. Compared with the 1981 census data for children 0-4 years, it was found that all the clinic areas underestimated their population under 5 years (Table 2.4).

Despite the problems associated with the use of clinic records, they nonetheless provided the only available information on the numbers of households with pre-school aged children in different family categories. For the two major areas being studied they provided sufficient numbers of two-parent single-income (1206) and two-income families (542). However the relatively small number of single-parent families identified in all three study areas (97) posed

problems for the random selection of households given the possibility that not all of these households would be available or prepared to participate in the survey.

Considerable effort was expended in locating single-parent families living within each of the study areas to supplement the clinic records. Of the 48 recorded single-parent households in the Melba-Charnwood area, 33 households were residing in the Melba Flats Housing Estate. Given the concentration of single parents in this area and the likelihood that more could be located, a decision was made to restrict the survey of single parents in the Melba-Charnwood area to Melba Flats and acknowledge the bias in the survey toward single parents who were primarily welfare recipients.

An approach was made to the resident Housing Officer in the Melba Flats Estate to estimate the numbers of single-parent households with children under 5 years. Each household received a circular requesting their co-operation in the survey, but only four responded. Although sufficient numbers of single parents had been identified (123 families), obtaining their consent for a survey posed a major problem.

The Melba Flats Community Association which represented the interests of residents in the estate was approached for assistance in encouraging households to participate. The Association was initially reluctant to become involved, claiming that a past survey had misrepresented the needs and attitudes of residents. After a series of meetings the Association agreed to participate on condition that a separate report be written for their use in drawing attention to child care needs in the area.

Queanbeyan posed a different problem for the identification of single parents. Clinic sister could account for only 49 single-parent families. Unlike Melba Flats, single-parent households were geographically dispersed throughout Queanbeyan, making contact much more difficult. Assistance in locating single-parent families was sought through the Queanbeyan Women's Refuge and the Department of Youth and Community Services. Both organisations stated that they would be prepared to provide contacts, if sufficient numbers could not be located by other means.

2.4.3. Designing the household survey

The primary objective of the questionnaire was to provide information on the need for child care and household access to child care services. Designing questions which measured

need posed a number of problems. The first issue to be resolved was whether the questionnaire should be orientated towards the development needs of children, or towards the broader social and economic needs of the family, or both. Arguments presented in Chapter 1 suggest that the issues are closely related, but in this research the role which child care plays in the social and economic development of families, and women in particular, has been chosen as the central focus. Accordingly, the question of need was treated in the context of eliciting responses which highlighted social and economic conditions within the family and how access to child care could influence these conditions.

The central problem in developing a questionnaire was whether a standard set of questions could be designed to reflect the diversity of personal family situations which could be expected from three study areas and family types. Discussions were held with the Office of Child Care, the Early Childhood Adviser in Queanbeyan, representatives of the Queanbeyan Women's Refuge and the Melba Flats Community Association on how to deal with the question of need. During the discussions the following points were raised:

(a) There would be considerable differences in the ability of respondents to articulate needs: (b) questions should avoid eliciting responses which allowed respondents to

sublimate their immediate and felt needs in favour of what they thought were acceptable responses; (c) open-ended questions which allowed respondents to elaborate on their particular needs were preferred to a more structured approach; (d) open-ended questions would provide a more accurate reflection of the immediate needs of respondents and their knowledge of what was achievable, given their personal circumstances.

In these discussions, representatives from the Queanbeyan Refuge and the Melba Flats Community Association stressed the importance of developing a social and economic profile of each family so that, if respondents were unable to articulate their needs, an independent assessment of need could be made from these profiles. The inference was that, in some cases, those most in need would have a low needs rating because of problems of articulation.

Recording the nature and extent of child-care use among households was considered to be the best way of measuring access. By comparing the frequency and type of services used, and relating the information to the social and economic circumstances of families, a basis for analysing the comparitive access of the three household groups to child care could be established. Representatives

from the Queanbeyan Refuge and the Melba Flats Community Association expressed reservations about the capacity of a formal survey to record accurately problems of personal access among families with special needs. They argued that for some families the factors affecting access could only be determined by in-depth personal knowledge of the families concerned. Thus, in their view, the survey might understate the needs and access problems of special need families. This issue is taken up in more detail in the discussion on the role of participant-observer in research design.

2.4.4 Questionnaire contents and the pilot test

Table 2.5 summarizes the major components of the household survey used in interviewing 330 households throughout the three study areas between September and December 1981.[3]

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3. See Appendix 4 for the content and format of the questionnaire.

TABLE 2.5 : SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENTS

Part	Contents
A	Deals with household details covering residency status, family size and composition, employment and education status.
B	Introduces the child care diary in which respondents are asked to record their child care arrangements over a period of seven days.
C - D	Covers the usual and intended child care arrangements made for pre-school aged children.
E - F	Requests information on whether the respondent is providing any paid or unpaid child care and arrangements made for school aged children.
G	Examines the issue of access to friends and relatives for the provision of child care.
H - I	Covers the changes the respondent wishes to make to existing child care arrangements, the reasons for these changes and future personal plans once all children are at school.
J	Outlines the types of child care used since having children, child care preferences and an attitude scale for rating feelings of social alienation.

The rationale for introducing a child care diary (part B of the questionnaire) into the survey requires some explanation. The diary was intended to collect information on the types of child care arrangements made and the amount of time parents cared for their children over a seven day reference week. The diary was seen as a useful guide to explaining the division of labour in relation to child care among parents and was expected to highlight how parents used their time when their children were in care. The diaries were also envisaged as being used to examine variation in the pattern of child care between children of different ages within the same household.

Calculating the maximum number of hours for the reference week posed a problem. In the pilot survey, provision was made for the diaries to record child care arrangements made between 1 a.m. through to 12 p.m., 7 days a week, a total of 168 hours. Analysis of the data from the pilot survey revealed that the majority of child care arrangements occurred between 7 a.m. in the morning and 12 p.m. at night. Some respondents reported confusion over how to record periods, usually between 12 a.m. and 6 a.m., given that parents and children were usually asleep. To avoid confusion the reference week was limited to recording child care arrangements between 7 a.m. and 12 p.m. a total of 126 hours over a seven-day period. In situations where regular child care arrangements were made outside these hours, as

in the case of shift workers, a special note of these occurrences was made. A total of six households was involved in this category but only two were using arrangements outside the immediate family.

Before the pilot survey was undertaken it was planned that the questionnaire would be administered in the following way. Once contact had been established with a respondent, household details were to be recorded (Section A) and the purpose of the diary explained (Section B). A date for a second interview would then be established to discuss the diary and to complete sections C-J of the questionnaire.

A total of 15 households in the Melba-Charnwood area was selected for the pilot survey; five households from each family type. The pilot survey highlighted a number of logistical problems. Most two-income families preferred to be interviewed at night, as they wished to keep their weekends to themselves. This attitude restricted the number of interviews which could be carried out to about two per night. Single parents were frequently absent at both the contact and interview stages.

The pilot survey highlighted the earlier concern about the difficulties some respondents were likely to have in articulating their needs for child care. In several households it was evident that relations between parents

and their children were severely strained, yet most of these respondents chose to present themselves as having no special child care needs.

No significant changes were made to the questionnaire, but it was apparent that completion of the diary would pose problems. Almost a quarter of the respondents interviewed in the pilot survey failed to complete the diary to a standard where it could be used for statistical purposes. The problem was not that it was too difficult, but that it required daily recall and for some respondents this was apparently too time consuming. Despite this problem the diary was retained in the questionnaire. The pilot survey revealed that, of those diaries completed, valuable information on the time budgets of parents and their children could be obtained.

2.5 Implementing the survey

Since the total number of family types in each study area could not be reliably estimated, it was impossible to adhere to the usual conventions of statistical sampling by drawing a sample from a known population, calculating margins of error and determining the representative nature of the survey. Despite this problem, the actual number of households surveyed (330) is considered more than illustrative of family types (Table 2.6). For example, 18

per cent of clinic households were surveyed in Melba-Charnwood, 36 per cent of the total single-parent population in Melba Flats and 12 per cent of two-parent family clinic attenders in Queanbeyan. The proportion of single-parent households surveyed in Queanbeyan was almost twice the number of estimated clinic attenders, although no estimate of the number of single-parent households with children under 5 years could be established for Queanbeyan as a whole.

TABLE 2.6: PER CENT OF HOUSEHOLDS AND CHILDREN AGED 0-4 SURVEYED IN STUDY AREAS.

Family Type	Melba-Charnwood			Melba Flats			Queanbeyan		
No. of Households	Clinic Population	Population Surveyed	Per cent Surveyed	Clinic Population	Population Surveyed	Per cent Surveyed	Clinic Population	Population Surveyed	Per cent Surveyed
Single Parent	---------Not Applicable--------			33	44[1]		27	50[2]	
Two Parent Single Income	457	67	15.1	---------Not Applicable--------			749	75	10.01
Two Parent Two Incomes	161	44	27.3	---------Not Applicable--------			381	50	13.12
Total Clinic Population	618	-	-	33	-	-	1157	-	-
Total Households Surveyed		111	17.9		44	36.4		175	11.56
No. of children 0-4 Survey Population		159			57			213	
No. of children 0-4 1981 Census		1153	13.7		178	32.0		1736	12.2

1 Survey Population determined from clinic records and Melba Flats Housing Manager's records.

2 Survey Population determined from clinic records and referals by the Department of Youth and Community Service and other single parent respondents.

Three research assistants were employed to assist in the survey. Two were allocated to the full-time task of assisting in locating single parents in Queanbeyan and Melba Flats, the third assisted in night interviewing. In those areas where there were sufficient numbers of households listed in the clinic records, as was the case with two-parent single-income and two-income families, potential respondents were selected at random and lists of addresses given to each interviewer.

As the data in Table 2.6 indicate, there was a shortfall in the number of single parents interviewed in Melba Flats (7) and in two-income families in the Melba-Charnwood area (5). These shortfalls occurred either because sample households declined to be interviewed, or because families were out on each occasion and could not be reached, or because they had moved away.

In Queanbeyan the clinic records for single parents proved to be inaccurate. The main problem encountered was the extreme mobility of these families. Some had moved two or three times in the space of one year. Single parents in Queanbeyan were mainly contacted through single parent networks. These networks were built up by asking respondents for assistance in locating other single-parent households. The networks were usually no larger than 2-3 households and not all approaches were successful.

2.6 Statistical methods

Data were processed using the procedures of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nie et al. 1975). These included the multiple response procedure to aggregate data in which the respondent gave more than one response to the same question. For example, in Section C of the quetionnaire, question 4 asked respondents to indicate their reasons for using various forms of child care. The responses fell into three broad categories and often the same reason was given twice if more than one service was needed. The main value of multiple response tables is that they indicate the proportion of responses attributed to a specific variable. On the other hand, a limitation to their use is that no significance tests can be employed.

In Chapter 4 use is made of a contingency table (Table 4.9). Instead of expressing relationships between variables in percentages, ratios are used. Ratios greater than 1 are indicative of a greater concentration of households in a particular category. The main value of the contingency table is that it could be used to show association between variables which, while not being statistically significant, do have some meaning. The actual method of calculating the contingency table is described in a note appended to table (4.9). The approach was adopted from work carried out by the Australian Institute of Urban Studies (Cartwright, 1973:60).

For some tables chi square tests have been used to highlight the statistical significance between variables. Statistical significance is determined where there is a relationship between variables with a probability value of .05 or less. Where significance levels have been calculated they are denoted by the letter (P) followed by the chi square value. Unless otherwise stated, all data used to compile figures and tables in this study have been drawn from the household survey.

2.7 Describing community management. A role for the participant observer

In terms of methodology, the household survey presented few problems. But for the difficulty of identifying a sample population, the basic conventions of survey design were adhered to. On the other hand, a description of community management and its effectiveness in child care delivery posed more complex research problems. Unlike the household survey, which could be handled by a questionnaire, community management is a social process which, if not already documented, requires continuous observation over a long period of time. No reported research had been carried out into community management and the issue of child care in any of the three study areas. Hence, if a detailed case study of community social service provision was to be developed to complement the household survey, a suitable 'community' involved in the provision of child care service had to be found.

The Melba Flats Community Association was chosen for three reasons. First, the Association mainly represented low income families, many of whom had pre-school aged children who are the focus of government sponsored child care initiatives. Second, the Association and its endeavours to secure child care for its members provided an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the community model of social service provision in catering for those most in need. Third, the Association had stipulated that, in return for encouraging residents to participate in the household survey, a report should be written outlining child care needs in the area. The compilation of this report and its recommendations for the improvement of child care services led to my personal involvement in the activities of the Association.

The role of participant-observer provided the opportunity to undertake a more in-depth study of need and access among households and the interaction between policy makers and the community in the submission process. For example, most of the discussion on personal-access problems, which are central to the arguments presented in this thesis, come from personal knowledge of households acquired as a member of the Melba Flats Community Association and not from the questionnaire. For some households the major obstacles to the use of care were too personal to record in a one-off

survey administered by a total stranger. Personal access considerations were often only revealed after contact with households had been established for some time.'

Without direct participation in the Association and the negotiations between Committee members and government departments concerned with the delivery of child care services, the insights gained into the social and political processes of community formation and social service delivery outlined in Chapter 6 would not have been possible.

While criticism can be levelled at the 'personal participation' approach because of its implications for objectivity, an issue which Rein (1976) claims does not exist in social research, the approach was adopted because it was considered to be the best way of recording how individuals and institutions interacted with each other.

Personal participation in survey design is taken up by Oakley (1981) as a central issue in a feminist critique of conventional research methodology. Oakley argues that objective formal interviews promote a hierarchical and male-dominated view of society which attempts to define social relations as being devoid of emotion and subjectivity.

For Oakley:

> the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship (1981:41).

The importance of subjectivity in social research is also pursued by two geographers, Ley and Samuels (1978). They urge that a more humanistic approach to social research needs to be adopted with the aim of making people the subjects and not simply the objects of research. For Ley and Samuels, social action cannot always be accurately represented by objective measurement. Emotions, attitudes and feelings which can often only be recorded through subjective observation also form a legitimate part of research methodology.

In the chapters which follow data are presented which attempt to reveal both the objective and subjective nature of the factors which influence the access of households to child care services.

CHAPTER 3

Household profiles

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to describe some fundamental social and economic characteristics which emerged from the survey of the three household groups selected for study; single-parents, two-parent single-income and two-income families. The basic premise of this chapter is that the material and social well-being of households is closely linked to their income-earning opportunities. Special attention is therefore given to household incomes and the factors affecting the income-earning capacity of families. Data presented in this chapter provides a useful framework for the analysis of the comparative use and need for child care among households (Chapter 4) given, that for most households, employment prospects are closely allied to the availability of child care, in or outside of the home.

The discussion begins with an analysis of family composition which seeks to highlight important differences in size of households, the age of parents and their dependents. These differences are considered to have a bearing on the income earning capacity of households. Following this discussion, household incomes are examined with special attention being given to the amount of disposable income available to household members after basic items of expenditure have been deducted. The issue of contributions made to incomes of single parents through de facto relationships is also examined.

Factors affecting the income-earning capacity of parents such as education, employment skills and issues relating to household composition are described to illustrate the major obstacles to employment and greater income security among low income earners. In the light of data presented on comparative household incomes, the relative impact which differences in income have on the purchasing power and the material welfare of households is examined in five key sectors; expenditure on food, transport, health care, child care, house-rent and mortgage payments. Lastly, the relationship between income and feelings of social alienation among respondents is examined by means of an attitude scale.

3.2 Household composition

The most striking feature of household composition was the very great predominance of women among single parents; of the 94 single parents interviewed only two were males. Various agencies involved with single parents, notably Parents Without Partners (PWP), the Melba Flats Community Association and the Department of Youth and Community Services all suggested similar reasons for this occurrence; that most men were unable to cope with raising young children, particularly those under five. Men chose to avoid shared child care arrangements where infants were involved, but often sought access to their children once they were

older. Members of the Belconnen branch of PWP reflected this trend. In the survey search for potential single-parent respondents, the Belconnen Branch of PWP was approached and discussions held with members. Of those members who had children under five the majority were women. Men, who made up approximately half the membership, were primarily caring for or seeking access to older children.

3.2.1 Number of dependent children

Most single-parent households had only one dependent child (Figure 3.1)

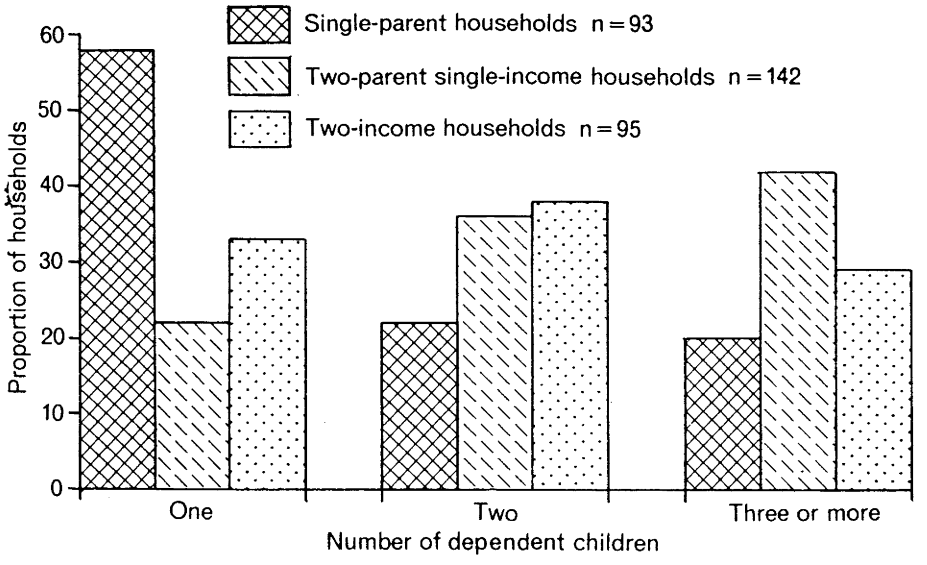


FIGURE 3.1: NUMBER OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE.

The dominance of the one-child family among single parents can be attributed to the relative youth of the parents: 67 per cent were under 26 years of age (Figure 3.3). There was also an acknowledgement among some women that a second child could limit their social and economic mobility.

> If I had another kid it would be harder to work and no bloke would look at me. (Single parent, Queanbeyan)

The number of dependents in a family was more variable among two-parent households. Single-income households had proportionately fewer families with one dependent child, but had the highest representation among two-parent households with 3 or more children. The implications of these differences are examined in detail in the discussion on the income-earning capacity of households.

3.2.2 Age of dependant children

There are some notable variations in the age of children by family type (Table 3.1). single parents and two-income households had fewer children under the age of 12 months than did two-parent, single-income families. In the case of two-income families it is suggested later in this chapter that this occurrence is directly related to employment opportunities and the availability of child care. Single-parent households had a higher proportion of children aged 0-4 years (75 per cent) than did two-parent households.

TABLE 3.1 : AGE OF CHILDREN BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Age of Children	Household Type: Single Parent	Two Parent Single Income	Two Income
	per cent	per cent	per cent
< 1 year	12	17	9
1 year	15	13	12
2 years	17	14	13
3 years	16	15	13
4 years	15	10	16
5-12 years*	25	31	37
Number of children	153	321	188

* Children over 12 years of age were excluded from the survey. The Children's Services Program is primarily concerned with the 0-12 year age groups.

The relative youth of single-parent women (Figure 3.3) would account for this difference. Two-income households had the highest proportion of children aged 5 years and over. This occurrence can also be related to employment opportunity, given that older children are able to take better care of themselves and often participate in the care of younger children (Chapter 4, Figure 4.7)

In keeping with the emphasis on household composition and employment opportunity a significant feature of two-income households was the high proportion of families (77 per cent) with only one child under school age (Figure 3.2).

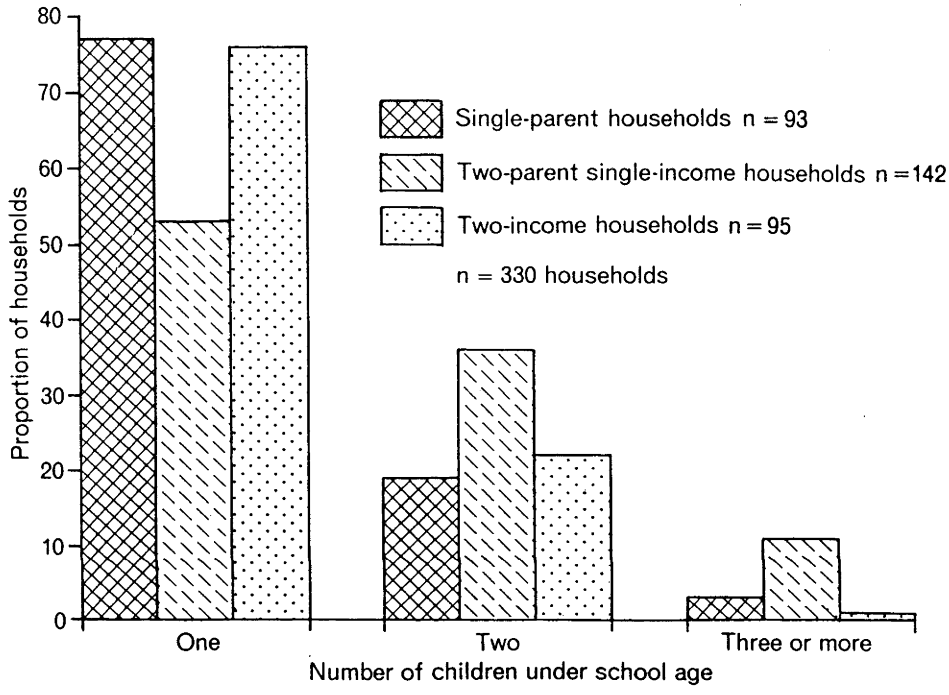


FIGURE 3.2: NUMBERS OF CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE.

As is discussed later, the problem and cost of locating suitable child care arrangements means that a family with more than one child under school age is less likely to seek employment for both parents; consequently there is a higher proportion of two-income households with only one pre-school aged child.

3.2.3 Age of female parents

There were notable age differences between female parents in all three family types which appeared to have a bearing on the employment status of women (Figure 3.3).

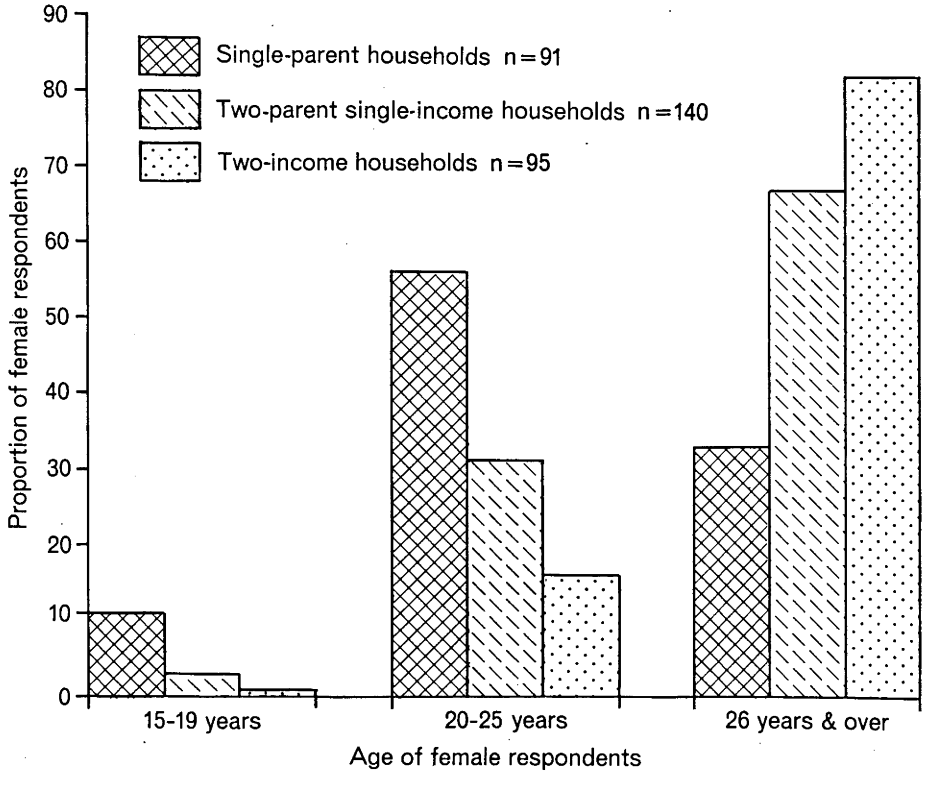


FIGURE 3.3: AGE OF FEMALE PARENTS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE.

The majority of women in employment (83 per cent) were aged 26 years and over. Mothers who did not work tended to be younger, with single parents being the primary household group in this category (67 per cent were under 25 years of age). Although the relationship between age and employment status was not canvassed in the questionnaire, the overriding impression gained from interviewing working mothers was that their age and maturity enabled them to cope with employment and motherhood much more effectively than younger women who appeared to be less sure about their future.

To summarize, single-parent households are characterised by a female household head with one dependent child. Because of the relative youth of single-parent mothers they have a higher concentration of children in the 0-4 year age group than any other family type. Two-parent households have larger families, with a greater diversity of age among both children and parents. There are, however, some major differences between two-income and single-income households within this group. Two-income households have fewer children under school age, but have a higher proportion in the 5-12 year age group. It is suggested that these differences have a bearing on the employment opportunities of two-parent families, an issue taken up later in this chapter.

3.3 Household incomes

3.3.1 Households and net fortnightly income

Net household income was calculated on a fornightly basis. Net income was preferred to gross income data because it more accurately represented the disposable income of each family. Net incomes were calculated using gross income less tax. Families were divided into two categories, those deriving their income from employment and those in receipt of welfare benefits (Table 3.2).

TABLE 3.2 : HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOMES RECEIVED FROM WELFARE BENEFITS AND EMPLOYMENT

		Queanbeyan		Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
Households	Single Parents	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent
Net income of households receiving welfare benefits ($192-$339)						
			Number of Households			
	44	9	-	2	-	38
			Per cent of Households			
	86	19	-	3	-	91
Net income of households in employment						
			Number of Households			
	6	42	43	54	43	4
			Per cent of households			
$213-$437 Low Income	100	43	7	26	2	100
$438-$557 Lower-Middle	0	43	9	46	5	0
$558-$710 Middle-Upper	0	14	37	19	35	0
$711-$1237 High Income	0	0	47	9	58	0

Of those households in employment, four broad income groups were delineated on the basis of the upper and lower quartiles and the interquartile range. All households on welfare benefits fell within the low income category, $437 or less per fortnight (Table 3.3)

TABLE 3.3: HOUSEHOLD INCOME CATEGORIES

		Queanbeyan		Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
Households	Single Parents	Two Parent Single Income	Two Income	Two Parent Single Income	Two Income	Single Parent
			Number of Households			
	44	50	43	56	43	34
			Per cent of Households			
$192-437 Low Income	100	53	7	29	2	100
$438-557 Lower-Middle	0	35	9	45	5	0
$558-710 Upper-Middle	0	12	37	18	35	0
$711-1237 High Income	0	0	47	9	58	0

Eighty-eight per cent of single parents were receiving social security benefits in the form of supporting parent's pension (Table 3.2). At the time of the survey a supporting parent with one child received $192 per fortnight. With the exception or single parents who worked, the income of these households was determined by the number of dependent children in each family. Of the single parents working, all were in the low-income category (Table 3.2).

In contrast to the low incomes of single-parent families, the average income of two-parent single-income households in Melba-Charnwood was $500 per fortnight and $429 in Queanbeyan. Since two-thirds of employed males in Queanbeyan were employed in blue-collar industries[1] (Table 3.4) average incomes could be expected to be lower. The relationship between low-income status and area among two-parent single-income households is highlighted in Table 3.3. More than half the Queanbeyan households were low-income earners (53 per cent) while only 29 per cent of households in Melba-Charnwood fell within this category.

The relative affluence of two-income households was even more marked. As the data in Table 3.3 demonstrate, two-income household earnings ranged up to $1 237 per fortnight. Eighty-eight per cent of two-income households

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1. In this study the term 'blue collar' is used to denote those areas of employment which are usually associated with manual work such as that performed by a labourer or tradesman.

were concentrated in the upper-middle and high income groups. Female incomes were evenly distributed in both study areas, in contrast to major area differences among male earnings from two-income households. In Melba-Charnwood almost 42 per cent of males from two-income households were earning $550 or more per fortnight (Table 3.4). In comparison only 24 per cent of males in Queanbeyan fell within this category. The higher proportion of males employed in professional and administrative positions in the Canberra survey area almost certainly accounted for this difference.

TABLE 3.4: NET MALE INCOME PER FORTNIGHT AND OCCUPATION STATUS

	Queanbeyan		Melba-Charnwood	
Households	Two Parent Single Income	Two Income	Two Parent Single Income	Two Income
		Number of Males		
	39	42	50	43
Income		Per Cent of Males		
$178-396	18	38	14	7
$400-546	69	38	56	51
$550-1000	13	24	30	42
Occupational Status		Number of Males		
	62	51	64	44
		Per Cent of Males		
White Collar	32	59	52	68
Blue Collar	68	41	48	32

Published data on the average weekly earnings of Australian households (ABS, June 1981) help to illustrate the substantial income differentials between those households deriving their income from employment and those dependent on social security benefits. In June 1981 the average weekly earnings for females in employment was $240, but a female single parent on a supporting parent's pension received only $91. For a male breadwinner, average weekly earnings were $280, $168 more per week than a male with a dependent spouse and child received on unemployment benefit. In short, social security payments were so far below average weekly earnings that prolonged dependence on unemployment benefits or a single parent pension was likely to place households at a serious financial disadvantage.

3.3.2 Disposable income per household member

The variable which best sums up the income status of households is disposable income per household member. This figure was calculated by subtracting food, rent or mortgage payments, transport and health insurance costs from net family income. These items were selected because they were considered to represent basic expenditures common to all households. All other household expenses had to be met from disposable income; notably clothing costs, heating and electricity charges, local government rates, child care and educational costs, entertainment and credit expenses.

The relative poverty of single-parent families compared with two-parent households is clearly evident in figure 3.4.

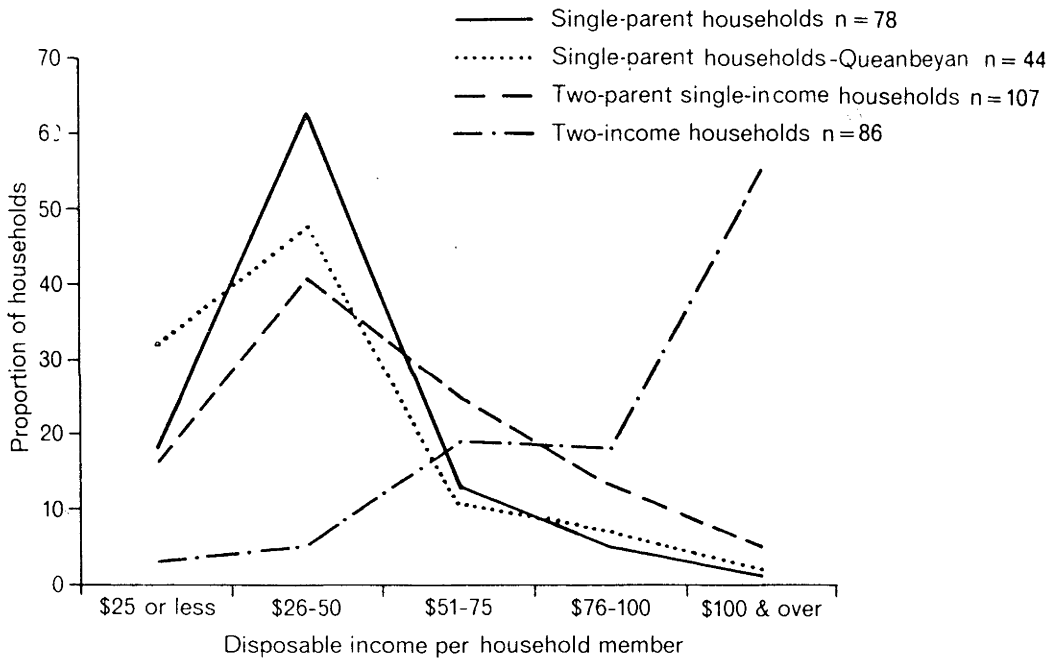


FIGURE 3.4: FORTNIGHTLY DISPOSABLE INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD MEMBER.

Eighty-one per cent of single-parent families had disposable incomes per household member of $50 or less per fortnight. Those in greatest financial hardship were single parents in Queanbeyan where almost one-third had a disposable fortnightly income of $25 or less. The factor which most influenced the disposable income of single parents in Queanbeyan was their residential status. The majority of single-parents in Queanbeyan were private tenants who were obliged to spend proportionately more of their income on rent than other household groups (See Section 3.7).

Among two-parent single-income families income per household member was distributed more evenly between the two study areas. Approximately half these families had disposable incomes per household member of $50 or less per fortnight. These figures indicated that after other basic expenses had been deducted, many families had little or no savings or money available for non-basic expenditure. On the other hand, these households often had capital assets such as houses and cars which contributed to their long-term security.

In contrast to the two groups discussed above two-income families had a clear advantage. More than half the two-income household members had disposable incomes in

excess of $100 per fortnight. While other household expenses would reduce the level of disposable income to more realistic levels, at least a significant proportion of two-income families had the choice of purchasing a range of goods and services beyond the absolute minimum needed for survival.

3.3.3 Single parents and supplementary income sources

The extent to which single parents are receiving supplementary income from a de facto relationship or maintenance payments are questions often raised when discussing income. No attempt was made to examine directly the impact which de facto relationships had on the economic status of single-parent families. However, during the course of the survey it became apparent that many single parents were involved in some form of relationship with a partner who sometimes contributed to household income.

Of those single-parents who were prepared to discuss the issue, the contribution of a partner varied greatly, from providing a substantial degree of financial security to other instances where the partner was a net cost to household income. Most women interviewed said that the major benefits from de facto relationships were more emotional than financial. This situation was illustrated by one woman with two children whose partner had spent long

periods in unemployment and had limited job prospects as an unskilled labourer. The woman referred to her partner as a 'bit of an albatross', in that he contributed nothing to the upkeep of the household and 'was never around when needed but always there when not'. While this respondent said that her partner was more of a drain on resources than an asset, she said that she was prepared to put up with him because she could not face being lonely.

Taking into account the characteristics discussed above for single-parent households surveyed, women were likely to form relationships with men from similar social and economic backgrounds and the economic benefits which accrued from such relationships were likely to be limited. A number of women commented that if they were able to establish a stable relationship they did not wish to maintain their single-parent status with its stigma and insecurity, purely for the sake of exploiting the welfare system. There were instances where exploitation was occurring, but the overriding impression in this survey was that the major benefits from de facto relationships were primarily emotional, rather than financial.

Maintenance payments, following divorce or alternative separation arrangements, did not feature as significant income sources for single parents. Only 15 per cent of women were receiving regular payments from their former

husbands. Most women did not see maintenance as a reliable or continuous source of income, because there was no effective way of enforcing maintenance payments on defaulting husbands.

3.4 Household employment status

Clearly, if households are to avoid poverty then employment for one or both parents becomes a priority. In the discussion which follows an analysis of the nature and extent of employment among the three family types is presented.

3.4.1 Single parents

Only 12 per cent of single parent households were employed (Table 3.5) the rest were dependent for their income on supporting parent pensions.

TABLE 3.5 : SINGLE PARENTS AND HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Employment Characteristics	Study Areas	
	Queanbeyan	Melba Flats
	No. of Households	
	49	43
1. Household Employment Status (female)	Per Cent	
.Employed full-time	8	7
.Employed part-time	4	2
.Not employed	88	91
	No. of Households	
	40	34
2. Reasons for Not Working (females only)	Per Cent	
.Looking after children	75	82
.No suitable child care	10	8
.No work available	15	10
	No. of Households	
	7	4
3. Reasons for Working (employed females)	Per Cent	
.Financial	100	100
.Other	0	0
	No. of Households	
	49	43
4. Current Occupation	Per Cent	
.White collar	6	9
.Blue collar	6	2
.Domestic duties	88	89

As stated in the discussion of household income, all single parents in employment were classified as low-income earners. The bias in the selection of low-income study areas described in chapter 2 would account for this occurrence. Employment among single parents was evenly divided between full and part-time work. As Table 3.5 shows there were no significant area variations between single parents in Melba Flats or Queanbeyan in either the rate of unemployment or the nature of employment.

The main reason given by single parents for not working was that they were looking after their children. Only 22 per cent referred to the lack of child care or job opportunities as being the main determinate for not working. The issue of whether those parents who were looking after children were doing so by choice, or because they had no other option, is taken up later in the discussion. All single parents in employment cited financial considerations as the primary reason for working. In terms of their occupational status, the proportion of women in blue and white collar employment was evenly divided. About the only significant characteristic of single parents in employment revealed in this survey is that there are so few of them. Because their numbers were so small (10), the data for single parents in employment needs to be treated with care.

3.4.2 Two parent single-income households

Among two-parent, single-income families, males were the principal breadwinners with only 4 per cent of women sharing this role. Unemployment in two-parent families was highest in Queanbeyan where 19 per cent of household members were without work (Table 3.6). Given that two-thirds of the male workforce was employed in blue-collar industry, an industry which has borne the brunt of the current recession, unemployment figures in Queanbeyan could be expected to be high. While overall unemployment in Queanbeyan was 4.3 per cent,[2] families with young children were particularly affected because bread-winners did not have the experience, skills or tenure to maintain their jobs at a time when the employment market was shrinking. Several unemployed males commented that they felt that the companies they had worked for discriminated in favour of older and more experienced men when deciding who had to be retrenched.

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2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981, Census of Population and Housing.

TABLE 3.6 : TWO PARENT SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS AND EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Employment Characteristics	Study Areas: Queanbeyan	Study Areas: Melba-Charnwood
	No. of Households	
	73	67
1. Household Employment Status	Per Cent	
.Unemployed	19	3
.Employed	81	97
	No. of Households	
	75	67
2. Employment Status of Women	Per Cent	
.Full-time	3	5
.Part-time	0	0
.Not employed	97	95
	No. of Households	
	66	62
3. Reasons for not Working (female)	Per Cent	
.Looking after children	88	92
.No suitable child care	4	5
.No work available	8	3
	No. of Households	
	62	64
4. Current Occupation (males)	Per Cent	
.White collar	32	52
.Blue collar	68	48

As with single-parents, the majority of women (90 per cent) said that the principal reason they were not working was because they were looking after children. Lack of suitable child care or employment opportunities were cited as having a direct bearing on the decision not to work by only a small proportion of women (10 per cent).

3.4.3. Two-income households

There are notable area differences in the employment characteristics of two-income households (Table 3.7)

TABLE 3.7: TWO-INCOME HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

	Study Areas	
	Queanbeyan	Melba-Charnwood
Employment Characteristics	No. of Households	
	50	44
1. Employment Status of Women	Per Cent	
.Full-time	55	41
.Part-time	45	59
	No. of Households	
	50	42
2. Current Occupation (female)	Per Cent	
.White collar	76	86
.Blue collar	24	14
	No. of Households	
	50	44
3. Current Occupation (males)	Per Cent	
.White collar	59	68
.Blue collar	41	32
	No. of Households	
	46	37
4. Reasons for Working (females)	Per Cent	
.Financial	89	76
.Other	11	24

Queanbeyan had a higher proportion of women employed full-time, most cited financial reasons as their main reason for working and, among both men and women in Queanbeyan, higher proportions were in blue-collar employment. Canberra's special position as the centre of government helps to account for the high proportion of men and women in white-collar employment in the Melba-Charnwood area.

For those women who were working at the time of the survey, 83 per cent gave financial reasons as their primary motivation for working, but in Melba-Charnwood, a quarter of the respondents stated that they worked either for interest or for social contact. Male incomes in Melba-Charnwood were substantially higher than for Queanbeyan, allowing some women to give reasons other than 'financial' for working. In Melba-Charnwood only 7 per cent of males from two-income households received less than $400 net per fortnight while in Queanbeyan the figure was 38 per cent (Table 3.4). Lower incomes among males in Queanbeyan may also account for why more women in Queanbeyan work full-time.

3.5 Factors affecting employment opportunity

A range of personal and family attributes can have a direct bearing on the employment status of households. In the discussion which follows, the influence of factors notably family size and composition, education, employment skills and social attitudes are examined. The analysis primarily focuses on how these factors influence the employment prospects of women given that they constitute the majority of adults not in employment in this study.

3.5.1 Household composition

In order for families to earn more than the income provided by unemployment benefits or a supporting parents pension, either one or both parents must work. To work, parents must have access to child care. For the two-parent family there are two options. If both parents wish to work, care for children must be found, usually outside the family. Where only one parent is working, the other parent, usually the mother, takes responsibility for the care of children. For single parents there is no option, care outside the family must be found if the parent wishes to work. As a consequence, single parents are immediately disadvantaged in their access to employment by their sole-parent status. Of the 94 single-parent households surveyed only 10 were engaged in full-time or part-time employment. Of those in

employment, three were involved in providing private child care in their own homes. These parents were able to overcome the problem of finding both employment and care.

Among other issues pertaining to employment and household composition, data from the survey revealed a strong relationship between the number of children under school age and wnether both parents worked (Table 3.8).

TABLE 3.8 : NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE AND THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF TWO PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

Household	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two-Parent Single Income	Total
	No. of Households		
	76	50	126
Number of children under school age	Per Cent of Households		
1	51	71	59
2 or more	49	29	41
Total	60	40	100

p = .0408

Less than one-third of two-income households (29 per cent) had more than one child under school age. In comparison, almost half (49 per cent) of two-parent, single-income households had two or more children in the same age group. No explanatory data were sought on the relationship between the number of children under school age and the employment status of two-parent households. However, a number of observations would appear to support the premise that parents with only one child requiring care are more likely to be both working than parents with two or more children under school age.

A household with one child under school age would, on the basis of cost and organisation alone, find it easier to pursue employment for both parents. At the time of the survey the average cost for a family with two children requiring care was $140 per fortnight.[3] For some households the cost or care for two children was a major disincentive to workforce participation, particularly in situations where a potential second income earner had insufficient employment skills to earn an income which would off-set the costs of child care. Among the two-income households surveyed, the average net fortnightly income of

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3. Calculations are based on average fees charged by family day care services operating in the ACT and Queanbeyan, July 1981.

women who worked full-time was $350. After child-care costs, the take home pay of women with two children in care was reduced by 40 per cent.

Age differences among children in families requiring child care can create major organisational problems for parents. Children under 2 years are more difficult to place in care because of the limited number of places available in licensed child care services for this age group as shown in Chapter 5. This means that a family with two children, one under and one over two years, can be faced with the problem of having to place children in separate child care arrangements. Such a situation can result in complicated transport arrangements for parents and can lead to emotional upheavel for children. Several respondents commented that if they could place their children in the same child care arrangements they would seriously consider employment.

3.5.2 Education and job skills

Although the demographic composition of a household can clearly influence employment opportunity, the reasons given by women for not working were complex. The following discussion describes the anomaly which exists between women's perceptions of their reasons for not working and their actual capacity to enter the workforce. Eighty-four

per cent of women cited 'looking after children' as their main reason for not working (Table 3.5). Reasons such as the lack of suitable child care facilities and the lack of employment opportunities were only minor considerations among the survey population. While the majority of responses were related to the need to care for children, the emphasis placed by women on their role as child carers varied. Some women said that they had no intention of working until their children were at school and held strong views about 'social responsibility' and 'motherhood'. Other mothers were less definite about their role as child carers, but did not directly refer to any problems which prevented them from working. Although most women who were not working did not make any direct reference to problems of gaining access to employment, data on the educational levels and job skills of women suggest that there is a strong relationship between these two variables and the employment of women.

Almost two-thirds of women in employment had higher secondary or tertiary qualifications (Table 3.9). An equivalent proportion of women who were not working had been educated only to junior secondary level.

TABLE 3.9 : EMPLOYMENT AND THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN

Educational Level	Employment Status: Employed	Not Working	Total
	Number of Women		
	114	211	325
	Per Cent of Women		
Up to junior secondary	38	69	58
Higher secondary to tertiary	62	31	42
Total	35	65	100

p = .0012

Given the strong association between education and employment, data on education levels among single-parents and some women from two-parent single income households gives little prospect for encouraging the belief that women with a limited educational background will be readily absorbed into the workforce.

The majority of single-parent households in both study areas were educated only to junior secondary level (Table 3.10). In Queanbeyan, women from two-parent single-income households were not much better off, with less than a third (27 per cent) being educated above junior secondary. In contrast, 63 per cent of women from similar households in Melba-Charnwood had higher secondary and tertiary qualifications. For these women, employment prospects could be considered somewhat brighter, particularly for those with tertiary qualifications.

TABLE 3.10: HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ATTAINED BY WOMEN

	Study Areas					
	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
Households	Single Parents	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent
No. of households	49	74	50	66	44	42
Education Levels			Per Cent of Households			
.Up to junior secondary	88	73	48	37	16	86
.Matriculation/ Higher School Certificate	10	23	30	42	52	12
.Tertiary	2	4	22	21	32	2

As already noted, working women had the highest educational qualifications, although almost half the working women in Queanbeyan (48 per cent) were educated to junior secondary level. Queanbeyan's special position as a supplier of unskilled and semi-skilled labour to blue-collar industries possibly accounts for the relatively high levels of employment among this group. The major limitation to employment among this group is the number of jobs available rather than the number of applicants.

A factor closely associated with educational achievement is occupational status. Table 3.11 details the former occupation status of women not currently in employment.

TABLE 3.11 : FORMER OCCUPATION OF WOMEN NOT CURRENTLY IN EMPLOYMENT

	Study Areas			
	Queanbeyan		Melba-Charnwood	Melba Flats
Households	Single Parents	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Single Parents
No. of Households	40	68	60	37
Former Occupation			Per Cent of Households	
.Professional/ Administrative	18	15	37	8
.Sales/Clerical Assistant	32	43	55	60
.Unskilled/ Semi-skilled	25	32	6	24
.Never employed	25	10	2	8

Women from two-parent single-income households living in the Melba-Charnwood area had the highest levels of job skills. Most had employment skills which would enable them to enter the job market without too much difficulty. In contrast, single parents in Queanbeyan were the least employable in terms of their skills. A quarter of these women had never worked before and, as such, were unlikely to be favourably considered by prospective employers. Women from two-parent single-income households in Queanbeyan were only marginally better placed, with almost one-third being either unskilled or semi-skilled.

In sum, the reasons given by women for not working varied greatly. Some women expressed a clear preference for remaining at home with their children, others had not given the issue much thought, and some had no option other than to remain at home. To assume that the overwhelming majority of women who were not working had a strong personal commitment to caring for their children at home ignores some real, but often hidden, problems of personal access to employment. These problems, on the basis of the data presented, appear to have close links with educational achievement and the level of job skills attained by women.

3.6 Household expenditure and consumption patterns

Whatever the reasons for not working, it is clear that employment, particularly the addition of a second income, conveys major economic advantages. This advantage is most evident in household expenditure patterns on basic items such as food, transport, health care, child care and housing.

TABLE 3.12: FORTNIGHTLY EXPENDITURE ON FOOD PER HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats	Total Population		
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income
No. of Households									
	43	51	44	57	42	34	77	108	86
Expenditure				Per Cent of Households					
$20 or less	51	33	7	26	7	29	40	29	7
$21-30	40	39	48	53	26	41	41	46	37
$30 and more	9	28	45	21	67	30	19	25	56

3.6.1 Food

Two-income families spent the most and single-parent families spent the least per household member on food. More than half two-income household members had food expenditure of $30 or more per fortnight. Forty per cent of single-parent household members spent $20 or less. Expenditure on food between single-parent households in Melba Flats and Queanbeyan was markedly different. Queanbeyan residents had much lower expenditures, with half of these families being in the lowest expenditure bracket. Given that single-parent households in Queanbeyan spent considerably more of their income on rent, (Figure 3.7) expenditure on food could be expected to be less. Expenditure on food among two-parent single-income earners was relatively consistent across both study areas.

A number of single-parent households in Melba Flats and Queanbeyan said that they occasionally had to seek assistance from various non-government welfare agencies, such as the Smith Family and St Vincent De Paul, in meeting their weekly food requirements. The Department of Youth and Community Services in Queanbeyan gave cash grants to bonafide cases of hardship to meet food and clothing needs. The extent of supplementary assistance being provided to low-income families was difficult to assess in the household survey as many respondents were reluctant to

discuss the issue. Youth and Community Service personnel in Queanbeyan stated that they often received requests for cash assistance from low-income earners in the ACT where there was no provision for such payments beyond the assistance given by charitable agencies.

3.6.2 Transport

Private ownership of a motor vehicle can convey major advantages to a household in facilitating access to social, economic and recreational opportunities. On the other hand, reliance on public transport can often restrict the activities of household members in terms of where they go and when.

Single-parent households constituted the largest household group relying on public transport as their main mode of travel. Of all those households using public transport, single-parents accounted for 66 per cent of users (Figure 3.5). Private transport involved a substantial capital outlay in terms of vehicle purchase price and registration as well as running costs. It was not surprising that the group with the least access to private transport happened to be single parents.

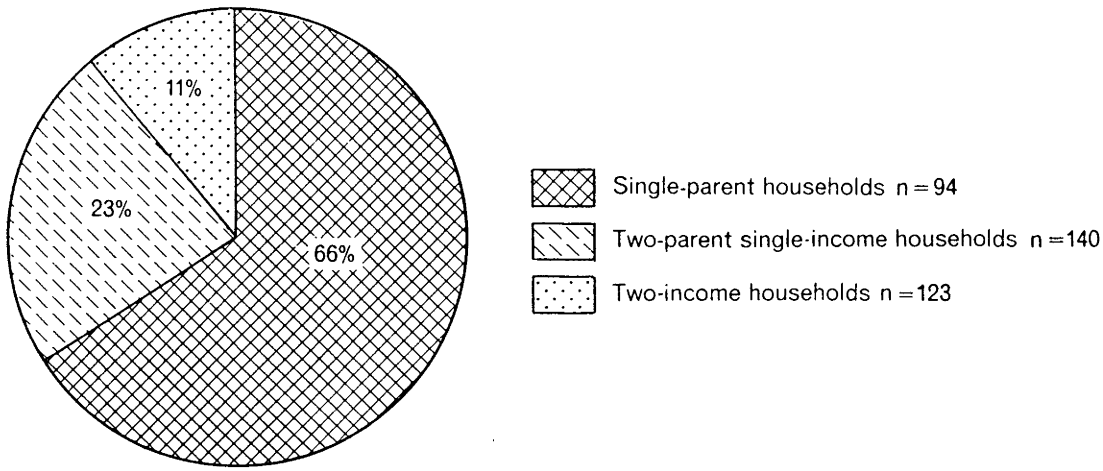


FIGURE 3.5: HOUSEHOLD TYPES AND DEPENDENCE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In contrast, few two-parent single income households used public transport (11 per cent), although among these households there was extensive vehicle sharing, with 35 per cent of parents sharing a car (Table 3.13)

TABLE 3.13: PRINCIPAL MODE OF TRANSPORT

	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent
No. of Households						
	50	73	50	67	44	43
Per Cent of Households						
Own car	46	60	62	46	61	39
Share vehicle	6	25	30	45	32	12
Public transport	48	15	8	9	7	49

Queanbeyan had proportionately more two-car families than Melba-Charnwood. Queanbeyan does not have a public transport system, thereby placing greater reliance on vehicle ownership for mobility.

Transport was a major expenditure for two-income families, since both parents usually needed to travel to work (Table 3.14).

TABLE 3.14: HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE ON TRANSPORT PER FORTNIGHT

	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats	Total Survey Population		
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income
No.of Households									
	32	48	42	54	42	31	63	90	84
Per Cent of Households									
$10 or less	50	10	7	4	5	42	46	7	6
$11-20	35	29	17	28	2	35	35	28	9
$21-30	3	27	19	28	36	10	6	28	28
$31-40	6	17	24	24	29	3	5	20	26
$40 & over	6	17	33	16	28	10	8	17	31

More than half the two-income families were paying in excess of $30 per fortnight on transport costs. This figure was based on petrol costs and/or the costs of public transport and did not include vehicle registration or repairs. Of those single parents who owned cars, many stated that if their car required major repairs or even registration, it was often off the road for some time until money could be found.

Because so many single parents were dependent on public transport their mobility was restricted. Many spur-of-the-moment decisions such as visiting a friend or shopping were not possible for families without their own transport. Very often, the thought of having to organize children on and off public transport was sufficient to deter parents from leaving their homes for all but the most basic necessities. Social isolation was not restricted to single-parent families. More than one-third of two-parent single-income households shared one car. Sharing usually meant that a women had access to a vehicle only when her husband did not require it for work or on special occasions.

3.6.3 Health Care

Relatively few households across all family types had no medical insurance (Table 3.15).

TABLE 3.15 : HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE ON HEALTH CARE PER FORTNIGHT

	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent
No. of Households						
	44	51	44	56	42	34
Per Cent of Households						
None	0	4	9	2	4	0
Health Card	96	23	0	11	0	91
less than $20	0	14	9	14	19	6
$20-39	4	47	80	66	62	3
$40 and over	0	12	2	7	14	0

All single parent families were eligible for a health card which the majority were using. A health card entitled the holder to basic medical coverage at out-patient departments of public hospitals. The rigidity of income assessment for eligibility for health cards was seen as extremely unfair by many low-income earners. For example, a two-parent family with two dependent children had to be earning less than $401.50 net per fortnight before a health card could be issued.[4] Families earning $402, only 50 cents more, had to pay the full cost of health insurance. Using the low-income classification derived in the survey (incomes below $437 per fortnight) almost 20 per cent of low-income families with two children were ineligible for health card assistance. Based on the minimum rate of health insurance at the time, the cost of health care for these families reduced their disposable income by $29.50 per fortnight. High income households generally opted for higher health care coverage which entitled them to more services and benefits.[5]

3.6.4 Child care costs

The cost of child care as a proportion of disposable income illustrates the impact which the purchase of a service can have on households with different incomes (Table 3.16).

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4. Source: Department of Social Security, October 1982

5. The introduction of Medicare in February 1984 removed much of the cost of health care from low-income earners.

TABLE 3.16 : CHILD CARE COSTS AS A PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLD DISPOSABLE INCOME

	Household Types		
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income
Number of Households paying for care	25	60	68
Per Cent of income spent on care		Per Cent of Households	
1-10 per cent	35	89	57
11-20 per cent	13	8	22
over 20 per cent	52	3	21

A distinguishing feature of the cost of child care to single parents was that they paid proportionately more of their disposable income for the use of child care. More than half the single-parent households paying for care paid more than 20 per cent of their disposable income for the use of child care. In comparison, 57 per cent of two-income families who were major users of child care services (Chapter 5) used no more than 10 per cent of their disposable income on child care costs. Even when compared with two-parent single income families who utilised similar child care services, child care costs for single parents were substantially greater. These figures once again highlight the substantial inequality in the purchasing power of low-income families.

From an examination of the expenditures described above it would appear that those on low incomes: first, ate less well than their more affluent neighbours; secondly, had less mobility in terms of transport and consequently had less access to goods and services; thirdly, had levels or health coverage which, although adequate, restricted them to basic services; and fourthly, paid proportionately more for services such as child care.

3.7 Residential status and the welfare of households

During the survey many low-income respondents, particularly those living in Queanbeyan, commented that issues relating to rent or mortgage payments, tenancy agreements or sub-standard housing were major causes of economic hardship and frustration within their households. For some families, accommodation-related problems took up so much of their time and money that their consumption of other goods and services was affected.

In this study, residential status, and associated factors such as rent or mortgage payments and the period of tenure of households are considered to have a direct bearing on the use and purchase of other services, including child care. Rent and mortgage payments normally represent the largest item of household expenditure and those households with high accommodation costs and low incomes will obviously have less to spend on other goods and services. Similarly, those households who are less secure in their tenure, primarily those who rely on the private rental market, are likely to be more transient in their occupancy and therefore less knowledgeable about services in their local areas. These issues, as they relate to child care, are dealt with in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5. The discussion which follows concentrates on comparing the residential status and associated attributes of households.

Table 3.17 illustrates the relationship between income levels and residential status.

TABLE 3.17 : RESIDENTIAL STATUS AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Household Income		
	Low to Lower-Middle Income ($192-$557)	Upper-Middle to High Income ($558-$1237)	Total
Residential Status	Per Cent of Households		
Owner/Purchaser	19	75	48
Tenant	81	25	52
Total	48	52	100

p=.0002
n=289

Of those households classified as upper-middle to high-income earners, almost three-quarters either owned their home, or were in the process of purchasing it. Less than 20 per cent of low-income earners were in a similar position.

As might be expected, most single-parent households were tenants (Table 3.18).

TABLE 3.18 : RESIDENTIAL STATUS

	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats	Total Survey Population		
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income
No. of Households									
	50	75	50	53	37	43	93	128	87
Per cent of Households									
Owner	0	12	8	0	0	0	0	6	4
Purchaser	6	44	66	68	73	0	3	56	70
Housing Commission	30	13	8	21	14	100	65	17	11
Private Tenant	64	31	18	11	13	0	32	21	15

There was a significant difference in the residential status of single parents living in Melba Flats and Queanbeyan. In Melba Flats all residents were Housing Commission tenants, while in Queanbeyan almost two-thirds of single-parents were living in private rental accommodation. At the time of the survey 200 families were on the waiting list for government accommodation in Queanbeyan: 50 per cent of these families were estimated to be single-parent households.[6] The waiting time for accommodation in Queanbeyan was approximately two years.

Unlike the housing authorities in the ACT, Queanbeyan officials did not offer priority housing. Allocation was on a 'first come first served' basis. The lack of government accommodation and the absence of a priority ranking system in Queanbeyan posed problems for low-income earners in that families were forced into the private rental market for extended periods of time. As discussed later, this meant that they spent proportionately more of their income on rent and had less secure tenure as leases expired or properties were sold.

Significant area differences in ownership exist among two-parent single-income families. Melba-Charnwood had more home purchasers while Queanbeyan had proportionately more tenants (Table 3.19).

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6. Source: Regional Housing Office, Queanbeyan, New South Wales Housing Commission, 1982.

TABLE 3.19 : RESIDENTIAL STATUS OF TWO-PARENT SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

	Area		
	Queanbeyan	Melba-Charnwood	Total
Residential Status	Per Cent of Households		
Owner/Purchaser	56	73	64
Tenant	44	27	36
Total	53	47	100

n=142 households

p=.0512

These differences were not unexpected, given higher incomes and greater employment security among residents in the Melba-Charnwood area. However, outright home ownership was highest in Queanbeyan. Home owners in Queanbeyan were usually established residents who had spent most of their lives in the area. Melba and Charnwood, on the other hand, were relatively new Canberra suburbs, established in the late 1960's, and significant numbers of home owners may not emerge for some years, given that most home purchasers still have substantial mortgage payments.

3.7.1. Period of residence

Compared with two-parent families the residential status of single parents was typified by relatively short periods of tenure (Table 3.20).

TABLE 3.20 : PERIOD OF RESIDENCE

	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats	Total Survey Population		
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income
No. of Households									
	49	74	50	67	44	43	92	141	94
Per cent of Households									
One year or less	47	32	32	19	14	70	58	25	23
Two years	24	12	12	15	18	28	26	14	15
Three years or over	29	56	26	66	68	2	16	61	62

Eighty-four per cent of all single-parent households were resident less than three years, with 58 per cent being resident 1 year or less. Melba Flats residents had the shortest period of tenure. The co-ordinator of the Melba Flats Community Association claimed that the concentration of welfare recipients in the area had led to stigmatisation and many residents had asked to be relocated elsewhere. An extensive account of the problems of Melba Flats is given in Chapter 6.

Almost one-third of two-parent families in Queanbeyan (32 per cent) had been resident one year or less. The lack of employment opportunities in Queanbeyan could be one main reason why tenure among some households was so brief. In contrast, the tenure of two-parent families in Melba-Charnwood was indicative of a more established and secure population in which two-thirds of households were resident for three years or more.

In Queanbeyan the limited residential tenure of single parents was related to the high proportion in the private rental market. Of those single parents resident less than one year, 85 per cent were in privately rented accommodation. The limited tenure of private tenants can be linked with the proportion of total income spent on rent. Of those single parents paying more than 30 per cent of their income on rent, 94 per cent were renting privately.

Short-term leases and the search for lower rents were two reasons often cited by private tenants for insecurity of tenure. Insecurity of tenure was generally felt by those surveyed to be socially disruptive on family relationships and in some cases was cited as a source of tension.

In Queanbeyan the allocation of Housing Commission accommodation was weighted in favour of single parents with more than one child. Of those single parent households with one child, 91 per cent were in the private rental market. Most Housing Commission accommodation was built to cater for families with two or more children. It was therefore difficult for a two-person household to be allocated a standard three-bedroom Commission house.

The financial advantages of having two incomes are particularly evident when comparing the proportion of net family income spent on rent or mortgage payments (Figure 3.6).

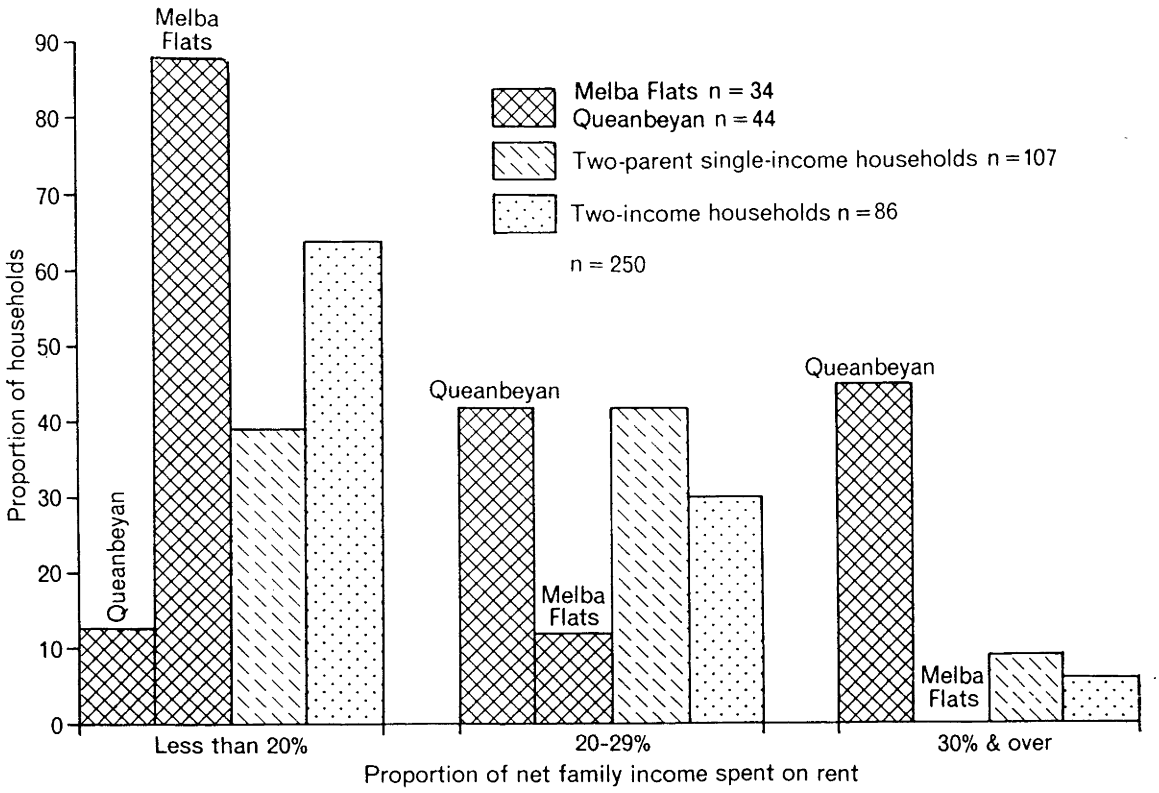


FIGURE 3.6: PROPORTION OF NET HOUSEHOLD INCOME SPENT ON RENT OR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS.

With the exception of single parents living in Melba Flats, whose rents were subsidised, two-income families spent proportionately less of their income on rent than did any other family type. As with virtually all economic indicators, single-parent families in Queanbeyan were again worse off. Forty-five per cent were paying 30 per cent or more ot their income on rent, with the majority of these households being in the private rental market. Single-parent families in privately rented accommodation paid proportionately more for housing and were less secure in their tenure than any other residential group.

For low-income earners who were usually unable to muster sufficient capital to obtain a housing loan, dependence on private rental or government-subsidised accommodation often posed social and economic problems. Those households in the private rental market paid proportionately more for accommodation than any other income group and, in many instances, the accommodation was substandard and did not provide a satisfactory environment for raising young children. On the other hand, many Housing Commission tenants, particularly those in Melba Flats, whose financial position was assisted by rental subsidies, felt stigmatised by the ghetto-like setting they perceived themselves to be living in.

3.8 Alienation and the material and social well-being of households

Throughout this chapter repeated reference has been made to individuals and families whose life-chances are constrained or enhanced by their social and economic circumstances. The data discussed above have demonstrated the relative poverty of low-income earners, particularly single-parent households. While lack of income security has an obvious impact on the consumption patterns and life-style of households, it also has a personal cost which is often manifested in feelings of personal inadequacy and social alienation:

> Just about everything I do goes wrong. I couldn't keep my relationship together, I can't get a job. Sometimes I wonder whether it (life) is really worth the effort. (Single parent, Queanbeyan)

To examine the relationship between income security and feelings of personal alienation, an attitude scale based on the work of Srole (1966) was included in the survey questionnaire. The scale examined characteristics relating to 'psychic isolation' in which the respondent felt alone, cut off, unwanted, unloved and unvalued (Srole: 8). A scale reflecting low, moderate and high levels of social alienation was developed from responses to the household survey (See Appendix 4, Part J, Question 4).

As expected, single parents exhibited the highest degree of alienation among all family types (Figure 3.7).

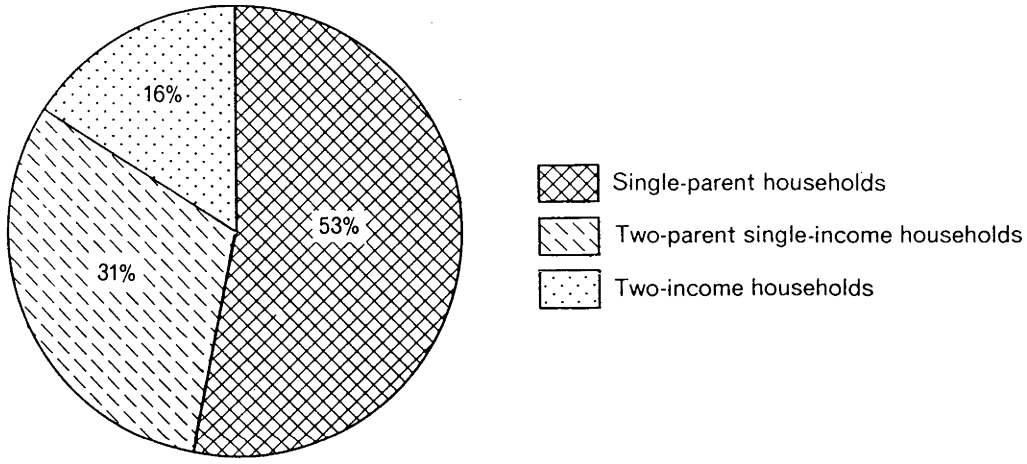


FIGURE 3.7: PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS EXPRESSING A HIGH DEGREE OF SOCIAL ALIENATION.

Area differences were found to be significant among two-parent families (Table 3.21). Queanbeyan respondents were more negative in their social attitudes than those in Melba-Charnwood. One-quarter of two-parent households in Queanbeyan displayed high levels of alienation, compared with 10 per cent in Melba-Charnwood. As has been described, incomes were lower in Queanbeyan where there was higher unemployment and less job security.

TABLE 3.21 : INDEX OF SOCIAL ALIENATION

	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent
No. of Households						
	49	74	49	67	44	43
Per Cent of Households						
Low alienation	14	20	33	50	56	12
Moderate alienation	32	52	45	38	36	39
High alienation	54	28	22	12	8	49

A strong relationship was evident in these data between net family income and the degree of social alienation felt by respondents (Table 3.22)

TABLE 3.22 : HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND SOCIAL ALIENATION

	Household Income		
	Low to Lower Middle Income ($192-557)	Middle-High Income ($558-1237)	Total
Degree of alienation	Per Cent of households		
Low-moderate	58	87	72
High	42	13	28
Total	48	52	100

n=290 households
p=.0012

Only 13 per cent of middle-to-high income households expressed a high degree of social alienation. In contrast, 42 per cent of low-income households exhibited strong feelings of alienation. Those on high incomes were obviously able to derive greater personal and material security from their economic status and therefore had a more positive outlook on life.

Srole considered anomie to be 'a variable condition' and not necessarily a permanent state of affairs. Changing social and economic circumstances could significantly alter the degree of alienation felt by an individual. Clearly, income security not only influenced the material level of well being among families, it also affected individuals at a personal level, creating in some people feelings of inadequacy and alienation. While families on low incomes were possibly able to tolerate material and personal poverty for limited periods of time, lengthy and in some cases permanent dependence on income maintenance schemes such as unemployment benefits, pensions or low paid employment, have the potential to create a class of men, women and children whose social and economic potential may be severely restricted.

Conclusion

The typical profile of a single-parent household was that of a female household head with one pre-school aged child, living in privately rented or Housing Commission accommodation and dependent on a supporting parents pension. Single parents in the private rental market were seriously disadvantaged by the high proportion of their income which was converted to rent payments. These families had the least disposable income of any family group and were frequently in need of assistance to meet basic needs such as food and clothing.

Given that the supporting parents pension is unlikely to rise to a level which will permit any significant degree of capital accumulation among single-parent families, employment was and is the only option, apart from a change in marital status, available for increasing income among this group.[7] Employment prospects for many single parents were limited by their lack of qualifications and the depressed nature of the employment market for unskilled and semi-skilled women. Dependence on the welfare sector, poverty and isolation all combine to produce in single

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7. Greater income security, either through marriage or a de facto relationship for most single parents would depend on the income earning capacity of their partner.

parents alarming feelings of social alienation which, for some families, has become a permanent feature of their life style.

There was considerably more variation in the profiles of two-parent families. The distinguishing factor was their comparative social and economic advantage in having access to two incomes. Two incomes in many cases enabled a family to accumulate capital and develop a life-style beyond having to work to meet the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. Two-income families were associated with high levels of education and white collar employment, particularly among women. A factor which was thought to strongly influence the employment prospects of two-parent households was the number of children under school age in the family. The costs of child care and the problems of organising more than one child into care were considered to be major disincentives for the employment of a second parent.

As for single parents, there were significant area differences between two-parent families. In Queanbeyan blue collar workers predominated among male income earners, incomes were lower and there was a higher proportion of single-income families in the private rental market. Queanbeyan residents were less optimistic about their

personal development and displayed higher levels of alienation. Those families in the low income bracket, whether single or two income, faced much the same problems as described for single parents; a shortfall in disposable income and associated problems of capital accumulation. In order to improve the financial status of these families one or all of the following actions may be necessary; entry into the workforce of a second income earner, job retraining and/or upgrading of qualifications.

If acknowledgement is to be given to the relationship between income and personal and material security of families, greater income earning opportunities must be made available to all low-income households. However, unlike households with no children or those with school aged children, all families in this study have children under five, most of whom require continuous care.[8] The access which these families have to child care will largely shape economic, social and personal relations within the household. The relative access and need for child care among the survey families is the central focus of Chapters 4 and 5.

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8. This does not imply that families with school aged children have no need for care. However, it is considered that families with pre-school aged children are more dependent on child care.

CHAPTER 4

A comparative household analysis of child care use and need

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 data were presented highlighting individual and family characteristics which have a direct bearing on the welfare of household members. Drawing upon this information, this chapter seeks to examine the relationship between the social and economic condition of households, their respective child care needs and their patterns of child care use. Data presented in this chapter provide an opportunity to examine the relationship between the 'special need' policy objectives of government child care initiatives and the actual use of services by households with special needs.

In this study, special-need families are primarily defined in terms of income, but other categories of need are also considered to illustrate the universal demand for care by all families regardless of income levels.[1] To examine the

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1. The definition of special need groups has varied since the inception of the Child Care Act. In 1976 the Office of Child Care (OCC) identified a range of priority groups which included: children from single parent, low income and working families, migrant children, handicapped children, isolated and aboriginal children and those with behavioural problems. All children within these categories were eligible to receive priority of access to child care services regardless of income. In the late 1970's changes were progressively introduced by the OCC to prevent high income households with special need children from taking advantage of subsidy arrangements. Currently households can only receive subsidies if their net income is less than $250 per fortnight. Parents with special need children whose incomes are above this figure are still eligible for priority of access to services but have to pay the full fee.

issues of need and use, data from the survey are used to establish the nature and extent of child care use and the expressed need for child care among the survey population. Access to child care is defined through the analysis of use of care and, 'need', through reasons for seeking care. Because of the complexity in comparing child care use in a total of 330 households among three family types, the factors affecting access, particularly to formal care, are examined separately in Chapter 5, as are some of the more complex considerations relating to expressions of need.

The discussion begins with an analysis of the child-care diaries completed in the questionnaire (Appendix 4). These provide a useful starting point for examination of the comparative use of child care among households.[2] The diaries established the total number of hours children under school age spent in the care of their parent(s) and in other child care arrangements. They highlighted the association between differences in the social and economic status of households and the amount of time parents spent with their children. In addition, they serve to draw attention to major differences in gender roles among parents in the provision of child care.

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2. Of the 330 households interviewed 257 (78 per cent) completed diaries. Out of the survey population of 435 children under school age, diaries were completed for 389.

The diaries provide an insight into the overall use of child care, but their usefulness as a means of describing child care arrangements made by families proved to be limited. Almost one-quarter (22 per cent) of households interviewed did not complete the diaries. Because some problems with the implementation of the diary were anticipated in the pilot survey, questions on the usual child care arrangements of households over a fortnightly period were also included in the questionnaire. All households answered these questions. In the analysis of 'usual arrangements' discussion focusses on two main age groups, children under two years and those aged 2-4. In addition, a distinction is made between the arrangements made by single and two income families. Age and employment distinctions are made to highlight differences in child care use and needs among different household types.

This discussion is followed by an examination of the reasons given by households for making child care arrangements and their satisfaction with the types of services they use. The analysis provides an opportunity to examine the felt needs of households and whether the child care services available meet these needs. In a further refinement of the discussion on child-care needs, data on the attitude of respondents to the prospects of changing their existing child care arrangements are presented. The views of respondents provide some interesting insights into

the reasons for wanting to change their existing arrangements, the types of care preferred and the problems which some families encounter in gaining access to desired types of care.

Finally, the use of formal child-care arrangements is taken up. Access to formal or licenced child-care facilities, particularly those sponsored by the government, has become a central issue in the child-care debate (Chapter 1). The demand for government sponsored child care is examined using data on the existing and future child-care requirements of households. The chapter concludes by assessing the capacity of formal child care arrangements to cater for those households identified as having special needs and those with more general child-care requirements.

4.2 The child care diaries[3]

4.2.1. Reference week characteristics

Almost two-thirds of women not in paid employment spent 90 per cent or more of their time caring for their children.

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3. See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the rationale for including the diaries in the questionnaire.

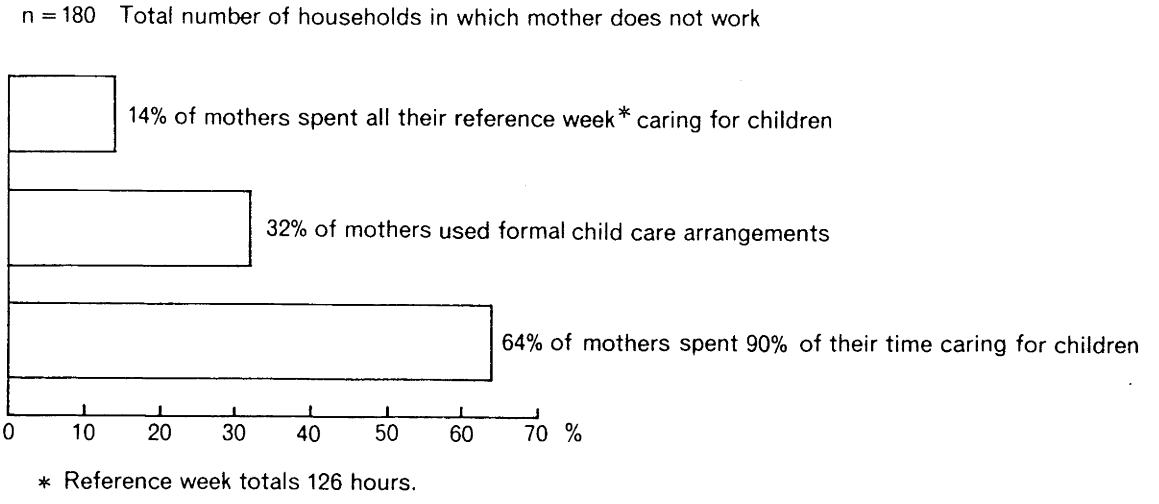


FIGURE 4.1: REFERENCE WEEK AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN NOT IN EMPLOYMENT.

For these women the actual hours of 'free time' amounted to a maximum of 6 hours per week or less than 1 hour per day. Of those women who were making child-care arrangements, only one-third were utilising formal child care which amounted to three hours or less of the total child care utilised each week.

For the majority of women not in employment, child care by persons other than the mother did not feature as a significant intervention in the daily routine of the mother and her children. The relatively minor role of formal child care in the overall care arrangements highlights the minimal effect which the government-sponsored Children's Services Program has had on households where women do not work.

It is not until the 'reference week' is divided into its main components; care provided during week-days, week-nights and weekends that variations in the hours of care used by households become apparent. Figure 4.2 illustrates marked area and household differences in the proportion of time mothers spent with their children. The relationship between single-parent households and the hours these parents spent with their children is clearly evident.

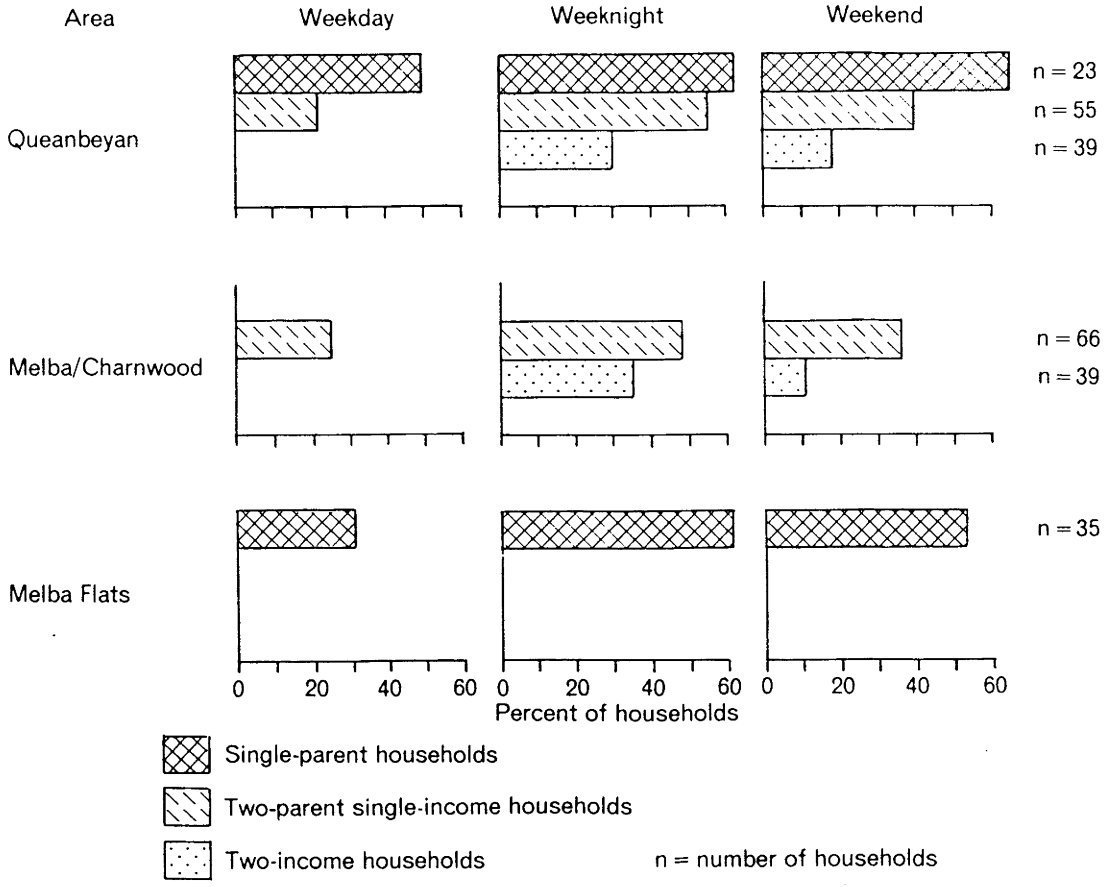


FIGURE 4.2: HOUSEHOLDS AND WOMEN WHO SPEND ALL OF THEIR TIME CARING FOR THEIR CHILDREN DURING: WEEKDAYS, WEEK NIGHTS AND ON THE WEEKEND.

The proportion of mothers in single parent households spending all their time caring for their children was higher than for any other family type throughout all periods during the reference week. The absence of a partner to share in child care arrangements has a significant bearing on time spent with children, particularly during week-nights and weekends. These are the times when male parents, from two-parent families, are most active in caring for children.

Of all the periods, weekdays were seen as providing the best opportunity for single parents to reduce the time they spent with their children. This period coincides with the hours of care (9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.) provided by formal child-care services. The high proportion of single mothers in Queanbeyan who spent all their time with their children during weekdays was almost certainly attributable to their low use of formal care described later in this chapter.

Most working mothers were employed during the day, and so the amount of time they spent with their children was only comparable with non-working mothers on week-nights and weekends. Of those women working full-time only 5 per cent indicated that they spent no time with their children during the week-day. Mothers working full-time worked an average of 36 hours per week and were able to spend a portion of the morning and afternoon with their children.

Excluding those women working week-nights and weekends (4 per cent), mothers from two-income families spent less time caring for children during these periods than did women who were unemployed (Figure 4.2). Although working mothers had more time to themselves during week-nights and weekends, much of this time was spent on household activities, especially shopping. The need for time to organise each week's domestic routine was a major concern expressed by working women.

4.2.2 Household income and time spent caring for children

Of the 14 per cent of mothers caring for their children throughout the reference week, two-thirds were low-income earners (households earning less than $437 per fortnight). The relationship between low-income earners and the proportion of time mothers spend with their children was most evident in the analysis of two-parent single-income families. Table 4.1 illustrates that mothers from low-income families spent significantly more of their time caring for children than their counterparts on higher incomes.

TABLE 4.1: HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND THE PROPORTION OF TIME WOMEN SPEND CARING FOR THEIR CHILDREN. (TWO-PARENT SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS ONLY).

Time spent caring for children	Low Income Households ($213-$437)	Middle-High Income Households ($438-$810)	Per cent of Households
Less than 90 per cent of time	20	42	32
More than 90 per cent of time	80	58	68
Per cent of households	43	57	100

n = 105 households

p = 0.0326

Single parents were not included in this analysis because of the small number completing the diary. However, many single parents stated that they made few child-care arrangements during the reference week and therefore did not bother to complete the diary. The proportion of single parents, and by association, low-income earners, caring for their children for most of the reference week was almost certainly under-represented in the diaries.

An important feature concerning the proportion of time mothers from low-income families spent with their children was that no distinction could be made between single-parent and two-parent single-income families. Over three-quarters of women from both family types spent more than 90 per cent of their total reference week caring for children. These figures suggest that problems of access to child care arrangements are not just restricted to single parents, but to low-income earners in general. The tendency for low-income mothers to spend more of their time with their children implies that there is a relationship between income and use of child care. This relationship is examined later in this chapter, in the discussion of 'usual child-care arrangements'. (4.3).

4.2.3 Household composition and time spent caring for children

The age and number of children within a household appear to have a direct bearing on the amount of time mothers spent with their children. Table 4.2 illustrates that in single-income families where there are children under the age of two, mothers spent significantly more of their time caring for these children than they did for their 3-4 year old children.

TABLE 4.2: AGE OF CHILDREN AND PROPORTION OF TIME CHILDREN SPEND IN THE CARE OF MOTHERS. (SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS ONLY).

	Age of Children		
Time spent in care of mother	Under Two Years	2-4 Years	Per cent of children
Less than 90 per cent of time	40	62	48
More than 90 per cent of time	60	38	52
Per cent of children	64	36	100

n = 247 children

p = 0.0015

A number ot reasons can be put forward why younger children spend more time with their mothers. From comments made during the survey, it is apparent that families seeking informal care of infants through relatives and friends often encounter resistance because of real and imagined difficulties in minding young children. Older children who are toilet-trained and have more regular sleeping habits are preferred.

Intormal child care for children under 2 years can pose problems, but formal child-care arrangements are even more difficult to make for this age group. Formal sessional care provided by occasional care and neighbourhood centres is limited by licensing regulations as to the numbers of children that can be accommodated at any one time. For example, in Queanbeyan in 1981 there were only six places in formal sessional care for a potential user population of 850 children aged 0-2 years. Clearly the lack of formal child-care places for children under 2 years restricts the use of care and increases the likelihood of mothers spending more time with their children at this age. On the other hand, some women cited a strong belief that children under school age were the primary responsibility of the mother and she should stay with them until they were four years old and ready for pre-school.

As discussed in Chapter 3, parents with more than one child under school age encountered difficulties in placing their children in either formal or informal care on a regular basis. The data from the diaries support this claim. Mothers with two or more children spent significantly more of their time caring for their children (Table 4.3).

TABLE 4.3: NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE AND PROPORTION OF TIME MOTHERS SPEND CARING FOR CHILDREN (SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS ONLY).

Households and number of children under school age in household	Proportion of time child remained in mother's care: Less than 90 per cent of time	More than 90 per cent of time	Per cent of households
One	70	52	62
Two or more	30	48	38
Total	100	100	
Per cent of households	55	45	100

n = 176 households

p = 0.0281

The task of organising care for two or more children can be difficult, particularly if the mother does not have access to private transport. Because of age differences between children, mothers are often unable to place more than one child in care for reasons described earlier. From the survey responses it was clear that cost was always a factor in discouraging families with more than one pre-school aged child from using formal sessional care. At $3 per session for each child, the cost of sending two children to pre-school in Queanbeyan for three sessions per week was $18, a cost which most low-income households could not afford.

4.2.4 Gender roles and the provision of child care

The diaries revealed major differences in gender roles in the provision of child care among two-parent families (Figure 4.3).

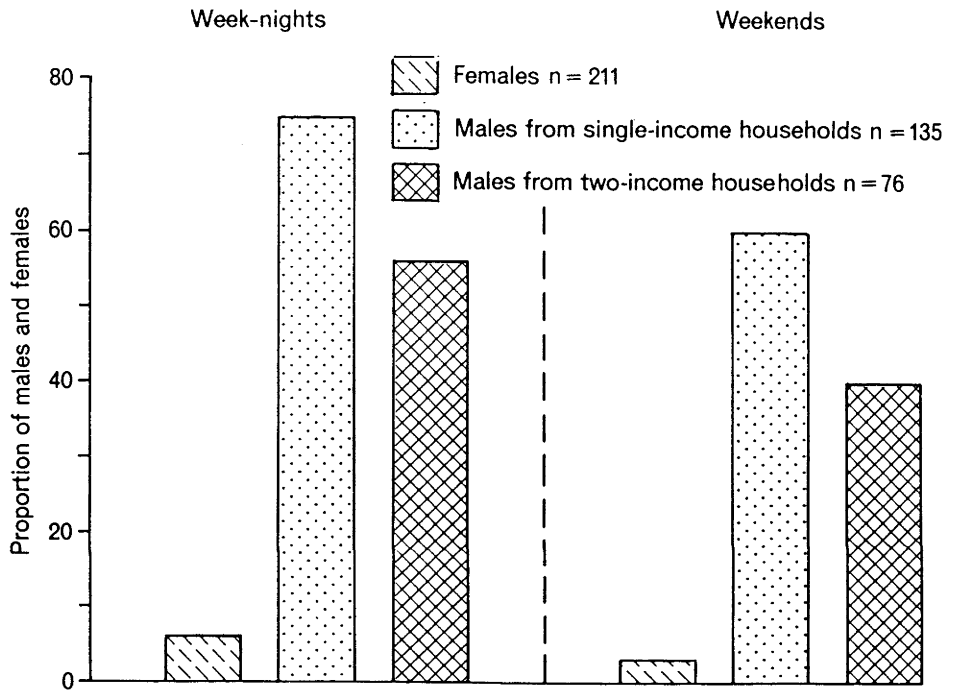


FIGURE 4.3: PROPORTION OF MALE AND FEMALE PARENTS WHO SPENT LESS THAN 50 PERCENT OF THEIR TIME CARING FOR CHILDREN WHEN NOT AT WORK. (TWO PARENT HOUSEHOLDS ONLY).

Males spent significantly less time caring for children than females. More males became actively involved in the care of their children on weekends. Among males, those from single-income households had less responsibility for the care of their children. Although males from two-income families spent more time caring for children much of the minding was to allow mothers to carry out domestic activities such as shopping and cooking.

Despite the greater involvement of males from two-income families in child care, there is no evidence to suggest that they share equally. When questioned about the inactivity of males caring for children, only 30 per cent of women interviewed indicated that they felt their husbands were not doing enough. A common comment made by women was that they considered their husband's activities as 'the breadwinner' off-set the need for him to participate actively in child care. For some households, on the other hand, the perceived failure of the husband to participate adequately in the care of children was a source of tension. Single parents, in particular, commented that the lack of involvement of the father in the care of children and the household routine was one reason for marital breakdown.

In summary, the diaries highlighted the tendency for low-income families whose mothers did not work, to spend proportionately more of their time caring for children than in families on higher incomes. As highlighted in Chapter 3, (Section 3.6.4.) when low income households purchased child care services they paid proportionately more of their disposable income for care then did households with higher incomes. Not surprisingly, the parents of children from low-income households carefully considered the opportunity cost of utilising child care, particularly when child care was one of a number of competing household needs.

The time spent caring for children by mothers was not always related to income. Families with children under two years of age, or with more than one child under school age also spent significantly more of their time with their children. Of all the data to emerge from the diaries, the greatest inequality in child care arrangements occurred in the home. Male parents when not working spent significantly less of their time caring for their children than their spouses (Figure 4.3). The apparent failure of males to share adequately in the care of their children was and is an issue which deserves much more attention at a policy level. It is possible that equality of opportunity in the home may make equality of opportunity in the workforce a more readibly achievable goal.

4.3 Usual child care arrangements

As set out in the introduction to this chapter almost a quarter of respondents did not complete the diaries, posing problems in the use of data to identify types of arrangements made by households. To supplement the diaries, data were collected on the 'usual child care arrangements' made by all households (Appendix 4, Part C). 'Usual arrangements' for the purposes of the survey were defined as child care arrangements other than those provided by the parent(s), made on a regular basis. 'Regular use' was defined as at least once per fortnight. In the following analysis the discussion focuses on two main age groups, children under two years and those 2-4 years old. In addition, a distinction is made between the arrangements made by single and two-income families.

4.3.1 Usual arrangements made by single-income households

Before entering into a discussion of the nature of regular child care arrangements made for children in the three study areas, figure 4.4. illustrates some of the household and area differences of children who were not placed in regular arrangements.

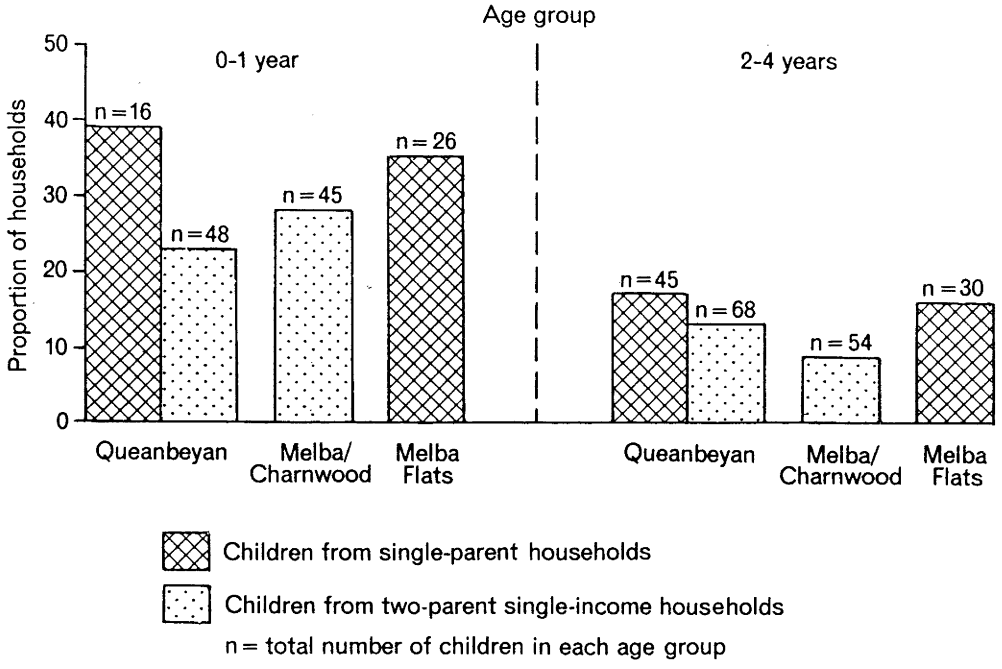


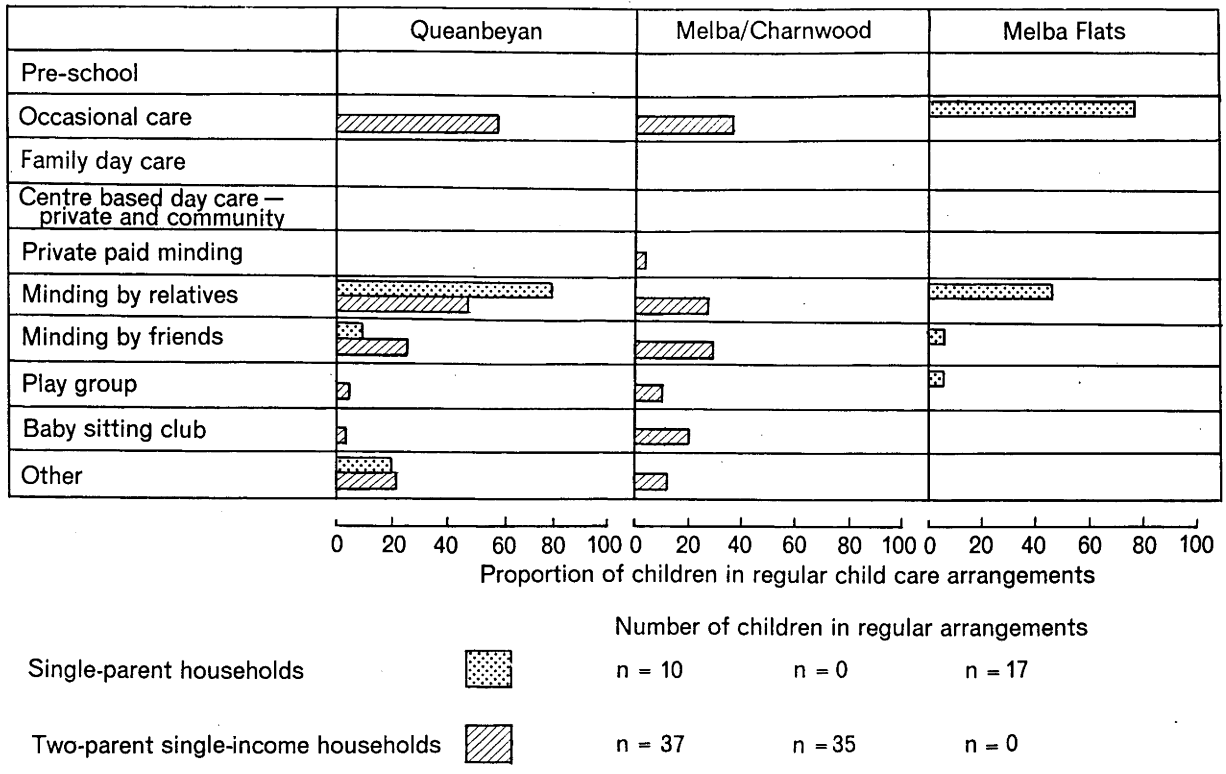
FIGURE 4.4: CHILDREN AGED 0-1 AND 2-4 YEARS NOT IN ANY REGULAR CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS. (SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS ONLY).

As is consisent with earlier statements about the problems of locating suitable child care for children aged 0-1, Figure 4.4 highlights substantial differences in the proportion of children aged 0-1 and 2-4 years not placed in any regular arrangements. Single parents were the most notable household group not making any regular child-care arrangements for 0-1 year olds.

The factors affecting the access of single-parent households to regular child care arrangements are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. Use of regular arrangements increased considerably in both household groups for 2-4 year olds, although once again, proportionately more children from single-parent households made no regular arrangements in this group.

4.3.2 Arrangements for 0-1 year olds

Five main types of care were used by the children of parents not requiring care for employment purposes: ocassional care, minding by relatives, minding by friends and, to a lesser degree, play groups and baby sitting clubs. There are marked family and area differences in the use of these types of care (Figure 4.5).



Note: Multiple response aggregates have been used to calculate the proportion of children using various services. Because some children were utilising more than one service, the proportion of children making regular arrangements can total more than 100 per cent. (See Chapter 2, Statistical Methods [Section 2.6]).

FIGURE 4.5: REGULAR CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR CHILDREN AGED 0-1 FROM SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS. (WOMEN NOT WORKING).

Single-parent families in Queanbeyan relied almost totally on care by relatives and no formal child care arrangements were made by this group. In contrast, the primary service used by children from single-parent households in Melba Flats was occasional care followed by minding by relatives. Because of the geographic concentration of single parents in Melba Flats and the location of an occasional care centre within the Flats, residents had better physical access to services than their Queanbeyan counterparts. The issue of physical proximity to child care is considered more closely in Chapter 5.

Single parents made minimal use of friends, play groups and baby sitting clubs. Among two-parent single-income households the main forms of care used were occasional care and minding by relatives. Minding by friends was a much more significant form of care and, while use of baby sitting clubs and play groups are proportionately much lower than other forms of care, children from two-parent single-income families were the primary users of these services, particularly in the Melba-Charnwood area.

Although single parents did not seem to lack friends, many were reluctant to use them for child care on a regular basis. The main reason cited was a reluctance to impose on friends who were commonly seen as having their own child-care problems.

Single parents in Queanbeyan were particularly unattracted to the use of play groups. The comment most frequently made among those who had used play groups was that it was difficult to socialise with other play-group mothers, most of whom were from two-parent families. Age differences between parents and social attitudes were given as reasons for incompatability. Among those women using play groups the success of the group was usually equated with having other parents with similar ideas and attitudes. In Melba Flats, play groups appeared to be more acceptable because of the proximity or a large number of single parents with a similar social background.

None or the single parents interviewed were members of baby sitting clubs. These clubs posed problems for single parents in that the care of other people's children was difficult. A single mother needed either to make arrangements for her own children to be minded, or take them with her or care for children in her home. While the last option was considered to be the most satisfactory, it was not always possible. The two-parent family, on the other hand, had the easier alternative of having one parent at work, while the other minded children. Further, the parents could also rotate baby sitting commitments so that one parent was not always responsible for minding.

4.3.3 Arrangements for 2-4 year olds

The major child-care arrangements made for children in the 2-4 year age group whose parents did not require child care for employment purposes were: pre-school, occasional care, minding by relatives and friends, play groups and baby sitting clubs (Figure 4.6).

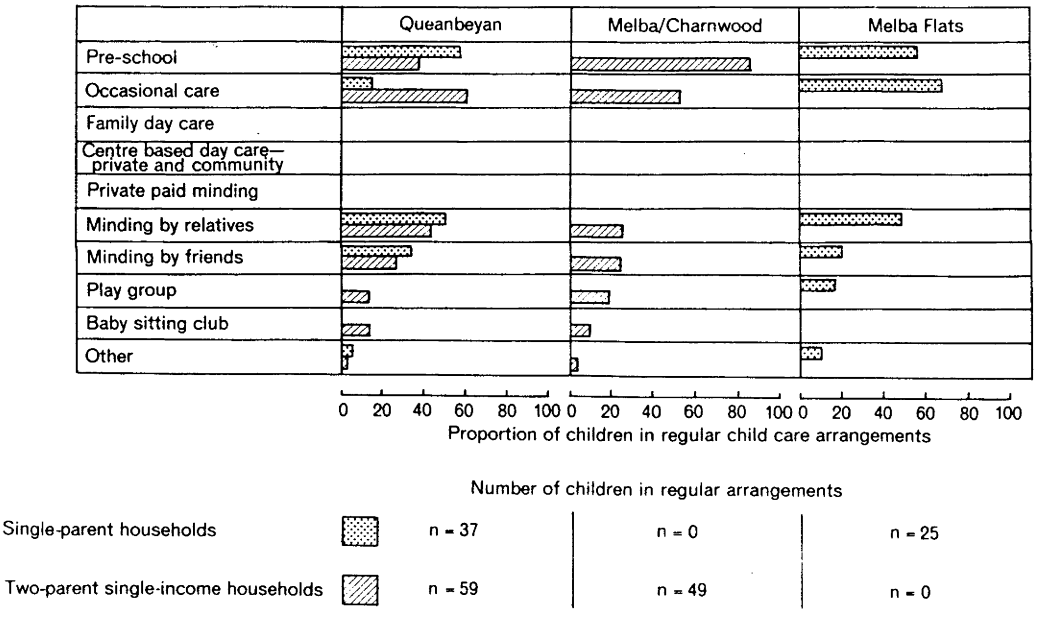


FIGURE 4.6: REGULAR CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR CHILDREN AGED 2-4 FROM SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS. (WOMEN NOT WORKING).

Use of care reflected the pattern described for 0-1 year olds. Single parents in Queanbeyan relied heavily on relatives as their primary source of care, although minding by friends increased significantly for this age group. Friends were apparently more prepared to mind older children than they were infants.

Use of occasional care by single parents in Queanbeyan was minimal, with only 16 per cent of 2-4 year olds attending regularly. More than half the children from single-parent families making regular arrangements were using pre-school. However, of all the children from families eligible to use pre-school, only one-third were in regular attendance. The overall usage of pre-school facilities in Queanbeyan by children from single parent and two-parent single-income families was low because of the lack of pre-school centres. For every pre-school place in Queanbeyan there were five eligible children (Table 2.3).

Occasional care was the main type of care used by single parents in Melba Flats and by two-parent single-income families. In Queanbeyan occasional care was seen by some respondents as a substitute for pre-school with a high proportion of 4 year olds (48 per cent) using this service. In the Melba-Charnwood area the position was the reverse, with 82 per cent of 4 year olds attending pre-school and only a small proportion (13 per cent) using occasional

care. Not only did more children use pre-school in this area, they used it more frequently. In Queanbeyan, pre-school was restricted to two sessions per week per child. In Melba-Charnwood, and the ACT in general, up to four sessions per week were available.

A feature of the use of occasional care by regular users among both age groups was the tendency for middle and high income families to use the service. Use of occasional care by children other than low-income families accounted for almost 60 per cent of users. Pre-school was better patronised by low income earners. Pre-school appeared to be universally viewed across all income groups as being desirable, but the lack of places restricted its use, notably in Queanbeyan.

The relationship between income levels and the use of formal care was complicated by the relatively high use of formal care by Melba Flats children (Table 4.4).

TABLE 4.4 - FORMAL AND INFORMAL CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR CHILDREN FROM SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

Study Areas	Queanbeyan		Melba-Charnwood	Melba Flats
Household Type	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Single Parent
		Number of Children		
	53	107	103	56
Types of Arrangements		Per Cent of Children		
.None	15	20	17	30
.Formal only	11	21	32	19
.Informal only	62	30	35	21
Formal & informal	12	28	16	30

Note: Percentages based on multiple-response aggregates.

Almost half the children in Melba Flats were utilising formal care (49 per cent). In Queanbeyan the figure was less (23 per cent).

Despite the high use of formal child care in Melba Flats, this area had the highest proportion of children (30 per cent) whose parents made no regular arrangements for them. Of all the study areas, Melba Flats had the highest proportion of children under two years. For reasons discussed earlier, these children were the hardest to place in care. No distinction could be made between the overall use of formal care by two-parent single-income families in Queanbeyan and Melba-Charnwood.

Major differences emerged between single-parent and two-parent single-income households in the number of arrangements made on a regular basis (Table 4.5).

TABLE 4.5: NUMBER OF REGULAR CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR CHILDREN FROM SINGLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

Household Type	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income
	Number of Children	
	109	210
No. of usual	Per Cent of Children	
.None	22	18
.One	62	35
.Two	12	41
.Three	4	6

Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of single-parent households had only one regular care arrangement. In comparison, almost half (47 per cent) of the children from two-parent single-income families were involved in two or more regualr arrangements per fortnight. Not only did some single-parent children use less formal care, they were also involved in fewer regular arrangements of any kind.

The most significant factor to emerge from the analysis of the usual child-care arrangements of single-income households is the apparent discrepancy between child-care policies which seek to give priority of access to households with special needs and the low use made of formal child care arrangements by single parents. Given that special-needs provisons have been emphasised in child-care policies since 1972 (Chapter 1) a substantial number ot single parents could be expected to be utilising government sponsored child care services. While a high proportion of single parents living in Melba Flats making regular arrangements were utilising government sponsored services, single parents in Queanbeyan could only be described as minor users of formal child care.

In Queanbeyan 62 per cent of children of single parents relied on informal arrangements as their main source of care and almost one third of single parents in Melba Flats (30 per cent) made no regular arrangements for their

children. In comparison, almost half of the children from two-parent single-income households in Queanbeyan and Melba-Charnwood were utilising formal child care. These data provide supporting evidence for the view that access to child care in general, and formal care in particular, poses major problems for single parents and for the successful implementation of a special needs policy in child care. The factors affecting the access of households to child care, especially single parent households, are taken up in Chapter 5.

4.3.4. Usual arrangements made by two-income households

The preceding discussion has concentrated on the child care arrangements made for children from single-income households. Whether by choice or circumstance, a parent (usually the mother) is generally available to carry out child-care functions. In situations where a single parent or both parents work, regular child care is essential. The following discussion outlines the main child care arrangements made by two-income households and those single parents who work.

The usual arrangements made by the children of working parents served to highlight the dependence which working families placed on informal child care for all age groups (Table 4.6).

TABLE 4.6: REGULAR CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR CHILDREN AGED 0-1 AND 2-4 YEARS IN TWO-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

	Children aged 0-1				Children aged 2-4			
	Queanbeyan		Melba-Charnwood		Queanbeyan		Melba-Charnwood	
No. of Children	16		19		43		34	
Reason for use of service	Employment	Other	Employment	Other	Employment	Other	Employment	Other
Type of Service Used	Per Cent of Children							
Pre-school	----------Not applicable----------				23	33	23	69
Occasional care	5	20	21	19	12	22	32	35
Family day care	20	-	17	-	13	-	10	-
Centre based day care	----------None----------				8	-	14	-
Private & Community								
Private minding	65	30	22	10	28	24	18	14
Relatives	38	25	46	42	34	38	50	44
Friends	--------None---------		4	32	-	20	12	22
Play group	----------None----------				-	10	-	4
Baby sitting club	-	6	-	16	-	8	-	24
Other	-	6	-	4	-	8	-	8

Note: Percentage based on multiple-response aggregates.

Formal centre-based care, either privately or publicly funded, caters for only a small proportion of total child-care use. Overall, the impact of government-sponsored child-care arrangements on two-income families requiring care for employment purposes can only be described as minimal. Among children 0-1 year none were using centre-based day care, a reflection of the difficulty in gaining access to this type of care for children in this age group. In Queanbeyan the main form of care was private minding in the minder's home and in Melba-Charnwood minding by relatives. Use of occasional care across both age groups by part-time working mothers in the Melba-Charnwood area was an important source of care. Use of occasional care by working mothers was frequently criticised on the basis that children of mothers working part-time were turning occasional care into permanent part-time care and were depriving other children of a place by their need for regular attendance.

Use of friends for child care was not a popular option among working parents. Friends were used when care was required for social and domestic reasons, but did not figure prominently in care arrangements to facilitate employment. All centre-based day care was concentrated in the 2-4 year age group. Most children using this form of care were located in the Melba-Charnwood area where there were considerably more day care places available than in

Queanbeyan (Table 2.3). However, as stated, centre-based care is a relatively minor form of care with only 10 per cent of children requiring care for employment purposes utilising this service. The lack of centre-based day-care services throughout Queanbeyan and the ACT is an obvious factor in the low number of children using this service.

The arrangements made by families who were shift workers revolved around use of informal care, usually involving the other partner and to a lesser extent private minding, or minding by relatives. Other than for family-day care, there are no formal services offering care to shift workers at night. Although many had inquired, respondents claimed that family day-care minders were reluctant to take children of shift workers because of disruptions to their own family life.

Among those single parents in employment whose children required child care, the type of care used varied by area. In Queanbeyan where formal child care was at a premium, there was much more reliance on minding by relatives and on paid private minding. Family day care was the only formal child-care arrangement used for employment purposes by single parents in Queanbeyan, although its use was rather restricted. In Melba Flats three out of the four working parents were utilising family day care.

The provision of formal child-care services for working mothers and single parents have long been priorities in the development of children's service policy (Chapter 1). However like their single-parent counterparts, working women in this study primarily use private informal child-care arrangements and those provided by relatives and friends. In the ACT and Queanbeyan there are simply not the facilities available to meet the demand for formal care, particularly centre-based care. Many more services are required if any impact is to be made on the child care needs of working mothers.

4.3.5 Child care provisions for school-aged children

So far the discussion has concentrated on the use of child care by children under school age. For single parents and two-income households, the problem of locating child care for school aged children also posed major problems. Because of the shortage of before and after-school care and vacational care arrangements, suitable care for school-age children was otten more difficult to find than child care for younger children.

The following analysis concentrates on the arrangements made for children from two-income and single-parent families as these children are the primary users of regular child care. School-aged children from families whose

mothers did not work made much the same arrangements outside school hours as their younger brothers and sisters. Other than for vacational care, which few children used, and occasional overnight stays with friends, child-care arrangements were usually a family affair with little separation of arrangements for those children under and over five.

Almost 50 per cent of school-aged children from two-income families were making regular child-care arrangements. The majority of children whose parents worked part-time usually did not need arrangements. Of the remaining children, approximately one-quarter could be classified as 'latch-key' children: that is, after school the children found their own way home and were not cared for until their parents arrived home. The attitude of parents to their children being at home alone varied. Some parents felt that it fostered independence; others were guilt-stricken and attempted to avoid questions on what their children did at home while waiting for their parents.[4] In some cases, school children had become an integral part of maintaining the family work routine, performing important domestic duties such as cleaning, shopping and looking after younger children. When school-aged children were placed in

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4. While the survey indicated that only a small proportion of children are minded by older children, it is possible that these figures understate the extent of this type of arrangement. Some respondents were most reluctant to discuss the issue.

child-care, the majority were in after-school care arrangements provided by relatives and friends, or private minders who were usually looking after a pre-school aged brother and sister (Figure 4.7).

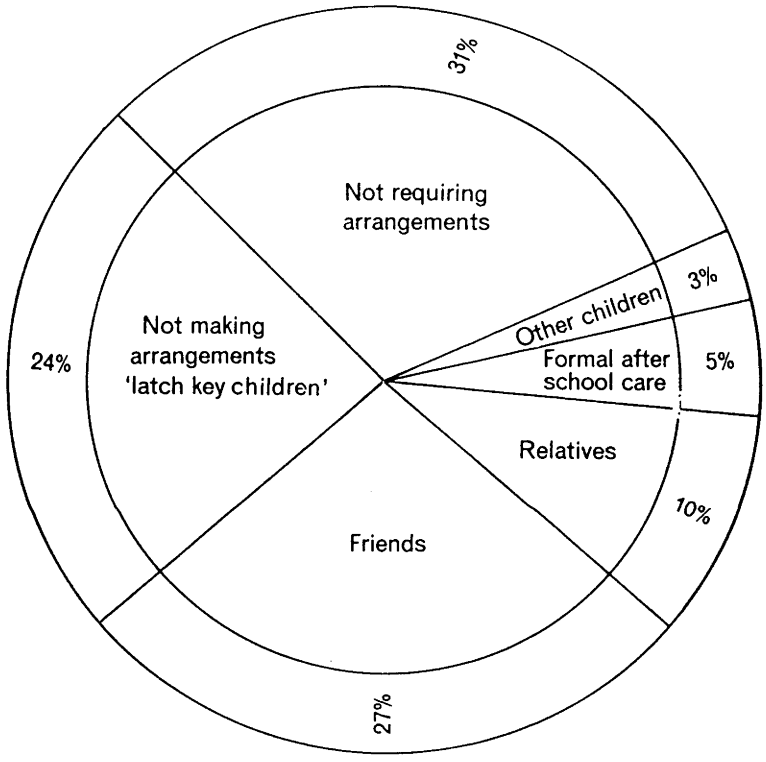


FIGURE 4.7: TYPES OF CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY WORKING PARENTS FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN.

4.4 Reasons for use of care

In the discussion which follows the reasons given by households for making regular child-care arrangements are examined. The analysis provides important background information on the felt needs of respondents and an insight into why certain types of child care are used by different households. Discussion focuses on the reasons for making child-care arrangements other than for employment purposes.

TABLE 4.7: REASONS FOR USE OF CARE. CHILDREN NOT REQUIRING CARE FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES.

Study Areas		A			B		C
		Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
Family Types		Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two-Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two-Income	Single Parent
Reasons for use of care							
Children under 2 years	No. of children	12	37	7	35	11	16
		Per cent					
Childs social/educational development		0	8	0	8	25	6
Parent's social/ recreational needs		75	32	28	55	37	81
Combination of child/ parent needs		50	70	85	74	75	49
Children 2-4 years old	No. of children	37	59	26	49	29	25
		Per cent					
Childs social/educational development		16	39	65	38	37	40
Parent's social/ recreational needs		48	47	46	52	37	72
Combination of child/ parent needs		58	77	30	72	48	72

Note: Percentage totals based on multiple response aggregates.

Children under two years were commonly placed in child-care to enable their parent(s) to pursue social and recreational activities, or because the parent(s) saw care as providing useful relief for both parent and child. Only a small proportion of children in this age group were placed in care for reasons associated with the social and educational development of the child. Single parents placed greatest emphasis on the use of care for parental reasons. Seventy-eight per cent of children from single-parent households had been placed in care to satisfy the social and recreational needs of their parents. The comparative figures for children from two-parent, single-income households was 43 per cent and for children from two-income families in this age group, 22 per cent. The importance attached to the use of care for parental needs indicated the pressure felt by sole parents as the principal providers of care

Among 2-4 year olds there was a marked increase in the use of care for the child's development needs. Forty per cent of children in this age group had been placed in care for the purposes of the educational and social development. This increase was mainly associated with the use of pre-schools and occasional care which many parents believed were important in preparing the child for primary school. Despite the increase in emphasis on the child's development needs, the demand for arrangements which satisfy parent

needs across all family types was high. Although single-parent households exhibited the greatest demand for use of care for parental needs, it was clear that all respondents felt they required some free time to satisfy their personal needs. Thus, even though some families may have had more pressing need for child care, child care had universal appeal.

The reasons given by different income groups for using child care were generally consistent with those applying to age groups. Thus, children under two were primarily placed in care to allow parents time off for social and recreational purposes, or for a combination of parent and child-related needs. While children 2-4 years were placed in care for the same reasons, there was a marked increase in the number of children using care for child development needs in both low and high income groups. The major difference in the reasons for the use of care was among low-income families. Single parents were more preoccupied with the need for child care for parental needs than low-income, two-parent families (Table 4.8).

TABLE 4.8: CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS PLACED IN CARE TO SATISFY PARENT RELATED NEEDS.

	Household Type	
	Single Parents	Two-Parent Single-Income
	Children aged 0-1 years	
Number of children	28	36
Per cent utilising care for parent related needs	65	23
	Children aged 2-4 years	
Number of children	62	54
Per cent utilising care for parent related needs	59	25

Percentages based on multiple-response aggregates.

These data suggest that among low-income families it is the single parent who feels most need for 'time out' in the day-to-day interaction between parent and child. Consequently, there was more emphasis on placing children in care to satisfy parental needs.

4.5 Satisfaction with services

In order to obtain an indication of the extent to which child-care services met the needs of service users, respondents were asked to rate services according to selected criteria. The data presented provide background to the discussion on use and factors affecting access to care in Chapter 5. On the whole, respondents were generally satisfied with the services they were using. It is important to note that most respondents, particularly those who did not require child care for employment, had very limited knowledge of services available and really had no basis for comparing arrangements. Often respondents were so appreciative of any child-care facilities that issues relating to the quality of care were of secondary consideration.

Services were rated according to five factors: the proximity of households to the service, costs, the hours of care available, the quality of care provided, and the child's happiness with the service. Because some services

were being used by a small number of children the responses cannot be considered indicative of the general attitude of respondents to certain types of child care. Data on the rating of service types is appended at the end of this chapter (Table 4.14).

4.5.1 Pre-school

Respondents using pre-schools were primarily concerned with issues relating to the location of services, cost and hours of care available. Few households had anything negative to say about the quality of care provided and most children were assessed by their parents as being happy at the pre-school they attended. Some two-income families in Queanbeyan were concerned about the cost of pre-school. These parents were using private care as their main source of care and were paying additional fees for the privilege of using pre-school. Pre-school fees in Queanbeyan were $60 per term (July 1981), a figure seen by some as excessive. In comparison, the cost of pre-school in the Melba-Charnwood area was $25 per term. The limited hours of care offered by pre-schools was a major concern among single parents and Queanbeyan residents as a whole. The restriction of most children in Queanbeyan to two sessions per week, compared with up to four in the ACT, accounts for the relatively high degree of dissatisfaction with pre-school hours.

4.5.2. Occasional care

Cost and hours of care were the main concerns with users of occasional care, although quality of care and the degree of child satisfaction were important issues in Melba Flats and are taken up in Chapter 6. Unlike pre-schools, funding arrangements for occasional care centres usually made no provision for child care subsidies for low-income families. In Queanbeyan, where there is heavy reliance on occasional care as a substitute for the lack of pre-school services, the cost of $3 per session was seen as prohibitive by low-income families.

In all study areas there was heavy demand for occasional care among all household types. The most frequent complaint was that occasional care was not available when required and that intending users had to book, often up to a week ahead, to ensure a place for their children. The demand for more hours of occasional care was universal. The special problems of the occasional care service offered at Melba Flats will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Briefly, at the time of the survey, the service was understaffed and over utilised and, as a result, there was considerable dissatisfaction with the service.

4.5.3 Family day care

Although there were relative few users of family day care (FDC) the quality of the service was frequently brought into question. Most of the problems in Queanbeyan related to the management of the service caused by the apparent lack of supervision of FDC mothers by the co-ordinator of the program. In Melba-Charnwood, users of FDC had a tendency to compare FDC mothers with trained child care workers, particularly pre-school teachers. Some FDC users assumed that because FDC mothers were part of a government subsidised program, they had formal child care training, a situation which was rarely the case. More rigid selection of day care mothers was seen as the answer to quality-of-care problems. The practicalities of achieving this objective are questionable. The income which can be earned by an FDC mother, up to $280 gross per fortnight[5], is not enough to attract professional child care workers. The shortage of day care mothers also means that there is not a large pool to draw from and therefore selection of women willing to become involved cannot be all that rigid.

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5. Based on the assumption that each FDC mother cared for a maximum of 4 children (the maximum number allowable under licencing regulations) and charged $70 per fortnight per child, the standard fee at the time of the survey (1981).

4.5.4 Private paid child-care

Although the majority of users of private paid child minding were satisfied with their arrangments, there was some concern over the quality of child-care and the degree of child satisfaction.

Of those who were worried about the quality of care, most focussed on the lack of activities provided by the minder, stating that their children were often restless and bored. There were a number of cases of border-line neglect and of child abuse by minders reported in Queanbeyan. Two of the most notable cases related to the drugging of a child with sedatives so that it would 'keep quiet' and one instance in which the child 'caught fire' while playing unsupervised near a heater.

The major advantage of using private minding was in the hours of care. Unlike centre-based care, where the staff worked regular hours, the hours of care could be negotiated in private minding and family-day-care arrangements. Many respondents appeared to be more interested in the flexibility of the minder with regard to hours of child-care if the parent was late, rather than in the quality of care offered. A factor worth noting from this survey was that, with the exception of one paid child minder, all the private minders were from low to

lower-middle-income families. It would appear that the provision of paid child care outside formal centre-based care, is primarily the domain of minders with low family incomes. Paid child minding was apparently not an attractive proposition for women from upper-middle and high-income families.

4.5.5 Other arrangements

Arrangements made with relatives and friends for employment and other child-care purposes were rated the most satisfactory of all forms of child care. Trust and flexibility of arrangements, particularly being able to obtain child care at short notice, were the major advantages cited. While friends and relatives provided the ideal situation for short-term care, the majority of respondents felt that their friends and relatives would not be available for long periods, especially when care was required for employment or illness.

Because of the low number of families using centre-based long-day care no realistic assessment could be made of this type of service except to say that users of private long-day care were more negative about the quality of care provided. It was generally acknowledged that community care with its government subsidies was able to afford better

qualified staff. In contrast, private centres often employed child care assistants with few qualifications or experience.

4.6 Proposed changes to child care arrangements by households

To complement the data on the nature and extent of household satisfaction with child-care services, respondents were asked whether they wished to change their existing arrangements, and for what reason, if given the opportunity to use child care services of their choice.

There was considerable variation in family and area responses to changing present child-care arrangements (Figure 4.8)

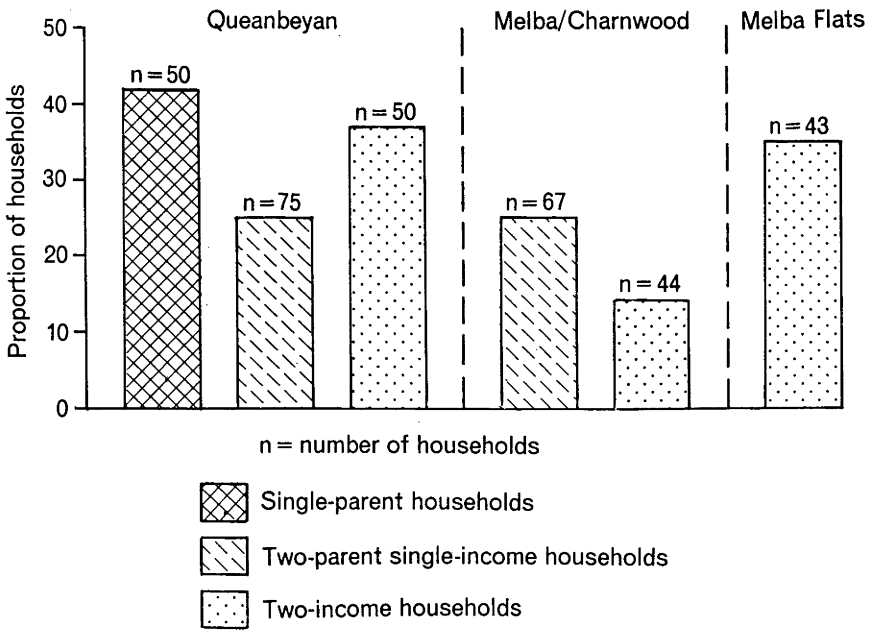


FIGURE 4.8: HOUSEHOLDS WANTING CHANGE TO EXISTING CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS.

Two-parent families residing in the Melba-Charnwood area were the least interested in changing their arrangements while single parents and two-income families in Queanbeyan indicated the strongest preference for change. This area variation was consistent with differences in the levels of service provision in each of the study areas. In Queanbeyan where there were fewer services, the level of dissatisfaction with existing arrangements was higher than for the Melba-Charnwood area. Single parents in Queanbeyan indicated a strong preference for change (42 per cent). Their lack of access to formal care, particularly for children 0-2 years, and their low overall use of care would account for this figure.

TABLE 4.9: HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND REASONS FOR WANTING TO CHANGE EXISTING CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS.

Income Category	Employment Related	Parent Related	Child Related	Domestic Reasons	Per cent of Households
Low income	0.61	1.44	0.49	1.37	41
Lower middle	1.30	1.02	0.23	1.05	29
Upper-Middle to High	1.25	0.37	2.45	0.34	30
Per cent of Households	33	28	15	24	100

n = 97 households

Note: The ratios were calculated by taking percentages of each column and then dividing each element by the percentage of the total column or row. For example 20 per cent of low-income households gave employment-related reasons as their main reason for wanting to change their existing child-care arrangements. These low-income households represented 33 per cent of all households thereby scoring a ratio of .61 or 20/30.

Of those wishing to make changes to their present arrangements, the largest proportion came from the low- to lower-middle-income group (70 per cent). The main reasons cited for seeking to change arrangements among low-income families related to parental and domestic needs, namely the need for a respite from the demands of children, more time for social activities, shopping and appointments. Child care for employment and the needs of the child were secondary considerations.

The reasons for changing existing child-care arrangements among lower-middle-income earners were relatively evenly divided between employment, parental and domestic requirements. Employment was the principal objective among this group and care for the child's development needs the least important (Table 4.10). Upper-middle- and high-income families were primarily concerned with making arrangements to facilitate the development needs of their children and to a lesser extent with employment.

From a 'needs' perspective, Table 4.10 illustrates that changes to present arrangements for employment purposes were concentrated among lower-middle through to high-income families. As described in Chapter 3, low-income families had limited employment prospects and were possibly less inclined to view employment as a realistic proposition, preferring to satisfy more immediate parent-centred needs

for child care. As indicated in the anomie scale (Table 3.22), the income status of a family is closely associated with the social outlook of respondents. Table 4.9 is another expression of this view, with low income families being preoccupied with personal and domestic needs.

4.7 Types of care required

Of the 106 households requiring changes to their existing arrangements, one-third wanted care for employment, other households were more interested in care for a variety of personal and child development reasons. Table 4.10 outlines the types of child-care arrangements required by those seeking changes for employment and other reasons.

TABLE 4.10: TYPES OF CARE REQUIRED BY HOUSEHOLDS SEEKING TO CHANGE THEIR EXISTING CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS.

Type of Care Required	Reasons for Seeking Care Per cent of Households	
	Employment	Child-Parent Needs
Sessional care	11	64
Long day centre based care	65	17
Private minding	11	5
Other	13	14
Total	100	100
Number of Households	37	69

n = 106

Those households requiring care for employment displayed a marked preference for long-day centre-based services. The demand for private minding which was the major arrangement made for employment was very low (11 per cent). Parents seeking to change arrangements for purposes other than employment demonstrated their preference for formal sessional care. Once again, informal arrangements, although extensively used, were not preferred when respondents were given the opportunity to 'choose' their own arrangements.

4.8 Households and prospects for changing arrangements

The majority of single-parent and two-income families interviewed in the three study areas rated their chances of being able to change their existing child care arrangements as being poor. Two-parent, single-income families had higher expectations, with 58 per cent stating that they thought their chances of making appropriate changes were 'fair' to 'good'. (Table 4.11)

TABLE 4.11: RATING BY RESPONDENTS OF CHANCES OF CHANGING EXISTING CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS.

Household Type	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income
Rating		Per Cent of Households	
Fair-Good	33	58	28
Poor	67	42	72
Number of Households	42	40	25

The reason for this attitude may be partly explained by the fact that significantly more two-parent single-income families are concerned with obtaining sessional rather than full day care arrangements (Table 4.10). Sessional care is more readily available and cheaper than day care.

As indicated in Table 4.12 about two-thirds (65 per cent) of single parents viewed the cost of care as the primary obstacle to implementing change.

TABLE 4.12: PROBLEMS ENVISAGED WITH CHANGING EXISTING CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS.

	Household Types			
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Total
Number of households	35	33	23	91
Problems Envisaged		Per Cent of Households		
None	7	33	5	
Cost	65	30	3	
Personal Family Problems	13	9	25	
Arrangement Problems	15	28	67	
Total	100	100	100	

By comparison, less than one-third (30 per cent) of two-parent single-income families rated cost as the chief obstacle to change and only 3 per cent of two-income families saw cost as a problem. Two-income families rated the lack of suitable child care arrangements as their major problem, particularly the lack of full-day, centre-based care. Whatever the main difficulty anticipated, whether costs for the low-income family or the problems of finding suitable arrangements for two-income households, about two-thirds of those in both groups rated their chances of being able to effect change as being poor.

4.9 Child care and the intentions of women once all children are of school age

The data presented in the preceding discussion on changes to existing child care arrangements highlight the fact that a large proportion of single-parent and two-parent single-income families either do not wish, or are unable, to change their present child care arrangements. On the other hand, responses to a question on intended arrangements once all children are at school indicated that the majority of women engaged in housework had long-term ambitions to pursue activities outside the home (Table 4.13)

TABLE 4.13 : TYPES OF ACTIVITIES WOMEN INTENDED TO PURSUE ONCE ALL THEIR CHILDREN WERE AT SCHOOL.

	Current Activity			
	Full-time employment	Part-time employment	Domestic activities	Total
Number of Women	45	46	163	254*
Intentions of Women				
Work related	58	59	83	
Further education	13	26	13	
Stop work or reduce hours of employment	24	4	0	
Other intentions	5	11	4	
Total	100	100	100	

Note: Of the total survey population of 328 women, 76 (23 per cent) were unsure about their intentions once all their children were at school.

Employment was the principal activity sought, with demand being particularly strong among respondents involved in housework. While employment was by far the dominant preferred activity, it is interesting to note that almost a quarter (24 per cent) of those women working full-time wanted to reduce their hours of work, or to stop working. Most of the respondents in this category were upper-middle or high-income earners.

After employment, the activity most sought after by those employed part-time, or involved in housework, was further education. Sixty per cent of respondents in this category were low to lower-middle income earners. From the information supplied on the educational status of low-income earners (Chapter 3), it is reasonable to assume that these households were seeking further education to improve their employment and, consequently, their income prospects.

Single parents in Queanbeyan were the most eager to enter the work force once all children were at school. This desire was understandable since these households were the least financially secure because of their dependence on the private rental market. In contrast, single parents in Melba Flats, while primarily interested in employment, gave considerable emphasis to further education as a prospective activity. The security afforded by Housing Commission

tenancy in Melba Flats suggests that financial considerations were, relatively speaking, less pressing than in Queanbeyan, although, as discussed earlier, further education would be mainly aimed at improving employment prospects.

Women from two-income families in the Melba-Charnwood area displayed the least interest in continuing to work. Male incomes in this area were significantly higher than for males from two-income families in Queanbeyan (Table 3.4). Thus, the need for female parents to continue to work for financial reasons was likely to be less pressing in the Melba-Charnwood area than it was in Queanbeyan, allowing women to consider activities other than employment.

In response to a question on the type of child care arrangements required by women considering entering the work force, over half stated that they would not require any form of child care because they intended to work school hours. This indicates a strong preference for part-time employment. Two-parent families were the main household type in this category. Single-parent families seeking employment were primarily interested in after school care, placing less emphasis on working part-time, possibly because of their need for greater income security which could only be found in full-time employment.

Intended arrangements for the majority of single parents and two-parent, single-income households were very much at the 'idea' stage. The personal circumstances and employment prospects of many low to lower-middle-income families would indicate that the chances of achieving their stated objectives were remote, particularly for employment. Two-income families were more definite about their arrangements, a response which reflected their relative economic security when compared with other groups.

4.10 Conclusion

The access of children from single-parent and low-income families to child care arrangements can only be described as poor. Women, who are the principal child minders in these households, exhibit a tendency to spend proportionately more of their time with their children and make fewer regular child care arrangements. When arrangements are made, they are predominantly informal, such as those provided by relatives and friends. With the exception of Melba Flats residents, use of formal centre-based sessional services, pre-school and occasional care, were minimal.

On an area basis single parents in Queanbeyan had the least access to formal services. In contrast, the children of single parents in Melba Flats making regular

arrangements were all using some formal care. Only a small proportion of single-parent households using formal care were receiving subsidies. Occasional care which accounts for the bulk of formal service usage does not usually provide subsidies because of the way the service is funded.

From a needs perspective child care was very much parent-oriented among single-parent families. Use of child care for the development and social needs of children were not major considerations. Low-income two-parent families displayed much the same characteristics as single parents except that there was less emphasis on the use of child care for parent-related needs. Two-parent, single-income families other than low income earners spent less time with their children and had much better access to formal and informal arrangements. Households from this family type were the major users of formal sessional child care services. Considerable emphasis was given to the use of services for the child's development needs, especially among 2-4 year olds. As with all other women, two-parent, single-income mothers also acknowledged the need for care for the purpose of 'time out' for the parent and child.

A feature common to both single parents and two-parent, single-income families in the three study areas was the low use of child care for children under two years of age. This situation was brought about by the limited number of formal

services available to this age group, by reluctance on the part of private child-minders to care for infants, and by the belief among some respondents that young children should remain in the care of their mothers. Children aged 2-4 years made greater use of formal child care arrangements, mainly because occasional care and pre-schools catered for this age group.

The majority of two-income families using child care for employment purposes were dependent on the use of informal child-care arrangements, usually minding by relatives and private minders. There was limited use of family day care and some part-time workers relied on regular use of occasional care. Among households requiring care for full-time employment, use of centre-based, long day care was minimal for 2-4 year olds and non-existent for children under 2 years. Flexibility in the hours of care was a major requirement of two-income families. Arrangements for reasons other than employment centred around child development needs and social and recreational activities for both parents and children.

A question in the survey on changes to present arrangements presented an opportunity to explore the degree of satisfaction with existing arrangements and the felt needs of households. Overall, responses were unexpected in that many households, particularly those in the lower-income

group who perhaps may have benefited socially and economically from improved access to care, stated that they had no wish to change their arrangements. Of those who indicated a desire to change, the reasons cited related mainly to satisrying parent and domestic needs.

While it may appear that households with children most in need of care were the least interested, and if interested, only wanted care to satisfy immediate personal needs, it is suggested that these responses mask more complex considerations within households. These considerations are linked to data presented in Chapter 3 which highlight the limited prospects of some households to progress to greater financial independence without considerable assistance. The desire of most low-income households for a more secure existence was amply demonstrated by the fact that most wanted to pursue employment or to attempt further education. This desire is evidence of the strong feelings of many women to break away from their domestic routine once all children were at school.

Despite the apparent reliance on informal care arrangements by most households for employment, social and recreational activities there was a strong demand for formal care as reflected in arrangements required and arrangements preferred. The apparent high demand for formal care, particularly for community-based services, and the

relatively poor access to it by special need families provides the focus for discussion on factors affecting access in Chapter 5.

TABLE 4.14: RATING OF SERVICES BY RESPONDENTS.

Study Areas	Queanbeyan			Melba-Charnwood		Melba Flats
	Single Parent	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Two-Parent Single-Income	Two Income	Single Parent
Pre-School	Number of Children Using Service					
	7	8	14	12	9	7
	Problems Cited (per cent of users)					
Location	33	0	25	27	11	20
Cost	0	0	44	10	0	0
Hours	50	40	27	27	0	60
Quality of care	0	0	0	9	10	0
Child unhappy	0	0	0	0	11	0
Occasional Care	Number of Children Using Service					
	5	49	10	32	6	30
	Problems Cited (per cent of users)					
Location	0	17	40	25	7	34
Cost	40	20	0	28	21	40
Hours	60	48	30	40	64	72
Quality of care	0	4	0	14	7	56
Child unhappy	0	0	0	10	7	20
Family Day Care	Number of Children Using Service					
	4	-	7	-	6	3
	Problems Cited (per cent of users)					
Location	0	-	14	-	0	0
Cost	25	-	0	-	75	33
Hours	0	-	0	-	0	0
Quality of care	50	-	50	-	75	33
Child unhappy	0	-	0	-	0	0
Private Paid Care	Number of Children Using Service					
	2	-	18	-	9	-
	Problems Cited (per cent of users)					
Location	0	-	7	-	0	-
Cost	0	-	14	-	17	-
Hours	0	-	15	-	0	-
Quality of care	0	-	33	-	17	-
Child unhappy	0	-	15	-	0	-
Care Provided by Relatives or Friends	Number of Children Using Service					
	39	61	24	50	32	21
	Problems Cites (per cent of users)					
Location	14	12	14	0	7	9
Cost	0	0	0	0	7	0
Hours	21	15	0	6	7	0
Quality of care	0	0	0	0	7	9
Child unhappy	0	6	0	0	7	9

Percentages based on multiple-response aggregates.

CHAPTER 5

Access to child care. Public and personal considerations

5.1 Introduction

Since its inception the Children's Services Program has sought to improve public access to child care. The policy emphasis has been on the locational and spatial dimensions of access. Following the establishment of the Child Care Act (1972), successive Federal Governments have attempted to provide services to families identified as having special needs by locating services in areas of need or stipulating that existing services must grant priority of access to special need families. In Chapter 4 data were presented which highlighted the minimal impact which government sponsored child care services had on low-income and single-parent households.

This chapter seeks to examine some of the factors which govern access to child care by focussing on public and private access considerations. Public access is discussed within the context of demand and supply limitations to the provision of child care, the problem of physical proximity to services and the administrative procedures for allocating children's services within the community.

The discussion on personal access is developed around the contention that differences in personal and material attributes can have a direct bearing on the welfare of individuals and groups (Hirsch, 1976). In this chapter the

objective is to demonstrate that although public access considerations undoubtably influence child care use, personal access factors are often the primary determinants of use of services for some households, especially those on low incomes. Consequently, if many 'special need' households are to make effective use of child care services, more attention must be given to assisting families to overcome their personal access problems.

5.2. Use of child care and issues of public access

5.2.1 The availability of licenced child care places[1]

As outlined in table 2.3 (Chapter 2), with the exception of pre-school services in the ACT, there was an acute shortage of formal child-care arrangements throughout the ACT and Queanbeyan. Queanbeyan had the lowest number of formal child care places and this was reflected in the lower proportion of households using formal care among all family types (Table 4.4, Chapter 4). Any improvement in the overall numbers of children using formal care can only come about through increasing the numbers of services available.

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1. Licenced child care services are those which, in order to operate, must meet the requirements of a licencing authority. In Queanbeyan the authority is the Department of Youth and Community Services and in the ACT the Child Welfare Branch of the Department of the Capital Territory.

The Children's Services program, particularly between the years 1975-83, was directed not so much at expanding the number of child care places available, but at attempting to rationalise service use by emphasising priority of access for special need households. In the period between 1980-83 there was almost no growth in the expansion of formal care services in the ACT and Queanbeyan (Table 5.1). What growth did occur, mainly in the area of family day care in the ACT, developed towards the end of 1982 and only after considerable pressure was exerted on the Minister for Social Security (Pers comm, Belconnen Family Day Care Association, September 1982).

TABLE 5.1 - CHILD CARE PLACES IN THE ACT AND QUEANBEYAN, 1980-1983 (EXCLUDES PRE-SCHOOLS)

Service	Day Care		Family Day Care		Occasional Care		Total Places
	No. of Services	Places	No. of Services	Places	No. of Services	Places	
A.C.T.[1]							
Year							
1980-81	23	1015	8	1100	15	600	2715
1981-82	25	1077	8	900	15	600	2577
1982-83	27	1115	8	1150	15	600	2865
						per cent increase	5.5
Queanbeyan[2]							
1980-81	1	35	1	66	2	25	126
1981-82	1	35	1	66	2	25	126
1982-83	1	35	1	66	2	25	126
						per cent increase	0.0

Source: 1 Department of the Capital Territory, Annual Reports, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83.

2 Regional Childrens Service Coordinator. Department of Youth and Community Services, Queanbeyan.

The problems experienced by the Belconnen Family Day Care scheme which services the Melba-Charnwood area illustrate the pressures exerted on many government subsidised services during the period 1980-82. During this period, government subsidised child care services were required to facilitate the access of children from special need households within policy guidelines which restricted the expansion of services. The Belconnen family day care scheme was established in 1976 on a grant from the office of Child care. Despite the heavy demand for its services (there were 50 children on the waiting list in September 1982), the scheme received no additional funds until late in 1982. Funds were only forthcoming because the administrators of the scheme made public statements about the possibility of having to close down or reduce service provision because the initial grant was insufficient to meet operating costs. The financial problems were so serious that the co-ordinators of the scheme were considering forgoing a national wage rise in order to maintain service levels (Pers comm, Belconnen family day care, September 1982). Although funding for child care services was limited, services were still expected to provide priority of access to special need families, many of whom required subsidies.

Despite the emphasis given to granting priority or access for special need families, the data presented in Chapter 4 raise questions about the success of government efforts. Low-income families, the focus of Children's Service policy initiatives, were only minor users of formal care. The apparent contradiction between policy objectives and the actual use of services raises the important question whether 'special needs' can ever be successfully met by a program which has universal appeal to parents with children under school age and, in which demand for services exceeds supply.

If all children in this survey who were eligible, were given priority of access to services, there would be chaos within formal sessional and day care services. There were simply not the places avalable in licenced child-care services to accommodate these children without displacing other children (Table 2.3). For example, of the 109 children from single-parent households eligible to use government sponsored child care, only 50 (46 per cent) were utlising these services. If the parents of children who were not using formal care were to attempt to exercise their right of access to a service such as occasional care 59 new places would have to be found or an equivalent number of low priority users displaced.

The shortage of child care places in government sponsored services was very apparent when, during the course of the survey, some respondents from Melba Flats were referred to the Belconnen family day care scheme because of their need for care. The scheme's co-ordinator requested that referrals not be made without prior consultation as the program could not accommodate any more children because of its own financial difficulties. Although the needs of the households concerned were recognised, the co-ordinator felt that it was unfair to publicise the priority of access provision when the scheme could not provide places for all needy children.

The situation faced by the Belconnen family day care scheme highlights the dilemma of most services implementing a priority of access policy. To accommodate more special need children in existing services, other children whose needs are assessed as being less urgent would have to seek alternative care, primarily in private child minding arrangements. However, since children from special needs families often have to be subsidised, centres can only remain financially viable if they receive additional financial assistance from the government, or use families paying full fees to subsidise those on low incomes. Given the limited extent of subsidy assistance to child care centres, most centres rely on a pool of parents paying the

economic cost of care to subsidise low-income earners. Without additional funding there is a financial limit to the number of special need children that a centre can take.

In Queanbeyan where pre-school services were at a premium and there were some two hundred eligible four year olds on waiting lists (July 1981), some parents who were interviewed in the survey expressed strong feelings about the 'priority of access' policy. Several respondents who had the experience of having their children's enrolment deferred in favour of 'special need' children were most antagonistic towards the legitimacy of the claims of needy families, particularly those made by single parents.

Given the high demand for formal care which is common to all income groups, it would appear that public acceptance of the 'priority of access' policy is likely to depend on how rigorously it is enforced. At present the policy affects only a few families in areas where services are in heavy demand. However, should the policy be pursued more energetically, public division over who should have access is likely to increase. In short, middle to high income families also perceive themselves as having a special need for child care and are likely to fight for it if their access is threatened.

The apparent success of the National Association of Community based Children's Services in lobbying against the recommendations made in the Spender Report (Spender, 1981) is an example of how quickly middle class groups can be mobilised when their interests are threatened. At the initial meetings of the Association in Canberra in October 1981, representatives from the various children's service groups, while acknowledging that the Spender report was seeking to direct access to those most in need, refused to countenance any policy which attempted to redistribute services to special need groups at the expense of those whose needs were arguably less pressing.

5.2.2 Location of child care services

One of the primary factors in shaping child care policy throughout the 1970's has been the emphasis given to locating child care services in areas of need, the assumption being, physical proximity to services will facilitate access. Physical proximity to child care obviously has a direct bearing on child care use. This is particularly evident when comparing the access considerations of respondents living in Melba Flats and those in East Queanbeyan. The presence of an occasional care centre in the Melba Flats complex means that physical access to care does not pose any problems for residents as they all live within easy walking distance of the centre.

In comparison with other low-income families, Melba Flats residents have the highest usage rate of formal care (Table 4.4, Chapter 4).

On the other hand, in East Queanbeyan, residents requiring child care must seek access outside their local area. (Figure 5.1) East Queanbeyan has no services and use of formal care is limited. Of the 150 eligible 0-4 year olds only 20 per cent were utilising any form of formal care on a regular basis. In comparison 44 per cent of eligible children in West Queanbeyan had access to formal care.[2]

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2. These figures were derived from a survey carried out in August 1981 of all children using formal child care arrangements in Queanbeyan. All centres were asked to provide addresses of regular attenders.

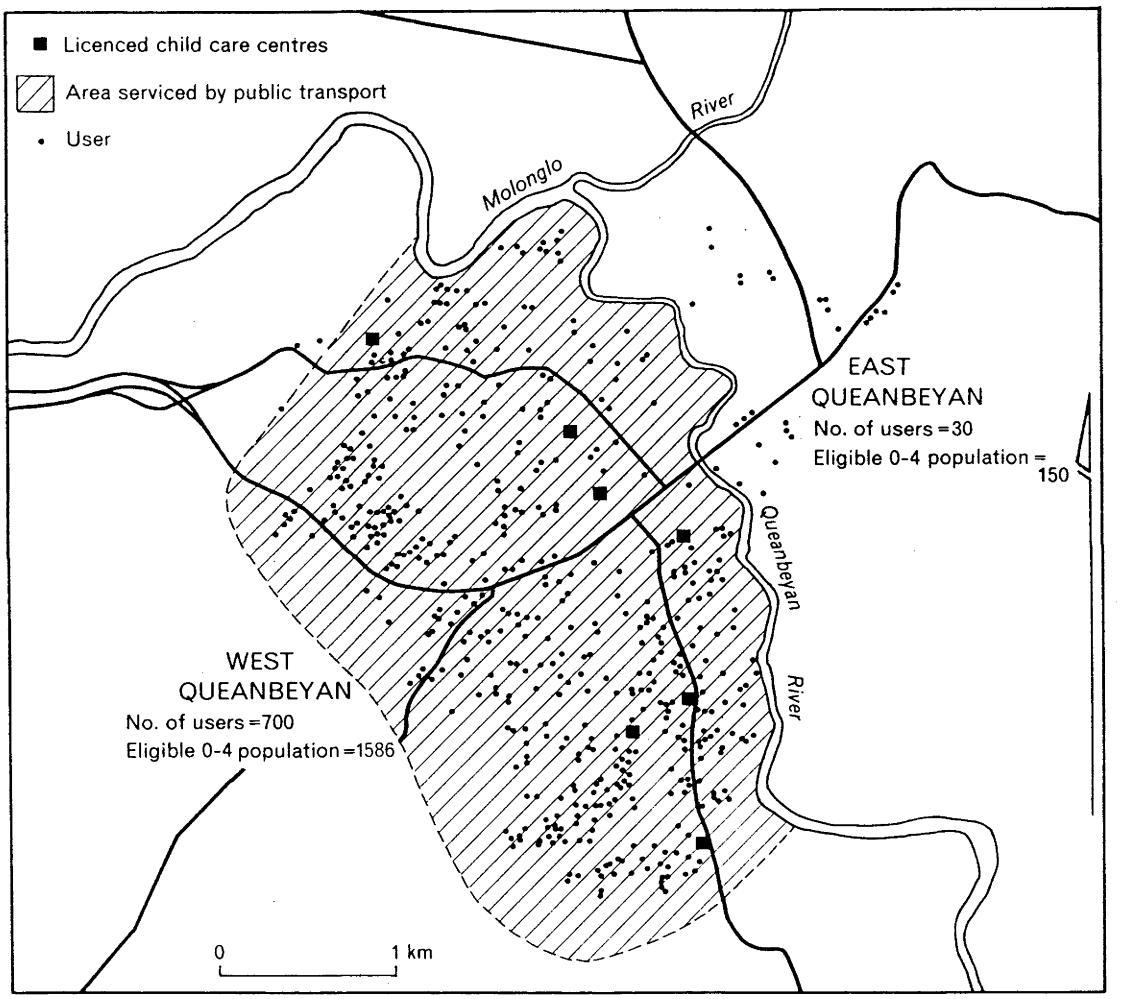


FIGURE 5.1: DISTRIBUTION OF ALL FAMILY CHILD-CARE SERVICES, QUEANBEYAN.

East Queanbeyan attracted many low income earners because of the concentration of flats and low rental housing. The access of these families to child care and other community services to the west of the Queanbeyan River is restricted by a lack of public transport. The private bus company responsible for Queanbeyan's public transport needs does not serve the area because it claims the service would be uneconomic. Parents wishing to use pre-school and occasional care services outside the area are obliged to walk or need to have access to a car. Since relatively few mothers from low-income families have access to a vehicle during the day most have to walk. The minimum walking time from East Queanbeyan to the nearest pre-school is approximately 15-20 minutes and to the nearest occasional care centre, 35-40 minutes.

For the residents of East Queanbeyan, physical proximity to services is a major factor restricting their access to child care. It can only be improved if the transport system is upgraded or services are located in the area. There are no plans to improve the transport system and, because the overall number of children under school age is low (150),[3] it is unlikely that child care services could be justified for such a small number of children. The East Queanbeyan example highlights the combined problem of

3. Source: The Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981 Census of Population and Housing.

locational disadvantage and the lack of sufficient numbers of children to warrant the provision of services. Families with pre-school aged children in these circumstances are unlikely to be able to improve their access to child care and possibly will remain permanently disadvantaged in the foreseeable future.

5.2.3 Submissions and public access

The procedures adopted by the Office of Child Care in allocating services to community groups have a decisive influence on access to services. As described in Chapter 1, the type and location of services has been largely determined by the submission model of resource allocation. Under this model there is usually no formal intervention in the location of services by government agencies sponsoring Children's Service Programs. In the ACT and Queanbeyan the responsible departments have preferred to respond to, rather than initiate submissions for assistance in the development of child care services.

This method of resource allocation places great faith in the concept of community participation. It assumes that individuals with similar interests and needs will organise themselves into a community group to pursue their common interest, in this case, child care facilities. The failings

of the submission model are well documented in Chapter 1 and are generally acknowledged to favour the articulate and the organised who, in many cases, are not the needy.[4]

The emphasis on responding to, rather than identifying need, has been with minor exceptions, the basis for allocating services. None of the services contacted in any of the study areas had a well developed 'out-reach' function where they actively sought to identify and contact families with special needs. If families with special needs presented themselves or are referred to services, then every effort was made to accommodate them. However, the principle method of access was on a first-come, first-served basis. Hence, if better organised and more affluent households were able to organise themselves to the service-gate first, they were virtually assured of access.

The Spence Children's Cottage which adjoins the suburb of Melba (Figure 2.2, Chapter 2) provides an example of problems of catering for special need children without an out-reach function. The Cottage provided part-time and full-day care, but at the time of the survey only 10 per cent of its places were filled by special need families. When a spokesperson for the service was asked why this was

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4. See report of the Social Research and Evaluation Association, Department of Youth and Community Services 'One Step Forward - Two Steps Back - the hidden problems in community management of children's services', 1980.

so, she replied that there was not a heavy demand for care from special need families in the area. When told that Melba Flats was within 2 km. of Spence and had a large number of single parents with unmet child care needs, the co-ordinator responded by saying that none of these people had ever asked to use the service and that she did not feel it was her responsibility to contact them. As was true for most child care co-ordinators interviewed, the co-ordinator at Spence Cottage had a highly localised view of her role and had limited time and skills to explore the possibility of serving those outside of her immediate area.

5.3 Use of child care and issues of personal access

It is tempting to view access problems as being primarily the result of lack of services and for many families, as in East Queanbeyan, the absence of formal child care places was indeed their major obstacle to the use of care. On the other hand, for some households, access was restricted more by material and personal considerations within the family. What follows is an account of personal household characteristics which were observed to have a direct bearing on the use of child care among some families during the survey. The impact on the use of child care by factors such as the period of residence, access to transport and household income are analysed. This analysis is followed by

a discussion on issues of a more personal and complex nature which largely reflect attitudes and social relations within the family.

5.3.1 Knowledge of services

One of the distinguishing features of low-income families surveyed in this study was the relatively short period of time they had lived in their local areas (Table 3.20, Chapter 3). These families, in contrast with those who had been resident for longer periods, appeared to be less well informed about the types of services available. This was particularly evident among low-income families in Queanbeyan, many of whom responded enthusiastically to the pamphlet on the availability of Children's Services printed for the survey (Appendix 5). It was evident that the pamphlet provided many respondents with their first insight into what services were available and whom they might contact. Of those households using formal child care, almost two-thirds (64 per cent) had been resident two years or more. Presumably, these residents had more time to get to know their local area and the services available.

5.3.2 Transport

A second characteristic of low-income families was their lack of transport. Assuming that low-income families knew about child care services, the next problem was getting to them. The problems that lack of transport posed to child care use have been illustrated in the discussion on problems of access among residents of East Queanbeyan. In areas where public transport is restricted, personal transport arrangements provide the only other alternative. As illustrated in Table 3.13 vehicle ownership is limited among low-income earners, particularly single parents.

Excluding service users in Melba Flats, where residents live within reasonable walking distance to child care, there is a relationship between use of formal care and vehicle ownership. Sixty per cent of formal care users had access to their own transport with the consequent advantage that they could range further afield in search of care. For example, several women in Queanbeyan said that although they preferred to shop within their local area they could not get access to occasional care. However, because they had transport they could shop at Woden in the ACT where occasional care was readily available (Chapter 2, Figure 2.3).

5.3.3 Cost

Thirdly, cost was reported as a major factor affecting the use of formal care services. Cost was the main issue cited by low-income earners as limiting their chances of making changes to their existing arrangements. (Chapter 4, Table 4.12). For low-income earners the cost of using services was proportionately greater than for families on higher incomes. For a family with a disposable income of $50 per week the cost of occasional care ($3 per session) accounted for 6 per cent of disposable income. In comparison, a family with a disposable income of $100 per week spent only 3 per cent of its income for the use of the same service. The operating cost of using child care as opposed to purchasing other essentials such as food and clothing posed a disincentive to the use of formal child care, particularly when some families had disposable incomes of less than $25 per week.

Since the capacity of sessional child care services to offer subsidies to low-income earners was limited by funding restrictions, even if children from these families were given priority of access, many parents would not have been able to afford the cost. Users of occasional care in Melba Flats said that they were often unable to pay for care even though they knew they had priority of access.

Some households were in debt to the child care centre in Melba Flats for the times they had used the centre but had not paid.

The use of child care was also affected by personal perceptions of income earning opportunities. Some low-income earners interviewed had made a conscious decision not to seek employment because they realised, even with a child care subsidy, they would be better off if they remained on social security benefits. The following example illustrates this point. A single parent on a supporting parents benefit earning $192 per fortnight (June 1981) decided to take up employment as a shop assistant. Her comparative financial position while she was receiving the supporting parents benefit and while in employment is compared in Figure 5.2).

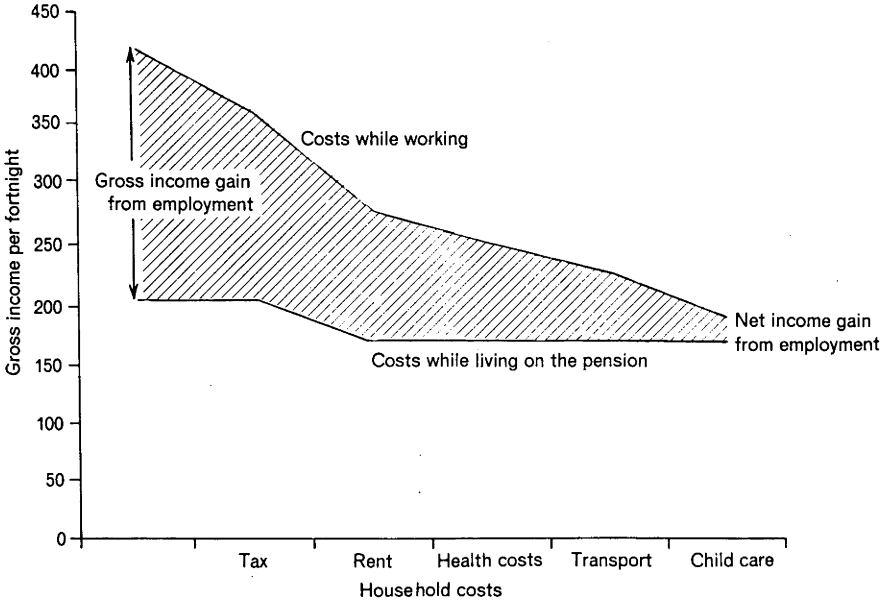


FIGURE 5.2: A CASE STUDY OF THE COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL BENEFITS TO A SINGLE PARENT IN INITIATING A TRANSITION FROM DEPENDENCE ON A SUPPORTING PARENTS PENSION TO EMPLOYMENT.

As this figure illustrates, the costs incurred in employment (and the benefits foregone) resulted in a net capital gain of only $20 per fortnight, after modest expenditure on rent, health insurance, transport and child care. If any additional costs resulting from employment were included (food or clothing), it is conceivable that employment would actually result in a net cost to the employee.

Some parents with similar employment potential said that working 'was not worth the effort' and had actually declined offers of subsidised care. As illustrated in Table 5.2, the actual amount of child care subsidy paid to encourage parents to enter the work force was small in comparison to the total benefits which accrued to the government. Using the case study cited, for an outlay of $17.50 per week in child care subsidies the government recovered $166.50 in taxes and revenue which would have otherwise been spent on benefits and subsidies.

TABLE 5.2 : SAVINGS IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE THROUGH THE WORK FORCE PARTICIPATION OF A SINGLE PARENT.

1.	Child care subsidy paid by government/week		$17.50
2.	Savings in welfare subsidies/week		
	Supporting parents pension	102.50	
	Subsidised rent	25.00	
	Health card	9.00	
	Transport vouchers	5.00	
3.	Taxation receipts on earnings of $210/week	25.00	
	Total government savings and receipts/week		$166.50

5.3.4 Other factors

While variations in the social and economic condition of households such as transport, income and residential status provide tangible indicators of personal access problems, a number of less visible considerations were noted as having a significant impact on access. Most of the observations noted below were not divulged during the household survey, but were revealed only after contact with respondents had been established for some time.

During the course of conducting interviews in Melba Flats it became apparent that some residents, although within reasonable proximity to child care were not using services for reasons which were personally very complex. Some parents could not be induced to use child care even if they were offered subsidies or given priority of access without some effort being directed to resolving their personal problems first. The following case studies illustrate some of the problems encountered.

(1) Judy was a 27 year old mother with one child. During her marriage her husband had a history of domestic violence, physically abusing both child and mother. In 1980 she left her husband and went to stay with her sister. Her husband found out where she was staying, bashed her and threatened to take the child away. In 1980 she managed to leave Sydney and came to Canberra without her husband's knowledge. She had not contacted relatives in Canberra for fear of being

traced by her husband and refused to place her child in care because she feared that her husband would find out where she was and abduct the child.

(2) When Vivien was divorced she brought her two children to Canberra where she had been told housing was available. She had no friends or relatives in Canberra and relied on her children for comfort. At the time of the survey her oldest child had just started school leaving her youngest, aged 3, to care for. Vivien said that she was very emotionally dependent on her children as they gave her 'something to live for'. Now that the oldest was at school she did not feel like placing her 3 year old in child care because she would have 'nothing to do'.

(3) A factor related to loneliness was the feeling of alienation. As described in Chapter 3 (Table 3.21) low-income earners, and single parents in particular, expressed strong feelings of alienation. In discussions with single parents in Melba Flats, some rspondents related how the emotional trauma of marital breakdown or lack of support by family and friends when a child was born out wedlock led them to adopt an insular life style, rejecting social contact for themselves and their children.

From the comments made by women who had gone through this phase, continuous help was often required to draw them out of their isolation and restore their self-esteem. Unfortunately such help was seldom available. The issue was not so much that there was no assistance, but that the parents concerned seldom sought help. As a general observation, those families who needed the most help were the least likely to request it. In an area like Melba Flats intervention by support groups was more likely to be successful because the geographical concentration of households facilitated access to special need families. In Queanbeyan, the dispersed nature of low-income families made them more difficult to locate. Given this situation it was not surprising that the most severe cases of hardship and isolation were located in Queanbeyan. For some parents who felt alienated and isolated it was not simply a matter of providing more services, but assisting them to regain their confidence and identity through out-reach programs.

(4) Anne had remarried. Both she and her new husband had one child from previous marriages and she was pregnant. Anne wanted to ensure that her second marriage was a success and said that she intended to show that she could be a good wife and mother. Anne did not intend to use any child care until her children were of school age because she was worried that some people might say that she was not a 'good mother'.

(5) For some respondents the attitudes and influence of their mothers had a bearing on their use of child care. In several instances where young women were being interviewed in the presence of their mothers the older women tended to try and dominate the interview by pre-empting answers to questions directed to their daughters. Generally the attitude of these older mothers towards the use of child care tended to be conservative, reflecting values prevalent during the 1950's when child care was perceived as a threat to the family and motherhood (Appendix 2). Certainly not all older women shared these values however, because many would not have had the opportunity to use care, even pre-school, their conservatism was understandable. One respondent even commented that she felt her mother discouraged her from using child care by making her feel guilty because she (her mother) wanted to exercise control over her by providing the only source of child care.

(6) In a number of two-parent single-income families household income was divided in such a way that no allowance was made for child care costs. The breadwinner, usually the father, would allocate a portion of his wages for house-keeping costs and his wife would be expected to keep within the limits of her budget. In these households gender roles were often well defined, either by choice or because one parent had definite ideas about what the other

should be doing. Some women saw their role as mother and housekeeper as a vocation and were adamant about not needing money for child care. On the other hand, some women complained that they received no allowance for child care because their husbands did not believe child care was necessary. Several women working part-time indicated that their primary reason for working was to earn enough money to pay for child care so that they could have some 'free time' and socialise with other adults.

(7) In Melba Flats where there was a concentration of special need families, staff from the occasional care centre were frequently under heavy pressure and personality conflicts often occurred between service users and staff. For reasons which will be elaborated upon in Chapter 6, conflict between the co-ordinator of the Melba Flats occasional care centre and local residents had led to problems over the use of services. Some residents were deterred from using the service because they felt the co-ordinator was too judgemental about their personal lives. Because of the conflict between some residents and the co-ordinator unfavourable comments about the occasional care centre had circulated throughout the flats. During the

course of interviewing in Melba Flats, several residents stated that they did not intend to use child care because of the 'bad reputation' of the centre's co-ordinator.

(8) For some families the main problem of using care related to the behavioural problems of their children. In several households respondents claimed to have hyperactive children who were difficult to place in care. Two respondents related instances where they had been requested not to bring their children back to a child care centre because their children had been too disruptive. Other parents said that taking their children to care was not 'worth the effort' as staff often asked them to assist with roster duty which, for some parents, defeated the purpose of seeking care. A number of parents claimed that they were not made to feel welcome by other parents and were reluctant to use care. This comment was frequently made by users of play groups.

The extent to which personal access problems similar to those raised actually affect service use is difficult to determine. However, it is clear that for some families these problems over-ride public access considerations as the major determinant of use. If it is accepted that personal access problems constitute a major hurdle for some households in the use of care, the out-reach functions of those allocating and providing care must be upgraded. As

will be illustrated in Chapter 6 it was only through sustained support in the form of counselling by social workers in Melba Flats that many families were using child care. If out-reach functions are not developed it is difficult to see how some 'special need families' will be able to benefit from any increase in service provision or tightening of priority of access considerations.

5.4 Conclusion

For all the rhetoric in government child care policies over the past decade there is little evidence in this study to suggest that special need policies have been very effective. From a public access perspective there are simply not enough services available to accommodate the child care needs of all families who wish to use them. This situation applies not only to households requiring care for employment purposes, but also to those who require care for domestic, social and child development reasons.

Given the lack of government subsidised child care places in each of the study areas, the child care requirements of many special need families could only be accommodated by displacing existing users to alternative forms of private care. Such action, while implicit in policy objectives, particularly those developed under the Fraser Government between 1975-83, is unlikely to occur. Child care is now

seen as a public good with universal appeal. Its positional advantages are so well recognised by parents that policies which attempt to discriminate in favour of special need groups have much less support than they have had in the past (See Appendix 2).

Even if public access problems could be resolved, access to care by some families would be restricted by personal and family considerations. While personal problems inhibit the access of all families to services at various stages of their life cycle, the personal access problems of low-income households appear to be more concentrated and more lasting. These circumstances if left unresolved can be major obstacles to the use of care. From a policy perspective, although increasing availability of services to provide for better public access has to be a priority, recognition must also be given to the more complex issue of overcoming personal access problems of special need families.

In addition to being increasingly unpopular, especially when services have a recognised social value, 'priority of access' policies pose problems for implementation. Special need groups are less likely to be involved in the submission process, because they are often less organised and articulate.

Chapter 6 highlights the problems of attempting to utilise the community model of resource allocation as the principle mechanism for servicing households with special needs.

CHAPTER 6

Melba Flats. A case study of community management

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter focuses attention on the effectiveness of the submission process in providing child care services for community groups with special needs. A case study describing the emergence and development of the Melba Flats Community Association and its efforts to gain access to child care services is used to discuss a number of central issues surrounding the use of the submission process and community management in pursuing special needs policies.

6.1.1 Community management. The issues restated

As outlined in Chapter 1 the use of community groups to facilitate social service provision has been the subject of much debate among theorists and administrators of social policy. On the one hand, there are those that argue that community management helps to foster participation and the pursuit of common interests (Hillery 1957, Hayden 1972). Participation, it is argued, focuses attention on community needs and local solutions to community problems. In the process of identifying needs and solutions, the community management approach provides an opportunity for all citizens to participate in the decision-making process and to develop organisational, administrative and conceptual skills, thereby reducing their dependence on outside professionals. In short, according to its advocates, the community management model has the potential to create greater self-

reliance and social cohesion which provide for members, a sense of identity and power.

For the critics of community management, the expectations of the approach are unrealistic. They argue that social relations are not based on consensus but on conflict and, in this context, it is the wealthy and powerful who command the resources in the participation process, thereby ensuring that their needs are attended to first or that the needs of others are excluded. Commenting on the inadequacy of community-based welfare provision Pinker notes:

> The most deprived local communities possess neither the resources nor the political means to secure the additional resources that they would need in order to tackle either structural problems or the hard core of their individual personal problems, that, in large part, is why they are so deprived. (Pinker, 1982:13)

In the discussion which follows, the events surrounding the formation of the Melba Flats Community Association and the subsequent development of child care services by the Association provide an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of the community management model within an operation context.

6.2 The Melba Flats community

6.2.1 Formation of the Melba Flats housing estate

The rapid expansion of public and private sector activity in Canberra in the late 1960's and early 1970's created a severe housing shortage. The demand for one and two-bedroom government accommodation was particularly high. As part of a program to alleviate the housing shortage, the Department of the Capital Territory (DCT) erected 410 prefabricated flats in the suburb of Melba and created the Baringa Gardens Housing Estate (renamed Melba Flats in 1981). Planning for the estate commenced in 1973 and the units were completed in 1977. The original intention of the estate was to provide for a 'social mix': families with children, single public servants, retired couples and even some families on welfare benefits were envisaged as being accommodated in the area (National Capital Development Commission, 1979).

By 1977 Canberra's growth had declined and, with the onset of the economic recession, increased emphasis was placed on providing housing for those most in need. The 'social mix' envisaged by the DCT did not develop and Melba Flats became the largest welfare housing estate in the ACT.

6.2.2 The Melba Flats 'community'

The major demographic, social and economic characteristics of Melba Flats are outlined in Table 3.1, Chapter 3. While there may be commonality in the economic condition of residents, (most are low-income earners or are in receipt of various forms of social security assistance) the ethnic and household composition shown in Table 6.1 indicates the diversity of interests in the area.

TABLE 6.1: THE MELBA FLATS COMMUNITY. SELECTED HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS (PERCENT OF POPULATION).

	Melba Flats	Melba
Overseas born	28	20
Aboriginals	2	0.25
Non Christian	6	0.47
Birth Place		
United Kingdom and Ireland	25	34
Vietnam	20	2
Other Asian	11	5
Speaks English but not much	4	1
Not married	23	43
Separated not divorced	10	2
Divorced	6	3
Widowed	3	1

Melba Flats, in comparison to Melba and the ACT in general, has a high concentration of overseas-born migrants, particularly Vietnamese and other Asians. There are proportionately more single-parent households, children between the ages 0-4 and adults over the age of 65 than in any other suburb in the ACT. Although they reside in the same geographical area the various ethnic, age and family groups appear to have little in common. From conversations with individuals and my own observations as a committee member of the Association between 1981-84, most households tended to see themselves as individual units, rather than as members of a wider community. Where interest groups had formed, such as a market-gardening collective among the Vietnamese, there was little interaction with other groups or residents.

While there has been relatively little conflict between the various groups in Melba Flats there was a noticable under-current of mistrust which effectively limited the development of a community spirit. For example, at a meeting called to discuss the needs of the area, senior citizen representatives said that the number of single parents and unemployed coming into the flats should be limited 'because of the trouble they caused'. Some residents expressed antagonism towards the Vietnamese because 'they were given more opportunities than

Australians, while theft and vandalism in the area, in the minds of some, was seen as entirely the fault of Aboriginal children.

Unlike most residents in the ACT who have some choice where they live, the 'community' in Melba Flats has been artificially created and largely consists of residents who cannot afford to live anywhere else. In short, the Melba Flats 'community' is a collection of people whose economic and social circumstances are such that they live in the same area out of necessity rather than by choice.

The rapid turn-over of residents in Melba Flats does little to foster a community spirit. Ninety-eight per cent of residents interviewed had been resident for two years or less (Table 3.2, Chapter 3). Most residents left the area as soon as they were able to do so. Dissatisfaction with the standard of housing and with the stigma of living in the flats were two reasons often cited for wanting to leave the area. As one resident stated:

> The trouble with this place is just when you get to know someone they leave.

To add to the problems of community development, 88 per cent of residents interviewed indicated strong-to-moderate feelings of social alienation. (Table 3.21, Chapter 3). Negative feelings of self esteem and ambivalence towards

participation (68 per cent of those interviewed said that they saw little use in writing to government officials about issues of pubic concern, (Appendix 4, Part 5, Question 4) created an environment in which the conditions necessary for effective community development were difficult to foster. This problem was compounded by the fact that many residents had unresolved personal problems of their own and had little time to consider the well-being of their wider 'commuity'.

In sum, the main factor which distinguished residents in Melba Flats as a community was their relative poverty. Because of ethnic characterstics, age and family differences there is little basis for common interest with the prospect of conflict never being far from the surface. Limited housing tenure, feelings of alienation and the lack of organisational skills all contributed to the instability of the community in Melba Flats.

6.3 Community management. The formation of the Melba Flats Community Association

Design problems with the prefabricated houses comprising the Melba Flats complex became evident soon after the first residents settled in the complex in 1975. Many of the flats leaked when it rained and poor ventilation created mildew problems. The high concentration of social security recipients led to real and imagined disturbances in the

area, with frequent references to drug abuse, prostitution and bad debts appearing in the local press. These unfavourable reports, together with the structural problems of the flats, prompted some residents to pursue the prospect of forming an association to improve the image of the area and to argue a case for improved housing maintenance. In March 1977 a committee was established to form the Baringa Gardens Resident Action Group.[1] Minutes from the Action Group show that it successfully lobbied for structural improvements to the area such as fencing, landscaping and basic maintenance.

As the Association attempted to become more active in lobbying for improvements for the area, committee members came under increasing pressure to devote more time to the centre. Despite their enthusiasm, most committee members did not have the time, energy or knowledge to develop the Association beyond its already extended capacity.

> None of us had ever done this sort of work before. It was like a full-time job but without any pay. (Former Committee Member)

Most of the committee members were welfare recipients and had personal problems which, at times, created instability

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1. The Action Group sought incorporation in 1979 to be eligible for public funding and changed its name to the Melba Flats Community Association.

in the operations of the Association. By late 1979 the problems within the Association had reached a stage where it had almost ceased to function. Membership had declined to such an extent that only executive members of the Association attended meetings and sometimes a quorum was not available. Personality conflicts developed and the Association was in danger of disintegration.

The Association's problems, in part, can be traced to a decision in 1979 to apply for funding under an International Year Of The Child Program (IYCP), to establish an occasional-care centre in the flats. The motivation behind the submission was the need for child care by committee members who found that they could not pursue their activities effectively and look after their own children at the same time. Members also acknowledged the importance of establishing a child-care service to cater for the large numbers of pre-school-aged children in the area. With the assistance of some Government-employed community health workers the Association submitted a funding application to the IYCP Co-ordinating Committee (DCT) for the establishment of the Baringa Gardens Play Group - Occasional Care Centre. The submission requested funding for 12.5 hours of care per week and was subsequently approved.

The availability of a child care centre, established in 1980 was a major asset, but it brought committee members into close contact with residents for the first time. The centre required a range of administrative and public relations skills which had not been needed in any of the Association's previous activities. The major problem was that by becoming a service provider, continuous input was required by Association members in order to maintain the efficient operation of the centre. Few committee members had the time or the energy to devote themselves to this end. The work-load fell upon the shoulders of a small core of committee members with limited experience in management. Committee members became increasingly involved in the personal problems of services users, adding further to their stressful working situation.

By the end of 1979 it became apparent that some form of regular outside assistance was required to ensure that the Association remained a viable operation. A non-resident member of the Association with a history of community activism urged members to apply to the DCT for a grant to employ a co-ordinator to assist in the management of the Association. This member wrote the application and, because of her interest and previous inolvement in community activities, was appointed to the position when it was approved by the DCT in April 1980.

Summarizing the early development of the Community Association, it can be seen that in the period between 1977 and 1979 it functioned primarily as a resident action group. Although the activities of the Association revolved around a small group of residents, most of whom were single parents with young children, the management of the Association was locally based, as was most of the decision-making. The Association was able to function more-or-less effectively while the demands placed upon it were limited to activities associated with improvement to the physical infrastructure of the flats; notably fencing, maintenance and landscaping. These activities did not require the direct involvement of committee members, other than for the initial negotiations with the relevant authorities. As such, given the time and skills available to the Association's members, the community's affairs were manageable.

Problems began to emerge when committee members became involved in more complex activities, such as the provision of child care which often involved providing support to distressed parents and their children. The demands placed on the time and skills of some of the Association's members by these more complex issues generated personal tensions which, by the time professional assistance became available, had made the Association almost totally ineffective in its role as a focus for the expression of community needs and action.

6.4 Managing the community and the development of child care services

The appointment of a professional co-ordinator in 1980 brought to an end any major involvement of 'the community' in the decision-making process of the Melba Flats Community Association. In the discussion which follows, the influence which professionals have had on the nature of the activities of the Association is examined. Attention is focused on the development of child-care services within the flats and how successive co-ordinators, motivated by different ideological perspectives, sought to develop services for the 'benefit of the community'.

The events described in the following discussion are based on observations and personal involvement in the affairs of the association between May 1981 and June 1984.

6.4.1 Image building. The role of the first co-ordinator

When the co-ordinator took up her position in January 1981 her first priority was to 'improve the image of Melba Flats' through a program of landscaping, garbage removal, maintenance and repairs to the flats and positive publicity about the activities of the Association. By pressing for infrastructural improvements for residents, particularly maintenance, the co-ordinator hoped to create a pleasant environment which would foster community spirit and generate a more positive feeling among residents about

living in the flats. Other than for her interest in acquiring premises for a new community centre the co-ordinator expressed little interest in pursuing activities beyond those of a recreational nature which could have more of a direct bearing on the social and economic condition of households. Hence the community centre was to concentrate on activities such as sewing, cooking, macrame and mothercraft. The provision or encouragement of activities related to the educational, employment or personal development needs of residents was, for the co-ordinator, 'outside the scope of her responsibilities'.

The co-ordinator was asked about the role of child care in the proposed community centre functions, given that many of the recreational and social activities were directed at households with children under school age. When questioned on the need to integrate child care with the community centre's proposed activities the co-ordinator indicated that she felt the existing child care service would be able to cope with the demands placed upon it. In elaborating upon child care, the co-ordinator stated that the service was adequately meeting the needs of residents in the area and, in her opinion, what was needed was a balance between support for the most needy and fostering a spirit of 'family responsibility'. She was particularly concerned that the occasional-care centre should not encourage

dependence on the service. The other reason cited for keeping the child care service at its current level was, that if the hours were expanded, this action would impinge upon the personal family commitments of the co-ordinator and the child care workers further adding to the emotional strain of working in the flats.

6.4.2 Child care needs. Perceptions by government departments.

Despite her confidence that the child care needs of households were being adequately met, the co-ordinator saw value in conducting a survey on child care needs and, in particular, the attitude of residents towards the operation of the occasional care centre.

Before the household survey on child care was implemented, information was sought on the functional responsibilities of government departments involved in the establihsment of the Baringa Occasional Care Centre. The Housing and Child Welfare Branches within the DCT and the Canberra Regional Office of the Department of Social Security were the principal government departments involved in the establishment of the centre.

Although the Housing Branch was primarily involved in the administration of the estate it bore the capital cost of providing and renovating the flat used for occasional care.

When asked for data on the number of households in Melba Flats for sampling purposes the Housing Branch stated that it kept no official statistics on residents except for the total number of flats occupied. In response to a question about the need for information for its own planning purposes the Housing Branch stated that its principal role was to accommodate people and not to collect social and economic information about families. Officials agreed that the information could be useful to other divisions within the department but, since they had never asked for it, the issue had not arisen.

One section within the DCT which could have made good use of household data on children under school age was the Child Welfare Branch. This Branch is responsible among other things, for licencing child care in the ACT and assisting community groups to make submissions to various funding authorities, particularly the Office of Child Care. Data from the Housing Branch on the nature and location of special-need families could greatly assist the Child Welfare Branch in identifying priority areas for service provision. Officers from this Branch were aware of the 'special-need' character of Baringa Gardens and described it as one of the 'problem areas in Canberra'. When asked about their involvement with the development of children's services in the flats, the Branch stated that it had never been directly approached to help and therefore offered no

assistance although, if requested, officers would only be too happy to help given the special-need nature of the area.

The Regional Office of the Department of Social Security through its Children's Services Co-ordinator was consulted about its role in handling submissions from community groups and the process of ranking submissions according to priority. The Office had approved the IYC grant for the establishment of occasional care at Baringa Gardens. The Office was asked if it had developed any overall planning scheme for the Canberra region with an emphasis on identifying priority regions or groups. As with the Child Welfare Branch, the Office stated that its primary function was to respond to rather than initiate submissions and, because of staff problems, it was not in a position to develop any comprehensive planning system. Assurance was given that the regional Children's Service Co-ordinator had the situation well in hand and, if requested, would provide assistance in project submissions. The Regional Officer further claimed that it was well aware of the situation in Baringa Gardens and stated, that in line with policy objectives, it would view sympathetically any submission to upgrade services in the area.

In sum, while all departments were well aware, or at least claimed to be, of the special needs of Baringa Gardens they operated from the premise that it was the Association's responsibility to ask for assistance and not their's to intervene on behalf of residents. This attitude was particularly strong among Housing Branch Officers who displayed considerable irritation when it was suggested that the present 'social mix' in the Melba Flats was the creation of the Housing Branch and, that a reasonable case could be argued that the DCT had a responsibility to assist in the provision of social services to alleviate problems in the area.

6.4.3 Children's services in Melba Flats

Comparative data on the use of child-care services in Melba Flats are provided in chapters 4 and 5. The following discussion focuses on the operation of the occasional-care centre and the attitudes to the centre by service users. At the time of the survey (August 1981) the principal child-care service being offered was 12.5 hours of occasional care per week. Although the centre was registered for only 16 children the average attendance was 25 children per session, with numbers sometimes as high as 34 (Baringa Gardens Annual Report 1981). The major reason given by the child-care co-ordinator for exceeding the recommended intake related to the concentration of 'at

risk' children living in the area. The co-ordinator felt it preferable to take in all those who requested care than to deal with potential child abuse and neglect.

Because service users frequently exceeded the recommended number, child care workers relied heavily on a roster of mothers to cope with their work load. Roster duty was unpopular because parents usually sought care to have a break from their children or to pursue other activities. Roster mothers were offered a reduced fee in order to entice them to stay. Other than the reduced roster fee ($1.50, instead of $3.00 per session) the centre did not offer any subsidy for parents who could not pay, as there was no provision within its funding guidelines. Parents with financial problems were not turned away, but were debited for their use of care. At the time of the survey several households had debts exceeding $25. Rather than write off these debts, the child-care co-ordinator believed that by insisting that parents paid some money 'they would not take the centre for granted'. A number of residents said that because of their debts they felt guilty about using the centre and one resident had stopped using the service for this reason.

A significant feature of the service was that, because of the high proportion of regular bookings, it operated more on the basis of providing regular part-time care rather

than occasional care. This was a source of dissatisfaction among would-be casual users who claimed that some parents, particularly those on the Committee, monopolised the service. This criticism was substantiated in that 40 per cent of places were used on a regular basis by Committee members. In their defence, Committee members stated that unless they could get access to regular child-care they could not fulfill their committee functions. The problem of overcrowding in the centre was a frequent criticism levelled at the service. The lack of separate play areas for 0-2 and 3-5-year-olds was of particular concern.

As the household survey progressed it became increasingly evident that the service was not able to meet the demand for occasional care. There was widespread support for an expanded form of occasional care, but because parents were often unfamiliar with other forms of child care, particularly day care, relatively little demand was expressed for developing the service beyond the provision of occasional care. If the expressed needs of respondents were to be acted upon, all that respondents could look forward to was an extended form of occasional care. Many of those interviewed were obviously referring to more than occasional care when discussing their needs. However, most were only able to describe their requirements within the context of the need for more child care, using occasional

care as their reference. Services such as long-day care, before-and-after-school care and family day care were beyond the experience of most respondents.

None of the parents interviewed saw their existence as being the life style they would lead if an alternative was available. The problem for most respondents was the absence of a choice of life style. Low education levels, lack of job experience, family and personal problems and, in some cases, lack of maturity all stood in the way of reducing their dependence on welfare. If parents were to attempt to tackle any of these issues then they had to have time to do so. Provision of adequate time was directly related to access to child care and, without it, coming to grips with the problems outlined above was not an option for the majority of parents interviewed. It was with this last point in mind that a decision was made to use the survey to draw the Committee's attention to the prospects of upgrading the occasional care service to a day care centre. A draft report of the survey findings was prepared for circulation among committee members (Simpson 1982).

The circulation of the draft survey findings prompted considerable discussion among committee members over the need to upgrade occasional care. The use of committee members in the household survey probably contributed to a shift in attitude, favouring expansion of child care

services and integrating them with the proposed community centre activities. Pressure started to build up within the committee for greater involvement by the co-ordinator in integrating child care and community activities. However, because of her own family commitments the co-ordinator decided to resign rather than expand her activities. A full-time co-ordinator was appointed in June 1982.

6.4.4 Background to the child care submission

The new co-ordinator was strongly committed to the development of services which could assist residents to alleviate some of their problems and make them less dependent on welfare provision. Her first priority was to attempt to integrate child care and community functions. The child-care survey and a welfare report carried out on behalf of the Association by a Community Health Worker (Arcus 1982) convinced her that the social, educational and recreational functions of the proposed community centre would be jeopardised without upgrading child-care services.

In June 1982 the co-ordinator arranged a meeting to discuss a proposal to integrate child-care services and the activities of the community centre. Officers from the Housing and Child Welfare Branch (DCT) and Regional Office of the Department of Social Security were invited together with other Child Care and Welfare agencies to discuss the

matter. The child-care survey and the welfare report were presented and it was generally accepted by all present that the needs of the area were such that upgrading the existing child-care service was a 'matter of priority'.

In December 1982 a submission was forwarded to the Office of Child Care requesting funding for a Neighbourhood Centre. The Association was optimistic about the prospect of the submission in the light of strong support given by government departments.

In January 1983 the Regional Office of the Department of Social Security advised that the Minister had approved funding for child care. However, in line with new funding guidelines a maximum subsidy of $10 per child per full-time place per week was to be all that was available. Given that the economic cost of each child care place in the new centre was estimated to be $54 per week, each resident wishing to use the service on a full time basis would be expected to pay $44 per week. The centre could pool the subsidy payments, a total of $280 per week, to subsidise fully five places; however if it did so, other users would have to pay the full fee.

In order to meet its operating costs the centre faced the prospect of allocating child-care places to non-residents from surrounding suburbs who could afford the cost of care.

Such a course of action was considered by the committee as being contrary to the whole concept of establishing child care in Melba Flats and the co-ordinator decided to release a press statement criticising the funding arrangements. The statement was broadcast by both ABC radio and television and prompted an immediate reaction by the Regional Office of the Department of Social Security which requested a meeting with the co-ordinator. At this meeting the Association's co-ordinator was closely questioned as to why there was a need for child care among parents who did not want to work or seek further education. The Director strongly hinted that there could be a case for increasing subsidies for families wishing to work or enrol in courses, but in the case of care for 'less productive purposes', justification of subsidies could pose problems.

Similar sentiments were also expressed by a local memebr of the ACT House of Assembly who chaired a committee for the review of welfare needs. The member stated that he felt the Assembly could not raise the issue with the Department of Social security until he was satisfied the residents would use child care in a 'responsible way'. His main concern was that if families in Melba Flats were subsidised 'to do nothing' this would create adverse community reaction; therefore the Assembly had to be careful what projects it supported.

Despite the failure of the Association to win any concessions from the Office of Child Care, the Melba Flats day care centre opened in February 1983 but was able to offer only a limited subsidy and so mainly catered for users requiring regular part-time care. Initially the centre operated at below its maximum capacity with potential users indicating that the cost was a major factor in deterring them from using the service more frequently. With the election of a Labor Government in March 1983 substantial changes were initiated in funding arrangements. Instead of a maximum subsidy of $10 per place all users with a weekly assessable income of less than $64 were eligible for a full subsidy. Subsidies were made available on a sliding scale on incomes of up to $250 per week. Virtually all users of the neighbourhood centre were eligible for the full subsidy.

Once full subsidies became available the centre began to operate at full capacity. The current state of the service (June 1984) is that out of the 26 places, 20 are used by the children of parents requiring full-time care. There are only 6 places available for regular part-time care. The shift in usage patterns has partly come about through the efforts of the co-ordinator and welfare worker in counselling part-time users on the prospects of either entering the workforce or pursuing courses in further education. In the opinion of both the co-ordinator and

welfare worker, the transition from use of part-time to full-time care is largely dependent upon parents having time to consider the prospects of pursuing other activities. The problem now is that because so many users have decided to take up the option of full-time care, there are insufficient places available to meet occasional and part-time care needs. The committee is now looking at the prospect of opening up an occasional care centre to cater for these demands.

6.5 Melba Flats. Issues in community management

The Melba Flats study raises a number of important issues about the effectiveness of the community management model of resource allocation as a means of facilitating access to services among families with recognised special needs. In the discussion which follows four areas of concern are examined: first the usefulness of the term 'community' in the Melba Flats context; secondly, the influence of the professional community workers on community management and the services provided; thirdly, the apparent dependence of community management on the voluntary labour of women; and fourthly, problems for co-ordination and service delivery generated by the submission process.

6.5.1 The community

If community management is to be the basis for allocating resources to key social services, considerable organisation, knowledge and skill is required from the community in order to participate effectively in the submission process. About the only factor distinguishing families in Melba Flats as a community is their relative poverty. At the time of the survey the Community Association consisted of seven committee members, four of whom lived outside the area and it had a membership of only 25 residents out of 500 eligible adults. The Association can only be described as a loose group of motivated residents who, from time to time, were able to devote some of their energy to issues affecting the area. Most residents did not consider the area as their permanent home and the membership of the Association was constantly changing. The fact that most members were welfare recipients themselves, with their own problems, made the task of developing an effective Community Association all the more difficult.

Without the services of a co-ordinator and the assistance of outside activitists, the Association would probably have ceased to function. If the Association was to compete with other community groups for funds through the submission process the services of a co-ordinator were essential. The

Association did not have, and probably will never have, except for short periods of time, the management capacity and knowledge necessary to compete on an equal footing with more articulate and organised community groups. Because funding arrangements for the position of co-ordinator must be negotiated yearly the future of the Association will always be uncertain.

6.5.2 Community management and personal values

In Melba Flats between 1981 and 1984 the concept of 'community management' gave way to the notion of 'managing the community' when professional community workers were brought in to provide assistance with the Association's affairs. This shift in decision-making was probably inevitable given the complexity of the problems committee members had to face with no social work background and relatively few organisation and administrative skills. Prior to the entry of professionals the Association had been relatively apolitical in the manner in which it conducted its activities. This situation was reversed with the establishment of the position of co-ordinator, the occupants of which have sought to shape service provision along lines consistent with their respective welfare perspectives.

The development of services under the first co-ordinator in Melba Flats reflected a conservative approach to welfare provision. Although the Association became much more active and organised under the direction of the co-ordinator, the services sought did little to come to grips with the long term social and economic problems of residents. The focus was more on the provision of physical infrastructure designed to 'clean up' the flats and charity for the most needy.

The image-building exercise conducted by this co-ordinator was consistent with the views of the DCT, especially the Housing Branch, which through maintenance and landscaping programs, was concerned to improve the physical environment of the estate for the benefit of residents living in the area and surrounding suburbs. The shared values of the co-ordinator and some Housing Branch Officers over what to do about problems in the area possibly account for the close and favourable working relationship between the Association and DCT in the period 1979-81.

In contrast, the values of the new co-ordinator, who was motivated by a commitment to the right of special-need families to services which might assist in breaking their dependence on welfare, led to confrontation with the Housing Branch. Her view that social rather than physical services should receive priority conflicted sharply with Housing's image-building program.

Differences in the welfare perspectives of the two co-ordinators are not the only examples where values affected access and allocation outcomes. Personal values were also reflected in the attitudes of Social Security staff who determined the outcome of the allocation process. Although the policy of granting priority of access to special need families does not specify what parents should do with their time, the personal concern of a number of important decision-makers that parents should be seen to use their time 'productively' lends weight to the view that individual perceptions of what is good for 'the needy' will affect the nature of resources allocated.

Although there was no disagreement that Melba Flats was a special-need area, the values of many respondents, as expressed by their desire to use child care for personal reasons, at least in the short term, conflicted with the values of those who controlled allocation and access. There is enough evidence to suggest that the allocation process in Melba Flats reflected the values of decision-makers rather than the needs of clients. While conflict in value interpretations is basic to any claim to the allocation of public resources, the legitimacy of the claims of special need families appear to be more open to question.

6.5.3 Women and community work

The role of women in community work is of particular concern to those who argue that the promotion of voluntary associations or communities under a system of patriarchal capitalism is intended to maintain the sexual division of labour and the inferior status of women (Cox, 1983). Whether by accident or intent, there is sufficient evidence in the Melba Flats study to lend support to these claims. Committee members, all of whom are women, by virtue of their office were committed to spending up to 30 hours per week attending to the Association's activities. Their tasks include handling requests for information by residents and government departments, organising social activities and supervision of the maintenance of the community centre. None of the committee members receive any payment.

For some committee members the demands of the centre impinged on their own time to the extent that they became full-time workers. This was particularly true for the President and Vice-President. Although it could be argued that the actions of committee members embodied altruistic motives, members frequently complained of feeling 'obliged' to tend to their duties because 'there was no one else to do the work'. In one case, feelings of allegiance and of being indispensable prevented a committee member from taking up paid employment. In such circumstances it is not

difficult to see the logic of arguments which claim that voluntarism and, by association, the concept of 'community' is exploitative of the labour of women.

On the other hand, while it was easy for women to become committed to the Association, for some the experience provided a valuable learning environment. These women were subjected to a range of situations which had the potential to open up a variety of social, educational and employment opportunities which they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to consider. One committee member, as a result of her experience expressed interest in pursuing a career in social work. For this person her involvement on the committee was a stepping stone to paid employment. However, it should be noted that the potential transition from unpaid to paid labour through the Association was most unlikely for the majority of committee members.

6.6 Community management and the submission process

The Melba Flats case study highlights a number of problems associated with the use of the submission process in attempting to service areas of special need. Three issues are examined; the lack of effective co-ordination among funding agencies, the lack of an overall planning framework and the emphasis given to the necessity for communities to highlight their more negative attributes in order to gain funding.

6.6.1 Co-ordination and problem solving

In special-need areas there is often a range of interconnncted social problems which require an interdisciplinary approach to resource allocation. Reliance on the submission model tends to promote an unco-ordinated approach to problem solving which can lead to conflict and inefficiency in the use of resources.

In their dealings with the Melba Flats Community Association, government departments responded to requests for assistance within the framework of their functional responsibilities. The Housing Branch saw its role as primarily one of providing capital works; the Child Welfare Branch was responsible for ensuring that licensing regulations were carried out; and the Department of Social Security was concerned with assessing submissions and administering the funding of projects.

In Melba Flats there was clearly a need for an integrated approach to social and economic issues affecting the majority of residents living in the area. Child care was just one of many issues: programs relating to youth, ethnic groups, the unemployed and care for the aged all required attention (Arcus 1982). However, if the response by departments to the problems of developing an integrated approach to the provision of a single child-care service

was an indication of their ability to deal with wider and more complex social issues, the prospects of a more rational approach to planning the allocation of resources were not good.

Throughout the negotiations on the upgrading of child care, government departments operated on a basis similar to unions involved in a demarcation dispute. When issues were raised which were beyond the functional responsibility of the department concerned, officials retreated behind a wall of regulations and guidelines to avoid the prospect of becoming involved in wider, but related issues. The Housing Branch was particularly prone to this behaviour. Although there are good arguments in favour of departments performing single functions, and performing them well, much more co-ordination between departments is required than was evident at Melba Flats in 1981.

Although some officers acknowledged the need to adopt a more integrated approach in the provision of social services, they claimed that established procedures for dealing with submissions made it difficult to adopt a broader perspective, as the submission process could only handle those requests for which departments had a direct interest. Submissions which required interdepartmental consideration could only be dealt with on a piecemeal basis, as there were no formal mechanisms which allowed departments to go outside their guidelines.

The fact that there were no planning procedures to facilitate an integrated approach to the allocation of social services highlights the need for a broader approach to the problems of service delivery by decision-makers. The lack of any plan among government departmens for the overall direction of the development of Children's Services in the ACT was indicative of single-purpose functional perspectives of social service delivery.

Not only does the submission process, in isolation from a co-ordinated system of planning, encourage government departments to adopt a narrow approach to service provision, it also discourages groups making submissions to attempt to integrate their project submissions. The development of separate submissions by the Melba Flats Community association for a Community Centre and, as an after-thought, for improved child-care facilities illustrates this problem. Had the Association been encouraged by departments to package its submission in a more integrated manner, some of the difficulties which arose in the subsequent discussion of the submission might have been avoided.

6.6.2 The need for a planning framework

A submission model of resource allocation which operates outside a planning framework does not allow for the development of a comprehensive view of need. Instead, it favours those groups who participate and discriminates against those who do not.

A number of government officers handling submissions stated that they became so involved in processing requests for assistance that it was impossible to find the time to place submissions in a 'regional context'. Certainly the lack of any readily available data base on the broader social and economic trends int he ACT did not assist matters. As stated, neither the Child Welfare Branch at the Regional Office of the Department of Social Security had mapped out any strategy or listed any areas or groups requiring priority funding. Recommendations for funding were made on the basis of assessing the relative merits of the submissions received. The needs of individuals and groups not participating in the submission process were simply not considered.

Throughout the negotiations with the various government departments over the child-care submission for Melba Flats it was evident some officers adopted a 'siege mentality' and were constantly on the defensive. The lack of any

overall plan in which to place Melba Flats in context, in the short or long term, meant that departmental negotiators were rarely able to take the initiative in discussions and offer the Association firm direction.

Departmental personnel were subject to the beck and call of the Association, often over trivial matters relating to the submission. In some instances their professional status was questioned by committee members seeking clarificiation of the implementation of policy objectives for which there was often no satisfactory response. Towards the end of the negotiations it was clear that Child Welfare and Social Security personnel were concerned about the Association's public statements on lack of co-ordination and policy direction. If there had been some program for the development of Children's Services in the ACT and greater interdepartmental liaison, it is possible that many of the criticisms levelled by the Association could have been successfully countered. However, lack of a planning framework meant that departmens had no fall-back position and were continually on the defensive.

6.6.3 Special needs and stigmatising the community

In the submission process it is often necessary for communities to draw attention to the negative aspects of community behaviour in order to gain access to services thereby stigmatising the community and reinforcing negative social attitudes about special need groups.

One of the differences between the two co-ordinators of the Association was that the first tried to mask the special-need nature of the area, while the other tried to expose the problems. By highlighting the problems of families, the later co-ordinator was successful in drawing attention to the need for developing a comprehensive range of social services for the area. Certainly the Association, in terms of access to social services, is likely to get more from emphasising its special-needs character. However, as a result of public statements about problems in the area, Melba Flats is now back in full public view. Some residents have complained about press statements made by the Association claiming 'they give the place a bad name'.

The demand by departments for specifics about special-need families also encouraged the Association to present its worst face. Descriptions of domestic violence and child abuse, which were and are real problems in the area, became a little colourful when some committee members wre pressing

home the problems of the area. On the other hand, the politician referred to earlier in this chapter stated that he required a 'body count' before he would support the subsidisation of care by parents who were not intending to use it for employment or further education.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate some of the weaknesses which apply to the use of the community management approach to service special need areas. While it could be argued that the Community Association has been successful in participating in the submission process, the success has largely been achieved through outside intervention and not through the efforts of community members. For the Melba Flats Community Association the concept of 'community' and its alleged attributes of individual initiative and altruism, on the one hand, and collective responsibility, power sharing and participation on the other, are really false assumptions reflecting romanticist and populist notions of community.

This does not imply that the concept of community has not been used to legitimise demands on the public purse. Both co-ordinators in their respective submissions for public funding of programs justified their requests in terms of community needs, but primarily acted upon their own

initiative and value assumptions rather than upon firm expressions of community need. Given the nature of 'the community' in Melba Flats it is doubtful whether the co-ordinators could have pursued a more participatory path. Finally, the case study of Melba Flats highlights some of the issues which feminist writers (Baldock, 1983: Cass, 1983) have raised concerning the exploitation of women in voluntary employment. The prospects for the resolution of these and other problems surrounding the issue of 'community' are discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

Social services, community and the strategy of equality. A critical review.

7.1 Introduction

In the introduction to this research, inequality and alienation were presented as two issues which have been of major concern to welfare theorists and planners in western industrial society since the turn of this century. Chapter 1 traced the rise of social democratic solutions to these problems, a blend of social service provision and greater emphasis on community and fellowship. These strategies were subsequently adopted by the Australian Labor Party, and, in the late 1960's, took the form of social policies designed to promote community-sponsored social services covering such diverse areas as care for children, the aged, the handicapped, and services for women, youth, ethnic and minority groups.

In order to focus attention on the effectiveness of community social services as a means of facilitating equality and greater harmony within Australian society, Chapter 1 concentrated on describing the emergence and development of Federal involvement in the provision of child care services which were seen as having a direct bearing on the social and economic opportunities of parents and their children. The chapter highlighted the special attention that was given by successive Labor and Liberal Country Party governments to servicing to those most in

need and the difficulties encountered by these administrations in implementing their policies between 1972 and 1983.

In Chapters 2 to 6 a framework for the evaluation of access to child-care services among households representing a range of social and economic circumstances was developed through the implementation of a child-care survey. The primary objective was to establish who the major users of government subsidised child-care services were and, whether the government's policy of granting priority of access to children from families with special needs, particularly those on low incomes, was facilitating greater equality of opportunity among parents and their children.

From the data and analysis presented in Chapters 3 to 6 government subsidised child care programs, funded through the community submission process, do not appear to have had much impact on low income families. In general, low-income families, especially single parents, used less formal care than their more affluent counterparts and spent proportionately more time caring for their children. Chapter 4, which compared child care use among households, concluded that government-sponsored child care programs had not been very successful in improving the access of low income households to child care.

In part, the lack of success in using child care services as a means of redistribution is linked to public and personal access problems. The overall shortage of child-care places means that not all those who need child care can be accommodated, while variations in material and personal situations within households can restrict individual access. In addition, the reliance on the community model of resource allocation as the primary mechanism for allocating government resources appears to have favoured the articulate and discriminated against the needy (Chapter 1 and Chapter 5). As for reducing alienation and promoting social harmony, Chapter 6 highlighted the conflict often inherent in community formation.

Although there is considerable scope for reform in the way child-care services are delivered (Appendix 6), more fundamental questions need to be raised about the effectiveness of community models of social service provision as a means of redistribution. In the following discussion the theoretical foundations of the concept of 'community' and the 'strategy of equality' are critically evaluated against the background of the findings presented in this study and other related analysis.

7.2 Reviewing the concept of community

7.2.1 'Community' and the common interest

Despite its acknowledged weaknesses, the community model of social service delivery has been a major force in shaping social policy in Australia over the past decade. Although there have been some fundamental ideological differences between the political parties about the role of the state in the market place, reformist and conservative governments appear to share a common view about the nature of Australian society, namely, that it is a society whose interests are reflected in pluralism and consensus.

In the search for reasons why the community model of resource allocation has apparently failed to deliver services to those most in need, attention is directed towards the looseness with which the concept of community has been used and the degree to which consensus and plurality are in fact common values in Australian society.

The applicability of the concept of 'community' in Australian society was challenged by Thompson (1971) and more recently by Bryson and Mowbray (1981) and Mowbray (1982). Thompson, in an assessment of the prospects for community formation in a Victorian housing estate (Bryson

and Thompson, 1972), claimed that there was little evidence of the formation of either traditional or participating models of community.

In searching for evidence of a 'traditional' model of community, Thompson was looking for characteristics which were embodied in the ideal of ' 'Gemeinshaft' (Chapter 1) and the associated view that community reflected an attachment to a place where human relationships were 'intimate, face to face, not discrete or segmented'. Instead, Thompson found that the residents had little attachment to place and were relatively isolated from each other as family units, findings which are compatible with the description of community formation in Melba Flats (Chapter 6). As for a 'participating community', 'participation remains the characteristic of a minority'. In summarising her findings Thompson noted:

> ...there are powerful forces in industrial cities which are antagonistic to the development in suburbs of the quality of social life and relative independence intrinsic to community. This is true whether it is the traditional or participating model which is held as the goal. Patently much more caution is needed in invoking community as a goal in urban planning and if we continue to use the term uncritically in this context we shall, at the very least, mislead ouselves as well as others (1972:29)

7.2.2 Community and conflict. A Weberian framework

Thompson's criticism of the applicability of traditional and participatory models of community development prompted her to seek an explanation for the manifestation of social relations in a Weberian framework for community development. Weber's views on community formation, published in the late 1900's but not translated until 1966 by Neuwirth (1969), are in marked contrast with the English and American sociologist tradition which viewed community formation as a function of area solidarity and consensus. (MacIver and Page 1950, Parsons 1960, Hillery 1956). For Weber, community formation was not a product of location solidarity, but of the closure of individual and group interests in the face of competition of economic interests, power and esteem.

> solidarity is not seen as a function of ecological residence, but rather as a response to outside pressures'. Community members are not envisaged...as being engaged in harmonious social relationships. Allowance is made for the possibility of power struggles within the community, for the utilisation of all sorts of coercion and for the forceful subjection of the weaker by the stronger...Most importantly... communal relationships do not exist when people merely find themselves in a similar situation, react to the situation in the same way, or even share a common feeling about the situation and its consequences. It is only when this feeling leads to a mutual orientation of their behaviour to each other that their relationships may be termed 'communal'
>
> (Neuwirth 1969:149-154).

Weber's notion of a conflict model of community formation provides for much more flexibility than traditional or participatory models which rely on consensus and solidarity. Certainly, the processes which led to the formation of the Melba Flats Community Association are more readily explicable through Weber's conflict model than traditional or participatory models. Ever since the formation of the Association, an event which was precipitated by attacks on the public image of the area, its development has been shaped by internal and external conflict.

Despite criticism of traditional and participatory models of community development, little attention was given to the possibility that conflict within and between communities could seriously impede social policy initiatives which relied on community models of resource allocation. The Labor Party confidently assumed that its strategy of community social service delivery as proposed through the AAP, the AIP and the Childrens' Services Program would greatly assist in the reduction of inequality and the growth of 'real income' for those most in need. All that was needed was co-operation and consensus.

As outlined in Chapter 1 co-operation and consensus were not distinguishing features of the operation of the Childrens' Services Program under the Labor government

between 1972-75. By Labor's own admission, access to Childrens' Services mainly accrued to those sections of the community whose needs were arguably less pressing (Bowen, 1974).

While Labor's exhortations for greater participation by the underpriviledged largely went unheeded, because the underpriviledged lack organisation and power, attempts by the LCC to give priority of access to those most in need within a reduced Childrens' Service budget also appears to have had little impact on improving the access of special-need groups to child care. The problem for the LCC appears to be that the consensus required within the community to support selective child care provisions has failed to materialise. This is particularly evident in the reaction by child care groups to the recommendations of the Spender Report (1981) and the difficulties encountered in pursuing a special-needs policy while restricting child care expenditure (Chapter 5).

Why so much conflict over child care? Weber's notion of community formation holds that as the 'number of contenders increases relative to available opportunities' (in this case, child care places)...'the relative positions of major and basic social groups is determined by interaction, antagonism and conflict' (Neuwirth, 1969:148). Given that the evidence presented in this research is generally

consistent with Weber's model, there should be little surprise that social policy initiatives which rely on community formation to identify need and allocate resources should encompass conflict. And further, that the major beneficiaries of community formation will be the most articulate and organised and not necessarily the most needy.

Weber's notion of conflict and Hirsh's (1976) concern with the contradiction of attempting to use positional goods with a social value to promote equality of opportunity, especially when there are marked disparities in the material and personal resources of individuals, raise serious questions about the future of community social service provisions as a means of reducing inequality in society.

Given the problems associated with the community model of resource allocation, should it be abandoned and replaced by a more centralised system which by-passes communities and allocates directly to priority groups on the basis of need? Pinker's arguments on the development of the communitarian movement (Chapter 1) imply that because of populist and romanticist attachments to 'community', such action would be unlikely to be successful (Pinker, 1982). Instead, Pinker presses for the development of 'compassionate social policy' which takes into account the personal and

institutional dimension of social welfare. Individuals should be free to have some say in the development of programs which affect their welfare, through community formation but, from time to time, it will be necessary for the state to intervene in the interests of some of its members, particularly those with special needs.

Certainly in the establishment of the Children's Services Program it is evident that insufficient attention was given to how and when the state should intervene on behalf of its less articulate members when applying the community management model of resource allocation. Both Labor and LCC administrations were reluctant to directly intervene in the submission process arguing that the identification of need was better left up to the community. It is possible that given the change in government in March 1983, the Labor Party, which has acknowledged the problem of the submission model (Grimes 1982) will seek to develop a more even balance between Federal and community roles in determining the allocation of child-care services. However what action Labor will take remains to be seen.

7.2.3 Community access to child care. Public and personal considerations

Direct government intervention on behalf of those most in need is only a partial solution to the problem of improving access to child care. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5

personal access problems, particularly among low income families, are often the overriding inhibitors to the utilisation of services. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's the emphasis of social planners was on the spatial dimensions of poverty. Areas of need were identified under the assumption that if services were directed to these areas, social and economic benefits would accrue to residents by virtue of their proximity to these services (Chapter 1).

This strategy encountered two problems, particularly when the provision of community services such as child care were involved. Firstly, although considerable attention was devoted to the identification of priority areas (SWC 1975), lack of community formation in these areas meant that relatively few submissions were forthcoming from special need groups. Hence services often went to more articulate and organised communities.

Secondly, although 'public access' considerations such as the location of services and availability of child care places play a major role in influencing access, the problems of access are more complex than simply ensuring that there is an adequate ratio of child care places to service users. Factors such as the period of residence, ownership of a vehicle, income, income earning capacity and a range of personal attitudes and situations can also have

a profound impact on service use (Chapter 5). As the Melba Flats case study illustrates, households with a high need for child care services can live close to services and have access to subsidised arrangements, yet still feel constrained by personal access problems.

If governments insist that their primary objective is to give priority to households identified as having special needs, then much more attention will have to be given to resolving personal access problems. Recognition will have to be given to the fact that proximity to a service does not necessarily guarantee access and, that out-reach and counselling functions within child-care centres will be required if in-roads into this problem are to be made.

7.2.4 Women and 'community'

Should any serious attempt be made to pursue a policy of granting priority of access to children from special-need families without a substantial increase in the number of child-care places available, it is likely that there will be considerable community reaction against special need provisions. Because child care is seen as a positional good conveying important social and economic advantages on those who are able to gain access to government-subsidised services, the legitimacy of the special-need provision is increasingly being questioned (Chapter 5).

Some sections of the Women's Movement have not shared the enthusiasm of reformist and conservative governments for special-need provisions over the past decade. Increasingly child care is being viewed as a feminist issue, fundamental not only to the development of children, but to the realisation of the social and economic potential of women. There is now a growing movement within the child-care 'lobby' to reject special-needs policies on the grounds that they discriminate against women all of whom, as mothers, have special needs (Cox 1983, Sweeney and Jamrozik 1984). Arguments have also been presented which pursue the notion that lack of government support for child care services is part of the design of the capitalist-patriarchal state to keep women in the home to ensure the reproduction and maintenance of labour (Cass, 1982).

This view has been reinforced by the extent to which 'communities' have come to rely on the voluntary labour of women (Baldock, 1983). The operation of the Melba Flats Community Association (Chapter 6) highlights the often exploitative nature of this relationship and raises the question as to whether the post-war emphasis on community development has resulted in any significant change to the role of women as the principal providers of personal social services. Some critics of community social service provision perceive it to be a thinly disguised attempt to

co-opt the labour of women under the banner of 'community'. Referring to the provision of community social services in general Walker (1983) comments:

> It is suggested that at best, care is provided in the community by female kin, and not by the 'community' and that, on grounds of social justice and equality is untenable (1983:158).

As a social policy initiative, the concept of 'community' has been criticised over recent years, particularly by disillusioned socialists and feminists, for failing to promote redistribution and power sharing (Corrigan 1975, Bridge 1975). Although acknowledging limitations, 'radical' advocates of the practice of community development and community work (Craig et al, 1982) point to the contradictions in these processes which may allow for a 'radical but realistic socialist practice'. According to Cockburn (1977) the contradition is that community work is a 'two edged sword'.

> Community work does bring with it new situations and new opportunities for working-class gain, it also sometimes leads working-class groups into incorporation and impotence (Cockburn cited in Craig et al 1982:5).

Evidence of this contradiction can be seen in the Melba Flats Community Association case study (Chapter 6). Community formation both co-opted residents and provided

for some, an opportunity to develop beyond what would have been possible if they had not participated in the Association's activities. In this context the potential contribution of community development programs in facilitating social change must be acknowledged. However in the case of the Melba Flats very few of those actually involved in the administration of the Association were able to take advantage of these 'opportunities'.

7.3 Social services and the strategy of equality

Throughout this research attention has been focussed on the adequacy of community models of social service delivery. Le Grand (1983) argues that it matters little whether services are delivered by communities or through a centralised administration: the 'strategy of equality' through social service provision by whatever means is a myth. In reviewing the impact which government involvement in social service provision has had on problems of inequality and fostering increased opportunity in Britain, Le Grand claims that the strategy of social service provision has primarily benefitted the middle class.

He examines a range of social services, health care, education, transport and housing, 'key components of the social services and essential elements of the Strategy of Equality', all of which have been central to the

development of British social policy initiatives in the post-war period. The achievements of each of these areas of social service provision are ranked using five measures of equality described as 'suitable objectives for guiding the distribution of public expenditure'. These measures relate to equality of public expenditure, equality of final income, equality of use, equality of cost and equality of outcome. Le Grand concludes:

> Public expenditure on the social services has not achieved equality in any of its interpretations. Nor does there seem to be much prospect of retrieving the situation through any piecemeal reform. Basically, the forces which created the inequalities in the first place and which perpetrate them seem to be too strong to be resisted through indirect methods such as public expenditure on the social services (1983:137).

In applying these measures of equality to the data presented on the major beneficiaries of child care (Chapters 4 - 5) much the same conclusions can be reached. Most of the <u>expenditure</u> on child care was initially directed to pre-school services which primarily benefit middle-income families where many women had the option of staying at home (Chapter 1). Although there has been a shift away from pre-school funding in recent years, funding for pre-schools in 1981-82 still accounted for 41.3 per cent of funds allocated to child care and represented the highest allocation of government money to any single service

(Sweeny, 1982:15). Despite the increasing emphasis being given to day care and family day care services which have the potential to benefit working parents or low-income families, the arguments and data presented in this research suggest that middle and upper income families will still be the major beneficiaries, receiving more than an equal share of public expenditure on child care.

The concept of final income is similar to the notion of real income under which expenditure on social services is directed to the poor to supplement their incomes so that they are brought more in line with incomes of the wealthy. In this research there is little evidence to illustrate that there have been any significant changes towards greater equality in final income. That is not to say that changes do not occur, but that low-income families have greater problems in gaining access to services. There is also the problem that when a low-income parent is able to utilise child care for employment purposes the benefits of being able to earn an income are often offset by the direct and indirect costs of entering the workforce. (Figure 5.2, Chapter 5). This is especially true for householders whose income earning capacity is limited by their employment skills. It could be argued that an individual with better income earning prospects will derive greater benefits from access to child care than a person with less saleable skills. Hence equality of final income is most unlikely.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal specifically with equality of use. Low-income earners in this study use fewer formal child-care arrangements and spend proportionately more of their time caring for their children than middle and upper-income groups. Public and personal access considerations are the main determinants of this occurence.

When low-income earners do use formal child care most are not in receipt of a subsidy and pay the same fee as would a household on a higher income. Low-income earners therefore pay proportionately more for the use of child care than their more affluent counterparts (Chapter 3). Recent changes in subsidy arrangements for low-income earners have alleviated this problem to some extent through the introduction of a sliding scale of fees. However, many low-income families are not aware that they are eligible for subsidies.

One of the major motivations for Labor's support for child care, particularly pre-school, was the belief that child care services could assist in providing an equal start to life thereby increasing the chances of an equal finish. Although it is certainly true that many children have directly benefitted from child care, the extent to which child care by itself can bring about equality of outcome in later life is questionable. Family and environmental influences obviously play an important role in the final

outcome. Debate over the effectiveness of the Head Start Programme in the United States, designed specifically for the purpose of promoting greater equality of outcome through the provision of child care, reflects the division of attitudes concerning the ability of child care to offset the effects of family and external environment influences (Burdon and Burdon, 1980).

Problems of equality of outcome can also be related to the use of child care in determining final income. As described, those parents with marketable employment skills will derive more benefit from child care than those whose skills are less saleable, making equality of outcome in a financial sense difficult to achieve.

If social service provision is not the answer, is there an alternative strategy to the problems of inequality? Instead of using social services to 'avoid grasping the nettle of income redistribution' and trying to achieve redistribution through the 'back door', Le Grand argues that the strategy of equality can only be achieved by promoting 'greater equality of money income'. This would allow for greater equality of costs, and would have a direct influence on equality of use and public expenditure which, in turn, would impact an equality of outcomes and final income. To promote greater equality of money income, a solution supported by Goldthorpe (1980) and Jencks (1979),

governments must adopt income redistribution measures which might range from increasing social security payments, to taxation reform, to expropriation of the assets of the rich.

For Le Grand, the issue of applying the strategy of equality lies not so much with how to redistribute income, but with combating 'the ideology of inequality'. Supporters of the ideology of inequality draw much of their inspiration from the writings of Hayek (1944) and Friedman (1962) who argue that the current distribution of resources and wealth is fair and just in that it reflects the effort individuals and groups are prepared to invest in pursuing wealth. Thus, people who are prepared to devote more effort to the creation of wealth should not be penalised for doing so. Income redistribution measures are also attacked for the impact they have on diverting resources away from economic growth and, in particular, their intrusion on the personal freedom of individuals as manifested through taxation assessment and means testing. Le Grand argues that until attitudes which support the 'ideology of inequality' change, the chances of effecting significant changes in income redistribution would appear unlikely.

In the Australian context, observations made by McQueen (1972) on "The End of Equality' relate directly to the apparent reluctance of the Labor Party to grapple with the

issue of income redistribution. Referring to the Whitlam Government's package for reform which encompassed urban infrastructure and social services, McQueen commented:

> Whitlam talks about equality and means it. But it is an entirely new twist in which the question of income distribution is neatly sidestepped. (1972:11)

7.4 A New Direction?

Throughout this research arguments and data have been presented which indicate that community social service strategies, as examined through the operation of the Chilren's Services Program, have not brought about the changes which both reformist and conservative governments have sought through their respective welfare strategies. The concept of community has been used widely and loosely as 'a spray on solution' (Bryson and Mowbray, 1981) with little attention to the contradictions inherent in community formation (Neuwirth, 1969). Further, the whole concept of promoting a strategy of equality through social service provision has been dismissed as the strategy of 'dreamers' (Le Grand, 1983).

Despite this pessimistic scenario, plans for social policy development in Australia in the 1980's appear to be focussing on community provision once more. Marie Coleman, Special Adviser to the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat

(1972-74), ex-Director of the Office of Child Care (1976-82) and former director of the Social Welfare Commission (1972-75) has noted...

> the strong trend in Australia at this time remains for generalist, non-statutory services designed to assist individual family or community functioning, to be sponsored by non-government bodies, many of a small self-help nature. This is particularly evident in the services for youth, families, children, aboriginals, ethnic minorities and the disabled. (Coleman, 1983:17)

Are the problems which beset the strategy of community social service provision in the early seventies about to be rediscovered by Labor in the eighties and, in some cases, by the same people? Defenders of reformist principles argue that lessons have been learnt. The introduction of a planning model of resource allocation in the Office of Child Care, as yet not publicly available, is cited as an example of Labor's determination to redistribute services to those most in need. (pers comm 1984, Office of Child Care)

What Labor's strategists lack in planning detail is more than made up for by the rhetoric of the 'strategy of consensus' which is energetically pursued by Prime Minister Hawke. Certainly the size of Labor's victory and the popularity of the Prime Minister, even during a recession, indicates that many Australians want to believe that he

will 'bring Australia together'. Whether this new found feeling of unity grounded in the politics of consensus will succeed where others have failed, only time will tell. If like the Whitlam experiment the Hawke experiment also fails, future students of community social service strategies may find Neuwirth and Le Grand instructive reading.

Despite the pessimism expressed for the future of community social service strategies as a means of achieving redistribution, government welfare policy in the 1980's, particularly under the Hawke Government, is unlikely to change. Attempts by Labor to hold down union demands for wage increases by offering services in the form of a social wage will ensure the place of community social service provision within the overall strategy of social policy development. In this context, and in the absence of any publicly acceptable alternatives, it is important not to dismiss community social service provision as being irrelevant to the process of redistribution and the pursuit of equality. In their critique of community work, Bryson and Mowbray (1981) note that an understanding of the failings of community work...

> should not be seen as negating all possibility of acceptance of the practice...and that recognition should be given to the fact that community work ... can assist the less advantaged, redress some injustices and be of value to is clientele in minor ways' (1981: 265-266).

Although conceding that some reform is possible, Bryson and Mowbray warn of the error in assuming that community social service provision holds solutions to the problems of poverty and inequality. With this warning in mind, but acknowledging that there is room for improvement in the way childrens services are currently allocated, Appendix 6 sets out a strategy which might assist in improving service provision and ultimately the access of households most in need of child care.

Appendix 1

An historical overview of Federal involvement in the development of social services 1900-1960

Attitudes towards social policy and social service provision in Australia, 1900-1940

The debate over the role of the state in Australia in the early 1900s in providing for the welfare of its citizens paralleled developments in Europe and Great Britain (Duncan 1939). In Australia, however, government involvement in social service provision and community development programs was piecemeal and slow until well after the Second World War.

Several reasons have been advanced for the apparent slow progress in the development of federally sponsored social services in Australia. Macintyre (1983) argues that social service provision in Australia was limited by the preoccupation of labour with the right to work rather than with the right to support during periods of recession. Until the 1890s depression, prolonged periods of unemployment were unknown in Australia. Short-term seasonal unemployment was common, but the states were usually able to cope by providing money for public works or dispersing the unemployed into rural areas with free rail passes in search of work. Certainly by the 1920s, among the labour force, there had developed a strong expectation that the state would provide relief when required. Employment preserved 'manliness' while charity attacked the moral fibre of society. (Royal Commission National Insurance: Minutes of Evidence, 1927)

The 1890s depression undermined the popular belief in Australia that unemployment was only a temporary condition and severely tested the ability of state governments to provide for the relief of the unemployed. Unemployment reached levels of about 9 per cent and government and charitable organisations were unable to cope with demands for assistance (Kewley 1965:19-27).

Despite the alarm felt in political and labour circles about the social consequences of unemployment, there were no significant attempts by organised labour to press for, or by the states to promote, relief measures other than those already available (Macintyre 1983). The primacy of the right to work over the right to relief dominated debate. The period betwen 1901 and 1914, in which the Federal Government was hailed for its social policy initiatives (Butlin et al. 1982) provided little for the relief of the unemployed. The Acts which were passed, covering the provision of old age and invalid pensions (1908) and maternity allowances (1912) emphasised the entitlements and obligations to relief by those outside the workforce.

Despite some early canvassing of the issue of unemployment insurance in Australia (Knibbs, 1910), and a series of Royal Commissions into National Insurance which included a report on unemployment (1926), unemployment insurance did

not gain any sigificant support, except in Queensland where compulsory unemployment insurance was introduced in 1923.[1] At the federal level, proposals on National Insurance, while supported in principle by the Labor and Conservative political parties, were never enacted. Opposition to the Bill centred around its contributory nature, and vested interests such as Friendly Societies and charitable organisations which saw their financial and welfare support roles threatened also contributed to its downfall (Macintyre 1983).

Until the late 1920s the Federal Government and States may have been confident that job creation rather than relief programs were the answer to the unemployed. However, the onset of the depression, with unemployment rates of 19 per cent in 1930 and 29 per cent in 1932, shattered any hope that government sponsored employment programs could reduce unemployment to acceptable levels (Butlin et al. 1982:172). 'The depression of the 1930s found Australia without any regular system of unemployment relief and otherwise unprepared to cope with the widespread unemployment.' (Kewley 1965:154). This situation was largely brought about by the 'popular insistence on the right to work which had

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1. Although the Queensland insurance scheme was overwhelmed in the depression years 1930-32, it was able to provide some relief to the unemployed throughout the latter part of the 1920s (Kewley 1965:153).

closed off an acceptance of the right to support. The ingrained attachment to independence and self sufficiency was weakness as well as a strength' (Macintyre 1983:12).

After the worst effects of the depression had passed, the issue of National Insurance was again raised in 1931 by the United Australia Party Government led by Prime Minister Lyons. Again the proposals for National Insurance were shelved. The proposal to base national insurance covering health, pensions and unemployment benefits on a universal contributory scheme proved to be the major obstacle to its implementation (Watts 1982).

Thus, the period from Federation to World War II saw a continuing debate over the issue of the Federal Government's role in the provision of social services. However, what progress was made concentrated on the rights and needs of the non-working population such as mothers, children, the aged and war widows. There was little evidence to suggest that the Federal Government saw its responsibility as being anything other than the provision of benefits through income supplements on a highly selective basis.

More wide-ranging support in the form of non-income related services such as care for children, the aged, the destitute and the handicapped were seen as state responsibilities and

were only developed at very rudimentary levels with the assistance of voluntary and philanthropic organisations (Jones 1982:5-31).

Social Services and the role of women between wars

Although the peoccupation with the right to work may have slowed the development of demands for more universal social service provision, the dominant view before World War II of the role of women as nurturers of the family provided little incentive for governments, state or federal, to extend their role in social service provision. Summers (1975) has drawn attention to the revival of the importance of motherhood by feminist, church and state advocates in the period between 1880 and the end of the First World War.

The preoccupation with encouraging women to reassert their vocation as homemakers stemmed from concern with a declining birth rate and the associated view that a 'high birth rate was essential to national greatness' (Summers 1975:32). In a series of state and federal industrial decisions between 1907 and 1919, arbitration systems effectively discriminated against the entry of women into the workforce. In the Harvester judgment of 1907 a basic wage was established for men but not for women (Baldock 1983). Wages for women were pegged at a maximum of 54 per cent of the male basic wage. The sexual division of

labour and wages was further reinforced by a decision by Justice Higgins in 1912 to demarcate legitimate areas of female and male employment which effectively prevented women from entering certain sectors of employment.

Among the objections to the employment of married women, voiced in an inquiry into the 'Employment of Female and Juvenile Labour' (1911), Summers notes references to the fact that employment 'encouraged the practice of prevention contraception', led 'to the day's energy being given up to making money to the neglect of the home', and 'encouraged idle and extravagant men' (Summers 1975:338-339).

Through moral and legislative pressure, which changed little throughout the pre-war period, married women were encouraged to remain at home. This provided a 'neat solution' to the problem of the shortage of domestic labour and, by association, to the problem of providing for the care of children, the aged, the sick and handicapped. Women, particularly mothers, were the principal providers of personal social services as distinct from those services associated with income support in the period leading up to World War II. The 'ideology of motherhood' enabled Federal and State governments to avoid considering those services which were part of the duties of a 'domestic vocation'.

Post war reconstruction and the National Welfare Scheme

It was not until the outbreak of the second world war and the election of the Curtin Labor Government in 1941 that the conditions for increased government intervention in social service provision became possible. Whereas the United Australia Party had been plagued by divisions over how to fund such a program in the pre-war period, the Curtin Government was able to use the war-time crisis and feelings of national unity to introduce uniform taxation legislation which gave it control over income tax throughout the Commonwealth. Control over taxation enabled the government to proceed with its plan for a National Welfare Scheme (Watts 1982, 1983). In December 1942 Prime Minister Curtin appointed J.B. Chifley as Minister for the new Department of Post-war Reconstruction. Chifley's primary concern was for the maintenance of full employment, but he saw supplementary income maintenance measures as being of major importance in promoting more unified social standards throughout the community (Watts 1983).

In 1943 Chifley announced proposals for the development of a National Welfare Scheme. the scheme embodied income maintenance benefits and, between 1943 and 1949, a range of programs were implemented. These included revised maternity allowances, family allowances and funeral benefits (1943), pharmaceutical, hospital and tuberculosis benefits

(1944-45), unemployment and sickness benefits (1945). In 1947 the Federal government introduced the Social Services Consolidation Act which brought together the National Welfare Scheme initiatives under one Act and emphasised the government's role as the principle provider of income-support programs.

Although the introduction of the National welfare Scheme was heralded as a major initiative,[2] it still defined the Federal government's social service responsibilities primarily in terms of income support. The states, voluntary organisations and women in the home were still the main providers of personal social services. However, the 'natural order' of social service provision in the home was changed by the entry of large numbers of women into the war time workforce. The entry of women into the armed forces and civilian employment, had a dramatic impact on the availability of domestic servants. The number of female domestic servants in the workforce declined from 24 500 to 41 500 between 1939 and 1943 (Spearitt 1974:592).

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2. Watts argues that Labor's enthusiasm for a National Welfare Scheme was motiviated by its desire to use the offer of increased social security as an electoral trade-off to ease the pressure on wage demands and to increase government revenue for the war effort (Watts 1982).

It is difficult to find documentation on the impact of the decline of domestic servants on social service provision. However, it can be reasonably assumed that because of the number of women involved, their exit left a gap in service provision and generated demands on the part of working women themselves for services. More significant overall was the progressive increase of women's role in the total workforce, and particularly of married women after World War II. The movement by married women into employment increased in the 1950s and 1960s in response to buoyant economic conditions. Between 1954 and 1971 the percentage of married women at work increased from 8.6 per cent to 32.8 per cent, an increase of almost 400 per cent (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PAID LABOUR, 1901-76

	Percentage of women at work	Women at work as percentage of total workforce	Percentage of married women at work	Married women at work as percentage of total workforce	Married women at work as percentage of female workforce
1901	30.7	20.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
1911	28.5	20.1	6.1	2.2	11.1
1921	26.7	20.3	4.4	1.9	9.2
1933	27.8	21.8	5.4	2.4	11.0
1947	28.4	22.4	8.6	4.4	19.8
1954	30.5	22.8	13.6	7.0	30.5
1961	33.8	25.1	18.7	9.6	38.3
1966	40.9	29.5	28.8	14.1	47.8
1971	37.1	31.7	32.8	18.0	56.8
1976	43.0	35.9	41.2	22.5	62.5

At the Federal level in the post war period, both Labor and Liberal governments were slow to introduce new social services. Despite the change to a conservative Liberal government in 1949 the new Prime Minister, R.G. Menzies, left Labor's social policy initiatives basically intact. Menzies had been a supporter of the 1938 National Insurance Program which had foreshadowed many of the National Welfare Scheme initiatives. Unlike Labor which financed the scheme from general taxation revenue and applied a means test to most benefits, the Menzies Government favoured a contributory scheme and the abolition of means-testing.

In the Menzies period (1949-1966) the post-war boom produced economic conditions in which unemployment levels seldom rose above two per cent. With the exception of the means test issue and the early controversy about health care, there was little public debate on social policy issues. The existing income maintenance schemes in a period of low unemployment, were seen as adequate social support by both parties (Jones 1983:55-56).

While there were no new policy initiative which could be compared with those of the years 1941-49, there were significant changes to the way the Menzies government attempted to allocate funds. In 1954, arising out of concern with the housing problems of old age pensioners, particularly those with limited incomes, the Federal

Government became involved through the Aged Persons' Homes Act (1954-57) in directly subsidising non-profit voluntary organisations in providing accommodation for the aged. The Act marked the first substantial change by the Federal government away from income support schemes. It also comprised the first moves by a conservative government to divest itself of public responsibility for the provision of welfare support by encouraging private provision of services.

The administration of the Aged Persons' Homes Act highlighted the problems of utilising voluntary and community groups to deliver services. Although the government made much play of helping those most in need, Kewley (1965:315-320) notes that the primary beneficiaries were middle income families. This situation occurred because most of the voluntary agencies, in an effort to match the government's offer of a one-for-one subsidy, required pensioners to make a contribution before they could be considered eligible for housing.

The operation of the Aged Persons' Homes Act effectively discriminated against low income earners. However, the general problems relating to the use of voluntary organisations for the provision of social services to special need families do not appear to have been recognised

by the government. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the Federal Government slowly expanded its commitment to subsidising community sponsored social services. The Home Nursing Act (1956), Marriage Guidance Act (1960) and Sheltered Workshops Act (1963) all provided for Federal assistance to approved community projects. The increasing interest shown by the Federal government in promoting community social service policy initiatives in the 1960s is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.

Appendix 2

Child Care. An overview 1788-1972

Child Care 1788-1895

When the first fleet sailed from Portsmouth, England in 1787, 212 marines were assigned to guard 565 male convicts, 192 females and 18 children.[1] Accompanying the fleet was the Reverend Richard Johnson whose task it was to safeguard the souls of all those on board. To enable him to achieve this end, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts provided him with a range of texts for instruction, among which included:

> 200 Exercises against Lying, 50 Cautions to Swearers, 100 Exhortations of Chastity, 100 Dissuasions from Stealing and 50 copies of 'Religion Made Easy' (Barcan 1980:7)

For Johnson the moral education of adults was his primary responsibility. Indeed, with the arrival of the fleet in Sydney Cove in 1788 both Johnson and Governor Phillip must have felt, that of all their human cargo, children were the least of their worries. A new colony had to be established and survival was the order of the day. (Walker 1964:1-6)

In keeping with the English tradition of allowing the education and care of children to be managed by the church and philanthropists, there being one representative of the

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1. The actual number of children accompanying the fleet was 33, the additional numbers were made up of the children of soldiers and administrative personnel.

former and none of the latter, the Reverend Johnson set about establishing schools for the education of convict and soldiers' children. The first school was established in 1789 in a hut in Sydney and was run by a convict woman. By 1792 the colony boasted three schools, all run by convicts which catered for children ranging in age from infants to teenagers.

After Governor Phillip left the colony in 1792 there was a marked decline in social order. The Lieutenant-Governors who replaced him were unable to control the ambition of officers within the New South Wales Corps who busied themselves with land, liquor and trading enterprises. Little thought was given to social issues, particularly the welfare of children. The social problems of the colony were complicated by the large imbalance between the sexes. In 1792 the ratio of adult males to females was 7 to 1. 'Prostitution and concubinage were common, family life hardly existed' (Barcan 1980:10). When Government King arrived in 1800 he noted; out of 958 children in the colony 398 were 'orphans or neglected children'. For the next ten years the conflict between successive governors and officers and supporters of the New South Wales Corps continued to weaken the social stability of the colony and efforts towards social reform were minimal.

It was not until the arrival of Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1810 that some stability was restored. Alarmed by the large number of children who appeared to be 'wholly neglected in their education and morals', Macquarie embarked upon an ambitious program of government sponsored Charity Schools for the education of poor children.[2] Macquarie recognised that unlike their English equivalents, the Public Charity Schools could not rely on philanthropists, voluntary organisations and the church for funding given the underdeveloped nature of these interests in the new colony.

While Macquarie's concern may be interpreted as being enlightened when compared with the actions of his predecessors, Windshuttle (1982) and Godden (1982) point out that the establishment of Charity Schools and other institutions for the poor were more directed at social control rather than social reform.

> Ultimately, it was the desire to change the culture of the lower classes which underlay the Charity School movement and which determined the nature of the education and authority provided. The English and colonial ruling classes viewed this culture with alarm and attempted, by quarantining children in institutions, to impose their own cultural aims on the lower orders. The origins of child welfare

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2. Children of wealthier government officials and businessmen were either educated or cared for by private tutors or in privately run academies (See Barcan 1980:7-22).

> should thus be seen as one step in an ambitious movement to destroy the cultural values of disorder, irreverence and promiscuity, and replace them with discipline, obedience and submission. (Windshuttle 1982:26)

The desirability of developing an education and welfare system for the lower classes around the principle of social control was strongly reflected in the views of the 'exclusives' or free settlers. John Macarthur, one of their principal advocates, saw the need to create 'a class of domestic servants and labourers composed of convicts, ex-convicts and their children' (Barcan 1980:26). The Reverend Samuel Marsden who had abandoned one pastoral vocation in order to take up another, on the land, expressed similar sentiments when commenting on the role of female orphanages.

> The Female Orphan Institution should not be like a Boarding School for Young Ladies who have some prospects in life, but like a house of Industry (Goodin 1950:184)

The education and welfare of children throughout the first half of the 19th century was largely aimed at achieving moral salvation and fostering industriousness. While the education of working class children managed to emerge from the confines of ruling class advocates of social control and move towards free, compulsory and secular education in the latter half of the 1800's, child welfare still remained in the hands of the church and female philanthropists.

In the history of the women's movement in Australia Godden (1982) views female philanthropy as a vocation which gave high status women power and purpose, just so long as they restricted themselves to the 'women's sphere' or those areas or social concern which were not the domain of men.

> Philanthropy wihin the women's sphere was a means whereby ruling class women attempted to exercise control over working class women and children and whereby they were themselves controlled and their activities restricted (Godden 1982:84)

Female philanthropists were particularly active in the economic boom conditions between 1870-1880. The stampede of men from the cities to the gold fields produced more than enough social upheaval to keep female philanthropists busy. The 'women's sphere' mainly involved itself in the establishment of institutions the more prominent of which included; the Female and Male Orphan Schools, the Benevolent Society, the Female School of Industry, the Female Factory, the Ladies Dorcan Society for Distressed Jewish Mothers, the Emigrants Home and the Female Refuge. All of these institutions had the primary objective of providing care and 'education' for women and their children.

For the most part of the 19th century child care for the lower classes, particularly for those below school age, was mainly philanthropic and institutionally based. The concept

of institutionalising children began to lose favour among more progressive female philanthropists in the 1880's. They argued 'that the basic system was harsh, too expensive and inefficient in terms of achieving the desired object [efficient and humble male labourers and female servants]' (Goddin 1982:94). Children were to be boarded out with suitable families and an elaborate system of inspection was initiated to ensure children were cared for in the proper manner. For destitute children or for those whose mothers were engaged in employment and were unable to care for their children, boarding out became an important system of child care in the 1890's.

The 1890's depression found philanthropic and religious institutions unable to cope with the demand for relief. The rise of state intervention to alleviate social misery, considerably weakened the women's philanthropic movement in terms of the power they were able to exercise over their traditional spheres of influence. However, while the depression forced the state to intervene in the provision of welfare services, there was still scope for philanthropic interests. One such area was in the provision of care and education for the pre-school aged children of underprivileged families.

The Kindergarten and Day Nursery Movement

Educationists throughout the latter part of the 19th century were increasingley concerned about the high number of infant children attending school. In 1881, 20 per cent of pupils attending state schools in NSW were under the official school age of 7 (Barcan 1980:163). These students were mainly accommodated in infant classes attached to primary schools and their relatively large numbers suggest that there was a strong demand for both the care and education of this age group.

In 1884 there were 98 infant departments in state schools in NSW and attempts were made to introduce Frobel's Kindergarten Instruction based on the principles of free play and expression. However, the cost of equipment and training and the reaction by teachers and parents to activities outside the formal education stream never gained acceptance (Barcan 1980:163-164). Spearitt noted that in 1881 the first kindergarten teacher 'was hired to demonstrate Frobelian techniques - but was fired the following year on the grounds that her kindergarten was little more than a nursery maintained at the expense of the state'. (1979:11)

Despite the failure to win widespread acceptance for the use of kindergarten methods in state schools, concern for the plight of infant children in the slum areas of Sydney led to the formation of the Kindergarten Union of New South Wales in 1895. The aims of the Union were to 'introduce kindergarten principles into every school in New South Wales and in particular to open free kindergarten in poor neighbourhoods'. (Turney 1975:136)

Kindergartens were to be both educative and philanthropic. Maybank Anderson, one of the founders of the Kindergarten Union in Sydney, referred to the importance of kindergartens to children 'who might otherwise become larrikins and eventually criminals' (Anderson 1920:296). Clearly, kindergartens, while having a role in education and social reform, were considered to have an important function in maintaining social control.

Indeed, teachers operating in the Free Kindergartens in slum areas not only saw their role as influencing the child in the kindergarten environment but also visited the homes of children 'to inculcate parents with middle class norms'. (Walker 1964:207) This task was not inconsistent with the practice of using middle class 'ladies' to visit foster homes under the Boarding Out Scheme which had very explicit aims of social control (Goddin, 1982).

By 1910 there were 32 kindergartens established throughout capital cities in Australia with the majority being funded by philanthropic interests. Although established to meet the needs of children from slum areas, needs were largely determined by educationists and concerned benefactors. Little consideration was given to the role which kindergartens could play in improving the social mobility of working class families and their children. Kindergartens only offered morning programs and did not take children under three years of age. Members of Kindergarten Unions apparently considered that children under the age of three 'should receice nurture from mother and home but after that age, when they are more likely to be on the streets, the kindergaten should intervene' (Spearitt 1974:589).

While kindergartens were attempting to mould the 'plastic clay' of some infant minds the majority of working class children, particularly those of abandoned mothers and working parents, had to make do with whatever arrangements they could find. It was in response to families which could neither afford domestic help or make informal child care arrangements that the Sydney Day Nursery Association was formed in 1905.

> There are in Sydney, as in every other large city, many poor working women, who through sad circumstances, are forced to leave early in the morning to pursue their work in shop, factory or steam laundry and their babies ... are left in the care of a

> child, little more than a babe herself, and failing her, to any one of the neighbours who will undertake the charge ... It is [to enable these mothers] to keep their home and family together, and to supply their little ones the wholesome and loving care of which they are deprived ... that the Sydney Day Nursery Association has been formed. (Sydney Day Nursery Association - First Annual Report, cited in Spearitt 1979:18)

The Sydney Day Nursery Association like the Kindergarten Union also depended on voluntary effort and philanthropists for its operations. Because the Day Nursery Association was the second organisation dealing with children under school age, it was unable to expand its services as rapidly as the Kindergarten Union. In 1911 there were only three Day Nurseries in Sydney as opposed to eleven Kindergartens.

Although the functions of the Day Nurseries were quite different from Kindergartens there was considerable co-operation between the two organisations in the first years of their establishment. The Kindergarten Union Teachers' Training Colleges often provided students to assist in Day Nurseries and, Day Nursery children were sent to Kindergartens on reaching the age of three. Despite early co-operation, divisions between Kindergarten Unions and supporters began to emerge. Kindergartens concentrated on educational aspects of child development while Day Nurseries provided care and security for children.

Spearitt (1974) provides some interesting observations about the training of Kindergarten teachers, who at the time, were mainly recruited from the ranks of the middle class. According to the Sydney Kindergarten Training College Prospectus of 1911, Kindergarten training provided the prospective applicant, all of whom were women, with 'a profession and educational preparation for life' while acknowledging ... 'that a woman's deepest instincts centre in the home ... her natural place' (Kingston 1974:75 cited in Spearitt 1975:586).

Not all women in Australia shared the view that their natural role was that of homemaker, or that Kindergarten training represented a good balance between a vocation and motherhood. In an article, the 'Womans Road to Freedom', the Militant Women's Group in Sydney extolled the benefits of state-run child care for working women in Russia:

> ... Attached to the factory is a creche where she can put her infant in skilled hands while she works and where she can also learn how to care for it efficiently when she takes it home at night ... In this way when the child is the responsibility of the state, women has been able to free herself from domestic servitude ... What wonderful vistas do these few and necessarily scanty glimpses of a free and useful womanhood conjure up in our minds. (Militant Womens' Group 1927:8)

Up until the outbreak of the Second World War 'vistas' and 'glimpses' were all that women with more than an educational or philanthropic interest in child care were able to 'conjure up'. Child care amenities in Australia whether Kindergarten or Day Nurseries were undeveloped and mostly relied on private sponsorship for their financial existence. Although the functions of child care facilities were generally applauded by state and federal governments, mainly for their assistance to the poor, government support was minimal (Walker 1964).

The Federal Government became involved in the issue of child care more by accident than intent. In 1937, at the first meeting of the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Right Honourable W.M. Hughes, Minister for Health, announced the need to direct more attention to the 'care of the infant and growing child of pre-school age' (Cumpston and Heinig 1944:1). The Council adopted a resolution supporting the Minister's statements. Prompted by reports of how 'Kindergarten favourably influenced the nutrition of all age groups' and an election later in the year, the Federal Government announced that 100 000 pounds would be made available to public health projects 'especially in relation to the health of women and children'.

The funds were to be spent on the establishment of demonstration child care centres in each capital city. The centres became officially known as Lady Gowrie centres and Lady Gowrie Child Centre Committees were established to administer the centres. The committees were largely made up of representatives of Kindergarten Unions and others with an interest in child welfare. Despite the Federal Government's much publicised initiative in the area of child-health and development through the Lady Gowrie centres, the Federal Government provided little in the way of financial support to the development of child care services. Of the estimated 500 000 children between the ages of 2-6, in 1939 only 1.13 per cent were enrolled in kindergartens (Cumpston & Heinig 1944:1974).

Child Care Developments 1940-1972

Australia's entry into the Second World War was a turning point in the development of child care services. First, in the way they were administered and second, concerning the children they were directed at. With a large proportion of the male labour force committed to military service, women were asked to play an increasing role in industry, particularly in munitions and other industries servicing the war effort. Between 1939 and 1943 the number of women in the workforce increased from 77 000 to 155 000 (Spearitt 1974:591).

This increase was achieved at the expense of the domestic service sector of employment, a sector which among other things had traditionally provided informal child care outside of the Kindergartens and Day Nurseries. From 1939-1943 the number of women in domestic service fell from 124 500 to 41 500 (Spearitt 1974:592). With the entry of so many women into the workforce, many of whom had pre-school and school aged children, and the decline in traditional sources of child care such as domestics, it soon became apparent that child care services were totally inadequate and the war effort endangered.

The position of the working mother was well summarised by Bayne (1943).

> If Australia is to produce for war at an ever increasing rate when her men are being insistently called from the workbench to the battle-front, then more and more women will have to be used. More married women would; for patriotic reasons alone, be glad to do their utmost to help the war effort. But no woman can settle down to do a good day's work if she is worried about domestic problems or knows that her children are left hungry to play in the streets ... In Australia we have, so far, done but little to lighten the burden of our married war workers (Bayne 1943:58).

Government involvement in the provision of care for the children of working women fell well short of the effort of Australia's allies; Britain, the United States and Russia.

In Britain, war time Day Nurseries were being opened at the rate of 100 a month with major government support. In Australia, expansion of child care facilities to meet the growing demand was still left in the hands of voluntary agencies. As late as 1942 the Federal Minister for Health and Social Services in response to representation over the extension of Day Nurseries by the Council for Women in War Work held that 'a Commonwealth wide scheme of this sort was impractical and unnecessary' (Bayne 1943:65).

It wasn't until 1943 that the Federal Government consented to allocating a grant of 5 000 pounds to Kindergarten Unions in Australia to extend child care services. Federal assistance only enabled a minor increase in the provision of services with the 1939 total of free kindergartens only increasing from 74 to 87 by 1943 (Cumpston and Heinig 1944:197). The war effort necessitated significant changes in the way kindergartens were run. Hours were extended and a new cadre of untrained staff, the 'Child Care Reserve', had to be recruited to assist in handling the increased work load. In addition, whereas kindergartens had traditionally focussed on inner city slum children, priority was accorded to the children of women involved in the war effort, many of whom were from middle class families.

Although federal involvement in the provision of child care services was minimal, those who had advocated a national scheme of wartime child care were greatly encouraged about the prospects for a 'comprehensive plan for child care' which would extend into the post war period (Bayne 1943:68-72).

The advocates of increased federal assistance to child care were not all motivated by patriotism. For women, the war opened up a range of employment and civil defence opportunities which previously had been restricted to men. The Council for Women in War Work issued a list of objectives which included equal pay and opportunity for both men and women. These issues went well beyond making conditions for working women more favourable simply to support the war effort. The eighth aim of the Council 'to work during and after the war, for the equitable treatment of women in the post war world' served notice on politicians that some sections of the women's movement saw their new found wartime status not simply as a temporary affair.

One issue of concern to women was the 'Reinstatement of Civil Employment' provision under the National Security Regulations which guaranteed men their pre-war employment status on demobilisation. This provision would force many

women out of employment (McGrath 1943). The President for the Council for Women in War Work described the position of working women in the following terms:

> In war-time women are eagerly welcomed as workers, but only as workers of inferior status. This is both undemocratic and inefficient, since the country needs the people who can do the jobs best, regardless of their sex. Moreover, unless women concern themselves with this matter now, there is every reason to expect that after this war women workers will continue to form an inferior caste in the community (Fitzpatrick 1943:1).

The optimism and the maintenance of gains made by women in working conditions and support services did not extend past the end of the war. Large numbers of women dropped out of the workforce either through marriage or were replaced by men. Federal interest in providing support services, particularly child care, also waned.

The post-war period also saw a revival in traditional values of concern for family and the home. The Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide claimed that it 'undermined the family and was a positive danger to the Catholic School System' (Spearitt 1974:594). The perceived evils of the child care movement were not shared by all denominations, although, child care was tolerated rather than encouraged. The Methodist Minister, the Reverend Allan Walker, in considering the apparent demise of the family, bemoaned the

fact that 'of 664 homes investigated ... only 90 admitted to saying grace at meals' (Walker 1947:18). For Walker, the role of the father 'as priest to his family' was clearly breaking down. However, on the subject of child care and the family, Walker was prepared to make some concessions.

> ... And what about such recent developments as the growth of the day nursery for the pre-school child and the community centre movement. Will they further undermine the home by placing the scene of activity outside the family circle. It could be so, but there are compensating factors ... With the vanishing of domestic help ... the Day Nursery movement may well provide necessary relief for the overworked mother' (Op.cit:16).

Despite the reservations of church leaders about the impact of child care on the family, the opening of the Lady Gowrie Centres and the experience by many mothers in child care during the war generated increased interest along middle class parents in the value of pre-school in the education of their children (Spearitt 1980). Whereas before the war, kindergartens were largely viewed as being for the underprivileged, the educational and child development emphasis placed on the role of the Lady Gowrie Centres attracted middle class interest.

Such was the interest of the wife of one Member of Parliament in pre-school that she complained about the bias of the Lady Gowrie Centres towards the underprivileged:

> ... Centres had no right to discriminate with taxpayers money ... the rich child was often poor in ways that the poor children were rich ... [all children] should have equal rights to enter the Lady Gowrie Centre's (Australian Pre-School Association File, cited in Spearitt, 1980. unreferenced)

Because of war-time priorities and the general reluctance of state and federal governments to become involved in the provision of child care services, the only avenue open to parents who were not part of the 'deserving poor' or the war effort, but who wished to use child care, was to establish their own centres. The first community kindergarten was opened in Sydney in 1942 in the middle-class suburb of Cheltenham and later in Killara in 1944 (Walker 1964). Unlike the Lady Gowrie Centres or Free Kindergartens, these new centres were primarily established to serve the children of middle-class families and were run by resident parent committees.

In the post-war period up to 1972 the expansion of pre-school services largely followed the Cheltenham and Killara examples. Middle-class parent groups established pre-schools, not for philanthropic reasons but for the perceived educational benefits which would accrue to their own children. The pre-war tradition of locating kindergartens in slum areas for the benefit of underprivileged children took second place to the needs of the middle class. Whereas middle and upper class interests

had previously intervened for a range of educational and social reasons on behalf of the disadvantaged, the post-war efforts of these groups were largely taken up in securing benefits for their own children. This attitude was reflected in the fact that most of the pre-school services which were established after the war to 1972 were located in areas with 'high socio-economic status' (Fitzgerald and Crosher 1971, Freestone 1977).

Although there was considerable interest by middle class parents in pre-school education, the organisational skills required for the successful management of a community pre-school were often beyond the capacity of many communities. Thus, despite all the post-war rhetoric about the advantages of pre-school education, by 1967 only 12 per cent of eligible children in Australia were attending pre-school.

What expansion there was in the provision of 'community', as opposed to private profit making child care arrangements, occurred in the pre-school sector. Parents who required child care for employment relied upon their immediate family or friends. The few private child care centres which existed were usually beyond the means of most families (Matthews and Fitzgerald 1975). Although the number of married women in employment declined immediately following the War the numbers soon rose again in response

to the rapid economic growth. In 1947 the proportion of married women in the workforce totalled 15 per cent, in 1961 it had risen to 38 per cent and 1966, 48 per cent (Department of Labour and National Service, 1968).

Despite the increasing participation of married women in the workforce their role was by no means universally accepted. In 1953, a book "Child Care and the Growth of Love" was published by John Bowlby, a child development psychologist. In this book Bowlby advanced the concept of 'maternal deprivation' in which he argued that children of working mothers, particularly those under the age of three, faced the prospect of nervous disorders and instability of character. His findings were based on the analysis of institutionalised children who were deprived of maternal care for long periods of time.

Although Bowlby's findings were refuted on the basis that children in institutions could not be compared to children of working parents (Tiller 1962, Myer and Hoffman 1963) his work was often used uncritically by supporters of the family cause and did little to assist the efforts of those seeking to involve the community and government in the development of day care facilities for working mothers (McCaughey, 1977).

The 'Royal Society for Welfare of Mothers and Babies' celebrating its fifty year Jubilee had the following comments to make about the social problems caused by maternal deprivation:

> Are there still battles for Tresillian to fight ... There certainly are! ... tension, maladjustment, mental fatigue, drug dependence, and abuse, delinquency and crime and marital breakdown. Have you considered where these maladies start? Problems begin at childhood. Tresillian has a part to play in limiting the growth of these forms of sickness. Medical scientists and researchers today believe these maladjustments to be in part results of the modern departure from the close relationship of mother and child established in breast feeding - and may be controlled by understanding and love which come to stay in a home where child rearing is a happy, welcome function and not a nuisance (Tresillian Mothercraft Homes, 1970:3).

Conservative elements of the Trade Union movement were also critical of increased female participation in the workforce. However, their opposition was more on the basis of job security for men than on child development needs (Hargraves, 1982). The attitude that married women should be in the home and not in the workforce came under increasing attack in the 1960's by women, sections of industry and some government departments. Calls were made to restrict immigration programs and employ more women to overcome labour shortages. Even a Treasury Bulletin on workforce projections decried ...

> a tendency to regard married women as usurpers of jobs that rightly belong to men and/or unmarried women (cited in Smyth and Patridis 1965:16

Treasury's concern over attitudes towards working women were partly stimulated by work being carried out within th Women's Bureau (Department of Labour and National Service). The Women's Bureau was established in 1967 and in a series of publications on Women in the Workforce started the first systematic analysis of the position of married women in employment.

In 1970 the Women's Bureau published statistics which highlighted the problems which working mothers faced in finding suitable care for their children. The statistics revealed that in 1968-69 there was an estimated 555 day care centres operating throughout Australia providing care for 14 000 (0.1 per cent) of the 280 000 pre-school aged children of working mothers. Of the 555 centres only 40 were receiving government assistance. The majority of Day Care Centres were privately run and had little in the way of trained staff (Women's Bureau 1970:15).

The figures produced by the Women's Bureau were taken up by the Liberal Country Party Coalition under Prime Minister John Gorton in 1970. Gorton was facing a half Senate election and the women's vote, particularly on matters relating to employment was considered to be sufficiently

important to pursue. Gorton promised to develop a network of child care centres for working mothers basing his motives on the economic rationale, that child care would contribute to employee morale, reduce absenteeism and help productivity (Matthews and Fitzgerald 1975:6). Gorton's proposals were shelved in 1971 due to financial problems.

The Child Care Act and subsequent developments under Labor, 1972-1975

Shortly before the 1972 Federal elections the LNCPC announced that it was introducing a Child Care Bill into Parliament in 'recognition of the rapidly increasing proportion of married women in the labour force and the consequences of this phenomenon for the care of their children' (Child Care Bill Second Reading 1972:1). The Bill provided for the allocation of funds to special need and low income families. The major thrust of the Child Care Act was towards the provision of child care for working mothers. The Federal Government was to make unmatched capital grants for the building of new centres and subsidise the costs of staffing and equipping the centres. The Child Care Act was proclaimed in October 1972, but the whole emphasis towards child care was overturned with the election of the Whitlam Government a month later. The development of child care under the Whitlam Labor government is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.3.

APPENDIX 3

Child Care services funded by the Office of Child Care

Source: Children's Services Program. Information kit, September 1979, Department of Social Security.

A description of the main components of the Program follows:

(i) Pre-Schooling

Commonwealth funding for pre-schools is paid through State governments. Pre-schools are services where trained staff supervise pre-school aged children. The children attend on a sessional basis and only during term-time. A 'session' refers to a two and a half hour to three hour program or an extended program, up to five or six hours, for children between three and five years of age. Generally the number of children in a group is between 20 and 30.

(ii) Day Care - Centre-based

These services provide for the care and development of children at a centre on either a regular, occasional, or emergency basis. The children are usually below school age. The centre may be specifically designed to cater for 60 or so children, or care may be provided in smaller group care centres or neighbourhood centres, using rented or purchased houses or halls renovated for this purpose.

Services are generally provided on a year-round basis during working hours. Funding is provided mainly under the Child Care Act 1972 except for some small group centres that are funded through State governments. Under the Child Care Act 1972 funding is available to non-profit organisations and local governing bodies are prescribed in the Act (and by regulation) for capital purposes (building or equipment grants) or for recurrent purposes (staff subsidy, special need subsidy or research). A condition of grants is that centres will give priority of admission to children in special need of day care. Organisations not funded under the Act but through State governments are eligible for an on-going operational support grant for administration, and on-going special need grant to help low income families to meet the cost of care and a one-off establishment grant. These services are also eligible to obtain capital grants under the C.S.P. There are also some one-off funding arrangements for special circumstances (for example A.C.T. services where a via-the-State mechanism is not applicable).

(iii) Family Day Care

Family Day Care Schemes developed in the 1970s from moves to utilise the services of home-based women as child minders, while at the same time ensuring some control over the quality of care. They also developed because many parents prefer this form of care. Family Day Care is now well established as an alternative to both the larger centre-based forms of care and to informal minding arrangements. Family Day Care is seen as having the following advantages:

- it is a personalised family type care, particularly suited to babies and very young children, and preferred by many parents because it enables care in very small groups;
- the flexible nature of the schemes means they can readily adapt to meet a variety of needs, for example, the provision of before and after school care, emergency care and occasional care;
- services can be quickly established where they are most needed without the long lead-time involved with building projects;
- it is an extremely flexible form of care in the sense that schemes can expand or contract according to demand, and they can range over an area to provide ready access by users of the service. Thus there is an assurance that Government funds are not expended on projects which may prove over time to be poorly located or become redundant when the population age groupings change.

(iv) Occasional and Emergency Care

Full-day or part of a day care is provided on an occasional basis. During an emergency, limited accommodation may be available.

Occasional care usually forms part of another more comprehensive service, it may, for example, be provided through a Family Day Care Scheme, or as part of the extended activities of a pre-school or child care centre.

(v) Outside School Hours Care

Holiday care programs and programs for school-age children, before and after school hours, may be part of a more comprehensive service, or funded separately. Through these programs children who would otherwise be unsupervised outside school hours are provided with a variety of cultural and physical activities.

(vii) Playgroup Support Services

Support is given to services which operate from existing community-based accommodation and which are run by participating parents to provide

creative activities for children from birth to school entry age (0-5 years). Funds go to State Associations, individual groups are not presently eligible except in exceptional circumstances. Assistance may be through annual grants-in-aid for publication and administrative expenses, through one-off grants to establish resource centres in isolated areas or through funds for development work.

(ix) Work Related Child Care

Child care services at places of work, and work related day care facilities are eligible for funding through the Children's Services Program. Organisations eligible to receive funds under the Program include trade union bodies and joint employer/employee groups.

A number of grants have been approved for work-related child care facilities designed to meet the child care needs of women in industry, with particular attention being given to the needs of migrant women.

(x) Neighbourhood and Multifunctional Centres

As well as being committed to the provision of services to those most in need, the Commonwealth is also committed to a comprehensive approach to the provision of children's services and is concerned that the Program considers the total development of children and does not take a fragmented view of the requirements of children and their families.

Every attempt is made in the administration of the Program to make maximum use of existing or proposed services and facilities. A result of this policy is the recent emphasis in the allocation of funds to multipurpose facilities.

The encouragement of multipurpose facilities has meant that the Program has supported neighbourhood type services, which are focal points in local communities where a variety of services can locate themselves and where people from the local area can find out about the range of services provided in their communities.

Often the neighbourhood centre is a renovated house, licensed to provide full day care and which is also used for after school hours programs, by

mothers as a drop-in centre and where an infant welfare sister may call about once a week to discuss the care of babies and young children with mothers from the area.

(xii) Child Care Services in Women's Refuges

Many children who pass through women's refuges need special assistance, and arrangements under the Children's Services Program have been made to improve the standard of child care given in refuges.

Projects receiving support have included parenting courses, a conference for the employment of child care workers in refuges and for toys, equipment and costs of special care services provided outside the refuges.

(xiii) Other

Funds have also been provided under the Children's Services Program for other service types including funds for services to provide alternatives to residential care, for contractual research and evaluation, for training and information programs

and for specialised services to handicapped children, aborigines, migrants and isolated children.

APPENDIX 4

Child Care Survey Questionnaire

CHILD CARE SURVEY

PART A

1. Group No. ☐

2. Household No. ☐☐☐

Respondents Name _____

3. Relationship of respondent to children _____

4. Type of Dwelling

1 Separate house
2 Flat/Home Unit
3 Other - state

☐

5. Ownership Status of Respondent

1 Owner
2 Purchaser
3 Tenant (Housing Commission)
4 Tenant (Other)

☐

6. How long has the family been living in this house?

YEARS ☐ MONTHS ☐

INSTRUCTION : WRITE IN ALL ANSWERS. DO NOT USE CODING

Column Instructions

Record the following information in the appropriate column.

7. First Name of each household member. Example: Jane

8. Age of each household member
Example: 36

9. Sex of each household member
- Male (M)
- Female (F)

10. Relationship. Describe how each member of the household is related to the respondent.
Example: husband, daughter, son

11. Highest Education Qualification obtained. Parents/Guardians only.
Example: High School Certificate

12. Write Former Occupation of the principle child minder in the space provided if this person is not currently working.

13. Employment status. State whether each household member is in:

1 Full-time employment
2 Part-time employment
3 Unemployed and looking for work
4 Not looking for work
5 Write not applicable (na) for children under 5 and those still at school.

14. Current Occupation
Describe current occupation of parents/guardians
Example: teacher, domestic duties, carpenter.

15. Hours of Employment Average number of hours worked each week. Parents/ Guardians only.

16. Income Source Describe the main income source of each household member. Example: wage, pension

17. Other Activities All adult household members. Is this person involved in any activities outside of the home other than occupational activities. Describe activities or answer NO.

Person No.	7	8	9	10	11	13	14	15	16	17
	First Name	Age	Sex	Relationship to Respondent	Highest Educational Qualification	Employment Status	Current Occupation	Hours of Employment	Income Source	Other Activities
1. Female Parent Guardian										
2. Male Parent Guardian										
3. 1st Child										
4. Second Child										
5. Third Child										

These questions only apply to the female and male parent(s)/guardian(s)

	Female Parent/Guardian	Male Parent/Guardian
18. What is the reason for not working. If more than one reason, list the main reason first.		
19. What is the reason for working. If more than one reason list the main reason first.		

Group No. ☐

Household No. ☐☐☐

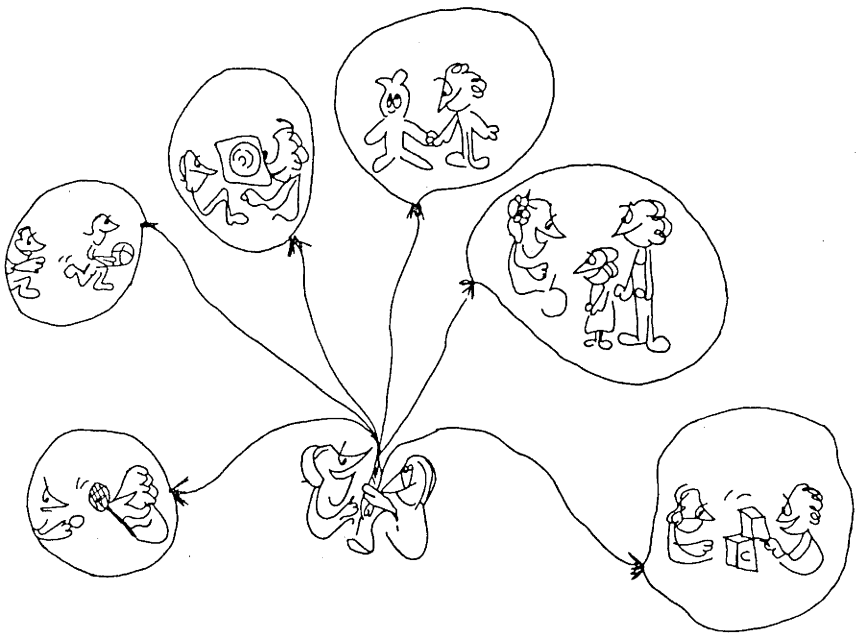
Child No. ☐☐

Part B

Name of Child .....

CHILD CARE DIARY

Keep a separate diary for each child under 5. Record this child's child care arrangements over the next seven days.



IMPORTANT

Your interview is at;

Time: .....

Date: .....

Place: .....

.....

Please ring: .....

if you are unable to keep this arrangement.

Date ..... Day of week .....

	Who was mainly responsible for looking after this child? 1	Where? 2	What did you/your partner do when not looking after this child? YOU 3	PARTNER 4	Were there any times during this day when you would have liked to make a child care arrangement but couldn't? Indicate times. 5	Why did you want to make an arrangement? 6
AM 7						
8						
MORNING 9						
10						
11						
12						
AFTERNOON 1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
EVENING 7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
PM 12						

7. Are the child care arrangements you have described representative of your usual weekly arrangements?

1. NO ☐
2. YES ☐

8. Did you pay a reduced fee for any services this child used during the week?

1. NO ☐
2. YES ☐

Which services? _____

9. When this child was born did you use the services of a baby health clinic;

1. NO ☐
2. YES ☐

10. General Comments

This space is provided if you would like to make some general comments about:

- the services this child uses
- your needs
- the child's needs
- problems you have in making adequate child care arrangements
- other issues related to child care

Average fortnightly income and expenses

Fortnightly Income after Tax

Male	
Female	
Other income eg. rent	

Expenses

Food	
Rent/Mortgage	
Hire Purchase/LayBy	
Transport (include petrol)	
Health Insurance	
Child Care	
Bankcard/Charge Account	
Other	

HOUSEHOLD NO. ☐☐☐

CHILD NO. ☐☐

PARTS C + D

Parts C + D must be completed

for every child under the age of 5.

SECTION C : Usual Child Care Arrangements other than those provided by parent(s)/guardian(s)

1. Types of arrangement															
2. How frequently do you make this arrangement?															
3. How many hours/day?															
4. Why do you use the service. If more than one reason give main reason first.															
5. Rate each of the above child care arrangements using the following factors	Unqualified satisfaction	Qualified satisfaction	Dissatisfied	Dont Know	Not applicable	Unqualified satisfaction	Qualified satisfaction	Dissatisfied	Dont Know	Not applicable	Unqualified satisfaction	Qualified satisfaction	Dissatisfied	Dont Know	Not applicable
1. Location for transport convenience															
2. Cost of arrangement															
3. Hours available															
4. Quality of care															
5. Quality of activities for child															
6. Equipment & amenities															
7. Ease with which staff can be approached to discuss matters concerning child care															
8. Management of the service															
9. Extent to which the child is happy in the arrangement															
10. Other: State															

SECTION D : Intended Child Care Arrangements

1. Do you intend to make any child care arrangements for this child before he/she reaches school age (5 years)

1	NO	Go to question 7
2	YES	Proceed to question 2
3	Dont know	Go to question 8

2. What arrangements do you think you might make?			
3. At what age do you intend to make arrangements for this child?			
4. How frequently do you intend to use this service:			
5. Why do you intend to make this arrangement? If more than one reason give main reason first			
6. Is this child on a waiting list for this service? 1. NO 2. YES			

7. This question is only to be answered if the parent(s)/guardian(s) is not using and does not intend to use any child care arrangements (including pre-school) other than those available through the parent(s) or guardian(s).

   Do you have any special reasons for not making child care arrangements for this child?

8. Does this child have any special development needs. Describe these needs. Do you think that these needs are being mat by the services he/she uses?

HOUSEHOLD NO. ☐☐☐

PART E _ J

GENERAL QUESTIONS

PART E : Care of Children Other than Household Members

1. Do you have any usual arrangements in which you look after children other than your own?

   1. NO ☐
   2. YES ☐

2. What type of arrangements do you provide?			
3. Describe the frequency of each of the arrangements			
4. For how many children?			
5. Do you get paid? How much?			

6. Do you receive any assistance/advice from any group or organisation for the care of the children?

   1. NO Go to question 10 ☐
   2. YES Which group/organisation ☐ _____

7. What assistance do you receive?

8. How would you rate this assistance?

   1. Good Go to Section F ☐
   2. Fair proceed with question 9 ☐
   3. Poor ☐

9. Give reasons for your answer

10. Would you like assistance?

    1. NO ☐
    2. YES ☐

11. What assistance would you like?

PART F : Child Care Arrangements for Household children over the Age of 5 (other than school arrangements)

1. Do you make any child care arrangements for any of your children over the age of 5?

   1. NO Go to Question 7 ☐
   2. YES Proceed with question 2 ☐

2. Which children?			
3. What arrangements have been made?			
4. Why have these arrangements been made?			
5. How frequently are these arrangements made?			
6. Are these arrangements satisfactory? If not satisfactory give reasons.			

END OF QUESTIONS FOR THOSE PARENTS MAKING CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN OVER 5

7. Do you want to make any arrangements?

   1. NO Go to Section G ☐
   2. NOW ☐
   3. LATER Proceed with question 8 ☐

8. Which children?			
9. What type of arrangement(s) do you want?			
10. How frequently would you use these arrangements?			
11. What is the main reason for wanting to make these arrangements?			

PART G : General

1. When you want transport do you usually:

   1. Have access to your own vehicle which you drive yourself? ☐
   2. Have access to a vehicle only when your partner is around? ☐
   3. Negotiate with your partner for use of the vehicle when you want it? ☐
   4. Have to rely on public transport for all transport requirements? ☐
   5. Other - state ☐

2. Is transport a problem?

   1. NO ☐
   2. YES ☐

3. When you want to make a child minding arrangement at short notice can you call upon:

	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
1. Relatives ☐			
2. Friends ☐			

4. Would relatives or friends be able to provide reliable and regular long term care if you needed it. For example, if either you or your children were sick or you were unable to use usual child care arrangements.

   1. NO ☐
   2. YES ☐

5. During the time that you and your partner are together with your children do you think that your partner

   1. Shares equally in the care of the children ☐
   2. Could do more ☐
   3. Not applicable ☐

PART H : Change and Choice of Present Child Care Arrangements

1. If you had the opportunity to use the services of your choice would you change your present child care arrangements for any of your children?

   1. NO Go to Section I ☐
   2. YES Proceed with question (2) ☐

2. Which children	What arrangements would you make

3. What would you do with your time?

4. Given your present circumstances, how do rate your chances of being able to do what you have described in question (3)?

   1. Very Good ☐
   2. Fair ☐
   3. Unlikely ☐

5. What problems would you have to overcome in order to carry out your intended activity.

   1. Describe those problems associated with arranging suitable child care

   2. Describe any personal, family or other problems

PART I : Future personal plans after all children are at school.

1. Do you ahve any plans to do something once all your children are at school?

   1. NO — Go to Section J ☐
   2. Dont Know — Go to Section J ☐
   3. YES — Proceed with question 2 ☐

2. What do you intend to do?_____

3. What child care arrangements do you think you will need to make in order to carry out your intended activity?

_____

_____

4. What problems would you have to overcome in order to carry out your intended activity?

   1. Describe those problems associated with arranging suitable child care

_____

_____

   2. Describe any personal family or other problems

_____

_____

PART J : Service Use, Preferences and Attitude Scale

1. Which of the following types of child care arrangements have you used since having children?

1. Pre-School	☐	6. Family Day care	☐
2. Occasional Care	☐	7. Minding with relative & friends	☐
3. Long Day Care (Community Based)	☐	8. Baby sitting club	☐
4. Long Day Care (Private Centre)	☐	9. Play Group	☐
5. Private Child Minding in minders home	☐	10. Other	☐

2. Is there any special care arrangement which you would not particularly like to place your child in? Give your main reason first.

_____

_____

3. If the government was to make more money available for child care facilities, which service would you like to see expanded? Give your main reason first

_____

_____

4. Finally I would like to get your reaction to several statements. Based on your experience and the way things are going for you now, would you tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following?

	Agree	Disagree
(a) There's little use in writing to public officials because often they are not really interested in the problems of the average person.	____	____
(b) Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.	____	____
(c) In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average person is getting worse.	____	____
(d) Its hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future.	____	____
(e) These days a person doesn't really know who he or she can count on.	____	____

APPENDIX 5

Queanbeyan Child-Care Pamphlet

MULTI-LINGUAL INFORMATION CENTRE

Farrer Place
Queanbeyan, 2620
Phone: 976110

Service Provided: Play activities are available for children whilst parents are engaged in other activities such as sewing or seeking information. Please enquire at the Centre if you are interested in attending a playgroup with your child/children.

NURSING MOTHERS' ASSOCIATION

Meetings: South Queanbeyan Neighbourhood Centre, 181 Cooma Street, Queanbeyan.

Times: Every 2nd Wednesday night of each month; every 2nd Thursday morning of each month.

Coffee Morning: Every 4th Thursday morning.

Phone: 975602.

Service Provided: This group offers support and encouragement to mothers who wish to breast feed and with general mothering and child-rearing for mothers with young babies.

LOUISA WOMEN'S REFUGE

Phone: 976070 — 24 hours.

Service Provided: A house to provide a safe place for women; women and children. If you need information on legal, financial, medical matters or just need to talk to someone in confidence.

Y.M.C.A.

Corner Cooma Street and Southbar Road
Queanbeyan, 2620

Phone: 972334

Services Provided: After school care — for Infant/Primary aged children, 3.15-5.30. Vacation care programmes. Gymnastics — from tiny tots to 11 year olds. Junior basketball. Callisthenics — a club for girls (music, exercise, dancing, singing, etc.).

LOCAL AGENCIES WHO CAN ADVISE YOU

- **The Department of Youth and Community Services**

  142 Monaro Street
  Queanbeyan, 2620
  Phone: 972954
  974469

A
8HV861
A8
S55

- **Queanbeyan Community Health Centre**

  Antill Street
  Queanbeyan, 2620
  Phone: 976733

- **Community Workers' Department**

  Queanbeyan City Council
  257 Crawford Street
  Queanbeyan, 2620
  Phone: 980285.



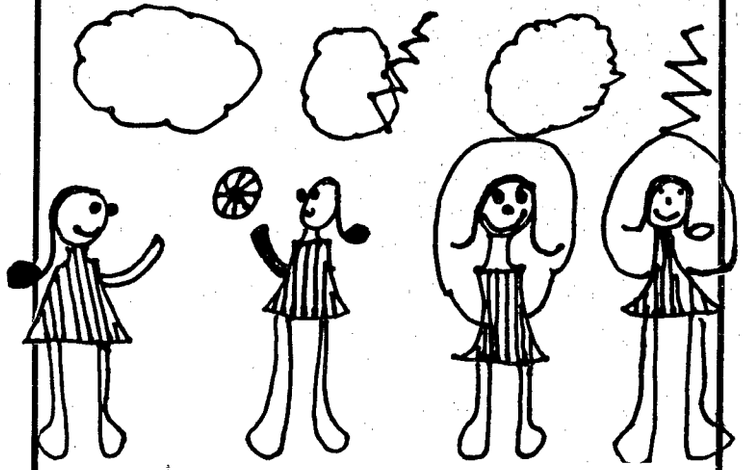
THE AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Queanbeyan Age Print — 97-3033

Do You Know



about child care services in your area



THE AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

INFORMAL GROUPS

Queanbeyan and surrounding areas have a number of groups operating as playcentres, playgroups and family education centres, all involving parents and children in different ways.

To join an existing group please telephone the contact person listed.

To form a group of your own to operate in the way you and your friends/neighbours wish, contact Rosemary Curry — 971292 — Field Officer for Playgroups and Family Education Centre, or Chris Sullivan — 972297.

SUTTON PLAYGROUP
Operates: Sutton Town Hall
Contact: Lyn Vollmer 303357

CAPTAIN'S FLAT PLAYGROUP
Operates: Local Hall Tuesday mornings.
Contact: Verve Rawson 366245

BUNGENDORE PLAYGROUP
Operates: School of Arts Tuesdays 9-12
Contact: Susan Brady 381469

MICHELAGO PLAYGROUP
Contact: Cheryl Kenyon 359156

QUEANBEYAN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP
Operates: C. of E. Hall, Rutledge Street.
Contact: Alison Seymour 976376

SOUTH QUEANBEYAN PLAYGROUP
Operates: South Queanbeyan Pre-School Friday afternoon.
Contact: Caroline Greenland 975294

SMALL FAMILY EDUCATION PLAYCENTRES
Home Family Education Groups are operating in Queanbeyan — for information contact Field Officer: 971292 or 972297.

SOUTH QUEANBEYAN NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE GROUP
Operates: Tuesdays a.m.
Contact: 971128.

FAMILY DAY CARE PLAYGROUP
Operates: Family Day Care Premises — Wednesday a.m.
Contact: 970284.

WEST QUEANBEYAN PLAYGROUP
Operates: West Queanbeyan Neighbourhood Centre Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
Contact: 974804

CHILD CARE CENTRES

(Licensed with Department of Youth and Community Services)

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

These offer a range of services which include: occasional, part-time and full-time care; emergency care.

● Bungendore Neighbourhood Children's Centre

Turallo Terrace
Bungendore, 2621
Phone: 381423
Ages: 2-5 years
Hours: 9.00-5.00 Mon, Wed, Fri.

● West Queanbeyan Neighbourhood Centre

3-5 McKeahnie Street
Queanbeyan, 2620
Phone: 974804
Ages: 0-5 years
Hours: 8.30-5.30 Mon to Fri.

● South Queanbeyan Neighbourhood Centre

181 Cooma Street
Queanbeyan, 2620
Phone: 971128
Ages: 0-5 years
Hours: 8.00-6.00 Mon to Fri.

LONG DAY CARE

● Kiddies Corner

21 Campbell Street
Queanbeyan, 2620
Phone: 974359
Ages: 2-5 years
Hours: 8.00-5.30 Mon to Fri.
Service Provided: Full-time, part-time and occasional care with a prepared mid-day meal.

PRE-SCHOOLS

Children attend a combination of morning and/or afternoon sessions.

● White Rocks Pre-School

YMCA Centre
Corner Cooma Street and Southbar Road
Queanbeyan, 2620
Phone: 973244
Ages: 3-5 years
Hours: 9.00-3.30 Wed and Thurs; 9.00-12.00 Fri.

● South Queanbeyan Pre-School

27 Alanbar Street
Queanbeyan, 2620
Phone: 973850
Ages: 3-5 years
Hours: 9.00-3.30 Mon to Fri.

● Harris Park Pre-School

Isabella Street
Queanbeyan, 2620
Phone: 971689
Ages: 3-5 years
Hours: 9.00-3.30 Mon to Fri.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Carers look after up to four children from birth to school age (including their own) in the carer's home. Sometimes they also care for older children before and after school and in the school holidays. Carers belong to a local scheme which is administered by a co-ordinator who supervises the selection of carers, the placement of children and provides support and advice.

● Queanbeyan Family Day Care Scheme

Queanbeyan Park
Phone: 980283

APPENDIX 6

Developing a Regional Children's Service Strategy

Resource allocation under the submission model

Since the inception of the Child Care Act in 1972, successive Labor and LNCPC governments have used community submissions as the major allocation mechanism for the funding of services under the Children's Service Program. Through the submission model, community groups are given the opportunity to apply for funds for children's services by written submission to the Office of Child Care, Department of Social Security. Based on the case put forward by the community, and the government's own priorities, funds may be allocated by the Minister for Social Security either under the Child Care Act or under Ministerially determined guidelines.

The major advantage of the submission model is that it fosters community participation in decision making and service provision. Costs can also be reduced if there is a significant voluntary component built into service provision. Submission funding enables the government, if it so desires, to allow the community to set the pattern in determining policy initiatives, and by analysing changes in community submissions, the government can adapt policy according to demand. The disadvantages of the submission model are generally recognised as being that it favours the most organised and articulate members of the community and

not necessarily those most in need. Unskilled management can lead to increased costs and impairment of effective service delivery. In addition, much of the effort on the part of the Office of Child Care is diverted away from policy making to routine administration in the processing of submissions.

To overcome some of these problems, the Office of Child Care has appointed Children's Service Development Officers to assist in the submission process. However, their role is principally one of advising services seeking assistance, rather than being directly involved in allocation and management decisions. The internal review of the Children's Services Program (The Spender Report) conducted for the Minister of Social Security in June 1981 acknowledged the problems associated with the submission model.[1] The report urged that the Office of Child Care adopt a more active role in identifying areas of need and in assisting to develop programs to meet these needs.

What follows is a discussion on how the development of a Regional Children's Service Strategy could be used to overcome some of the problems associated with the

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1. Review of Childrens Services Program unpublished Mimeo June 1981, pp. 19-20, paras (54-56).

submission model of resource allocation. Emphasis is placed on the identification of priority regions and the procedures for administering and assisting these regions.

Regional Policy Options

The regional strategies outlined in this paper assume greater involvement by the Federal government in the allocation of resources for Children's Service Programs. While community submissions would still be maintained as the basis for funding applications, the Federal government in co-operation with state and local authorities, would become directly involved in project assistance to these regions as required.

Regionalisation of the Children's Service Program is put forward within the framework of two policy options.

(1) Regionalisation through a central management model of resource allocation

(2) Regionalisation through a regional management model of resource allocation.

The Central Management Model

Under this model, the Office of Child Care would perform all program planning and implementation functions. The regions would simply be statistical units to assist in a

centralised planning process. The Office of Child Care would divide each state into planning regions. The regions would be ranked on the basis of selected indicators and priority regions identified. Once priority regions were established, the Office of Child Care would invite community groups residing within these regions to develop project submissions within defined program guidelines. Should there be a lack of response from priority regions, special project officers would be assigned to assist in the development of appropriate submissions.

Selecting Planning Regions

Local government areas are recommended as the most useful units for the development of a regional strategy for the following reasons:

- Regional boundaries for local government areas are already well established.
- Some local governments already have a responsibility for child care functions.
- Local government areas can be tied to census data.
- If necessary, local government areas can be broken down by wards to highlight intra-regional variation in service provision and need.

Ranking Regions

To assist in ranking regions, Children's Service Planning Directories need to be developed for each region. These directories would be based on existing information collected through the National Data Base supplemented by other indicators relevant to the development of Children's Services. Some of the indicators which could be included are:

(1) Demographic data for individual and aggregate age groups (0-12 years).

(2) Service data from the National Data Base.

(3) The level of federal, state and local assistance broken down by program and budget item for each region.[2] Negotiations between the Office of Child Care, state and local government authorities would be necessary to achieve this objective.

(4) Selected Social and Economic data relating to the distribution of

- Special need groups
- Employment data
- Income levels
- Interagency support.

An important feature of the directory would be the use of maps to highlight the distribution of key data. Once the directories had been compiled accurate ranking of regions

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2. Budget items refer to expenditure on items such as capital, staff, equipment, subsidies and other major items of expenditure.

could proceed. The directories would need to be developed over a period of time, possibly 1-2 years depending on resources. Basic information on population service ratios could be extracted from the National Data Base and census data to facilitate identification of priority regions and decision making in the interim period.

Program Planning and Implementation

To enable the Office of Child Care to proceed with forward planning, the development of the Children's Service Program within a rolling four year expenditure plan is recommended.[3] The present system of annual budget submissions makes forward planning an almost impossible task.

Currently any committment to new initiatives, and even to maintaining current programs, cannot proceed with any confidence until after the annual budget is brought down. An expenditure plan which committed the government, at least in principle, to a minimum level of expenditure over a four year period would provide the basis for a more rational planning approach. Using its regional strategy as

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3. A 'rolling plan' is a process which can take into account the need to revise program commitments by adding on an additional year to the program after the first year has been reviewed.

the basis for the preparation of budget estimates the Office of Child Care should submit a Children's Services Program to Cabinet with the overall objective of progressively upgrading services in priority regions. On the basis of Cabinet decisions the Children's Service Program could be adjusted and budget ceilings for each program component set accordingly.

Program Implementation

In the light of revised program estimates, the Office of Child Care would issue new guidelines and instructions to existing services and intending applicants for the next financial year. Program guidelines could include:

(1) A summary of Cabinet decisions regarding budget estimates for the next four years.

(2) Policy guidelines stating proposed levels of expenditure. These guidelines would highlight the direction the Office of Child Care intended to take on growth and rationalisation within the Children's Service Program. A list of priority regions could be included.

(3) Submission guidelines.

Submission Guidelines

The submission guidelines would aim at standardising the submission process and linking submissions to key budgeting and planning deadlines within the Office of Child Care. The guidelines should include notification:

(1) that all submissions for additional funds or new services must be forwarded to the Office of Child Care by a set date

(2) that instead of preparing a full project submission, projects would be placed on a design list for design approval. The objective of the design list is to give submission writers the opportunity to float their proposals without going into detail and wasting time if their project is deferred or rejected. The advantages to the Office of Child Care are that; it is able to pursue projects which it considers worthwhile, assess the extent to which its policy guidelines are being adhered to and reduce the tension which is often created when community groups, who have put considerable time and effort into their submission, find that their proposal is rejected.

(3) that special attention should be given to the establishment of out-reach functions within services to improve the access of special need families to child care services.

(4) that only those submissions receiving design approval should proceed to the full design stage. However, a statement to the effect that projects given design approval are not necessarily guaranteed funding needs to be made. Standardised forms for design approval should be developed.

The Regional Management Model

The process of planning and resource allocation should considerably improve with the adoption of a regional strategy. However, the heavy reliance on centralised decision making proposed in the first model raises a number of questions concerning the future of community participation. In addition, problems currently affecting

the allocation and management of the Children's Service Program at the regional level will still go largely unresolved if a centralised strategy is adopted.

Community Participation

The Children's Service Program has been based on community participation for almost a decade. If the Office of Child Care is to play in increasingly interventionist role in priority setting and service implementation, care will need to be exercised in order to avoid criticism that the government is abolishing the right of the community to set its priorities and manage its own affairs. The role of community groups must be acknowledged and a system developed which enables them to continue to express their needs and participate in the management of services if they wish. Centralised control of a regional program does not necessarily foster the conditions necessary for greater understanding between the Office of Child Care and community groups.

If decisions concerning resource allocation and management are to be regionalised then a framework for community participation must be drawn up in conjunction with the regional process. Community groups within a region must be given the opportunity to participate in priority setting

and decision making if they are to adopt a regional view. This is an important pre-requisite if a regional strategy is to be recognised as a legitimate planning procedure.

Calls from the Office of Child Care for co-operation, and priority funding for specific groups, are unlikely to be given much attention unless there is some attempt to develop agreement within each region. The lack of any organisational framework to foster agreement between services operating in the same area is one reason why present calls for rationalisation are not being heeded. The establishment of Regional Children's Service Management Groups which incorporate community interests and the major administrative and funding agencies would ensure that the principle of community participation was protected. The Management Authority would provide the organisational basis for developing the co-operation necessary for the rational planning of Children's Services.

Other Issues

(1) Maintaining a Data Base - Under a centralised model of regional administration the extent to which the bureaucracy can respond to localised community needs without detailed knowledge of local conditions is questionable. While the development of a Children's Service

Planning Directory may overcome some problems, the collection of detailed service and demographic information will depend on local services supplying this information.

The Regional Management Group could perform a number of data collection and reporting functions to assist the Office of Child Care to keep abreast of demographic and social changes in each region. The updating of the Children's Service Planning Directory could become a primary function of each Management Group.

(2) Effective Management - Although the Office of Child Care insists on proof of an effective management structure before allocating funds to projects, the reliance on volunteers to fill key management positions often hinders effective service provision. Personality conflicts, ideological differences and problems of administration are factors which most services have to cope with at one stage or another. Unfortunately for some services, these problems often go unchecked until the very existence of the service is threatened. Closer contact between services and those with the power and skills to assist in problem situations is required if effective service provision is to be fostered. Officers administering Children's Service Programs usually lack detailed knowledge of the management problems of individual services because of the large areas they are required to administer. A Regional Management

Authority with the power and necessary skills to assist services could do much to improve the mangement and delivery of services.

Rationalising Service Usage

Greater flexibility in the use of existing services is required in some areas to meet the demand for children's services brought about by changing demographic and social conditions. Many services which were originally funded as single purpose services now find that they are under pressure to diversify their functions.

Implementing a rationalisation program will be no easy task. However, if rationalisation is to develop past the stage of calls to 'make services more relevant to the community's needs', the services operating in an area must be encouraged to discuss the issue on a collective basis. The lack of any forum for services to discuss the principle of rationalisation will only further delay its implementation. A Regional Management Authority representing the interests of all services operating within an area would provide the organisational basis from which the issue ot rationalisation could be pursued.

Implementing a Regional Management Authority Strategy

The Office of Child Care should hold discussions with state and local government authorities notifying them of its intentions and seeking their assistance in implementing a regional program. It would be preferable if State Planning Committees could be established to oversee the implementation of the program. As part of its brief, each committee could work towards the rationalisation of state and federal Children's Service Programs. Consideration should be given to transferring a range ot financial and administrative functions to the committees.

Once the operational basis of the committees was established each committee would prepare a program to launch the development of Children's Service Management Groups in every local government region. A discussion paper outlining the objectives, functions and phasing of Regional Management Groups should be circulated to all children's services and community groups. The principle objective of the discussion paper would be to outline the need for the establishment of an interim committee within each region to discuss the proposals put forward.

General and Specific Objectives

The Management Group would provide the link between the State Planning Committee, existing services and those organisations wishing to establish new services within each region. Services, unless otherwise specified, would not have direct access to the Office of Child Care, state or other local funding sources. The submission model would still operate at the community level, however, instead of going direct to the responsible funding agency, submissions would pass through the Management Group and be incorporated into a more coherent regional plan for submission to the State Planning Committee.

The Management Group would be responsible for assisting in the development of a Regional Children's Service Program within the context of the following objectives:

(1) To identify existing resource allocation and develop a Children's Service Planning Directory.

(2) Using the Directory as a base, assess existing and future child care needs in the region.

(3) Examine the prospects for meeting these needs through rationalisation of existing services.

(4) On the basis of the information and resources available, prepare a Regional Children's Services Plan, sections of which would form the basis for future funding submissions.

Preparation of the Regional Plan

The State Planning Committee needs to decide whether it is going to rely on existing management skills within each region to pursue the process of regional planning, or commit resources to assist Management Groups. If no assistance is offered, and the allocation of resources is to be based on the ability of communities to produce regional plans, the system will again favour the articulate. Except this time, those with knowledge and management skills are likely to be more powerful than before.

The State Planning Committee should consider funding a position of Administrator to co-ordinate the development of planning within each region on a case by case basis. Some regions may be able to fill this position from existing positions and only require limited financial assistance. Without the position of administrator, potential contributers to the development of a regional plan, many of whom will already be heavily involved in administering existing programs, are unlikely to see much merit in further extending their activities without management support. An offer by the State Planning Committee to fund a position of administrator could produce a more positive attitude towards the development of a regional plan.

Funding of the administrator could be made conditional on the development of a plan over a period of 12-18 months. The costs of the administrator could be shared by the Office of Child Care, the relevant state department and local government. The position would be reviewed after the submission of a regional plan.

Devolution of Financial and Administrative Powers to the Management Authority

Given that the management authority will be expected to undertake a considerable work load in the preparation of a plan, the Authority will expect, and should receive, something in return for its efforts. The 'trade-off' could be the devolution of selected administrative and financial powers to the Management Authority on completion and subsequent approval of a regional plan. The functions to be transferred should be determined by the policy objectives of the Office of Child Care and State governments. While each region should be given the opportunity to accept or defer functions according to its management capacity the Office of Child Care, in conjunction with the State Planning Committees, needs to clearly distinguish between regional functions, those it is prepared to decentralise and central functions, those it wishes to retain. The division of central and regional functions should be a matter for consideration after State Planning Committees have had time to review the nature and feasibility of regional plans.

Approval and Implementation of Management Plans

Depending on the arrangements worked out between the Office of Child Care and the State Planning Committees, the Planning Committees would be responsible for approving regional plans. Any requests from the regions for additional funding or changes to federal functions would be considered by the Planning Committee within the context of annual program, planning and implementation guidelines. The Planning Committee would have a specified degree of autonomy over management decisions and could expedite the planning process by referring only major policy issues to State and Federal Ministers.

The role of the Office of Child Care would change from one of administering individual projects to providing executive assistance to the State Planning Committees for the development of regional programs. Where central functions were concerned, the Office of Child Care would follow the administrative procedures discussed earlier in Program Planning and Implementation Guidelines.

Problems involving the interaction between government, regional authorities and the community will not disappear if a regional management strategy is adopted. Any attempt to impose order on competing interest groups will result in some conflict no matter how good a planning system might

be. The choice is not between which system will eliminate conflict, but which system is best able to manage competing community interests and, at the same time, ensure a just distribution of government resources. It is with these objectives in mind that the proposals for a regional management approach to resource allocation have been put forward.

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Following the recommendations of the examiners,I submit the following statement as an attachment to my concluding chapter.The statement addresses the achievements of the study in terms of its contribution,from an empirical perspective,to the literature on community provision of services and the determinants of access.This statement should be read in conjunction with my written response to related questions put to me as part of my oral examination.

In 1980 when I commenced this research the debate surrounding the use of community in the provision of social services,and child care in particular,was primarily directed at attempting to explain the discrepancy between the aim of stated government policy and the results the policy was achieving in practice.

As noted by Sweeny and Jamrozik (1984:3),the debate lacked focus because very few indepth surveys had been carried out on the need for and use of child care services among the target groups of government child care policy.The lack of empirical case studies also applied to the related area of community formation and its role in social service delivery.

In sum,at the time I commenced my research,the need in the child and community care debate was not for more impressionistic discussion on the relationship between government policy prescriptions and child care use,but for more detailed empirical analysis of child care use and need among households reflecting a range of social and economic circumstances.Without data to distinguish prescription from practice,the debate surrounding the utilisation of community

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care services as a stategy for achieving greater equality would continue to be conducted within the rigidities of conservative and social democratic the welfare ideologies.

Against this background I decided that the principal focus of my research and,hence its contribution to the literature on community social service provision, should be an indepth empirical analysis which took into account:

(a) the relationship between policy objectives,child care use and need and the social and economic characteristics of households as they impacted on the access to child care.To this end,a comprehensive household survey of child care use and need was undertaken,the results of which are detailed in chapters 3,4 and 5.

(b) the relative strengths and weaknesses of community formation and management in the operation of a community based child care service (Chapter 6).

It was not my intention to be atheoretical in my approach to describing the problems of access to child care and the process of community management of social services.Indeed,chapters 1 and 7 deal specifically with the theoretical basis of community formation and the notion of equality.However, I consider the main strength of my research to be the attention given to detailing the child care household survey and the Melba Flats community study.These two studies provided me with what few other analysts of community social services and child care had at

the time;an empirical framework from which to evaluate the major policy and ideological asumptions governing community social service provision.In this context I argue that my research approach was both appropriate and revealing.

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The literature on access to social services suggests that access is determined by a range of processes, predominantly socio-economic status, public policies affecting the access of various population groups, and other personal factors. I would like Mr Simpson to re-examine the issues raised in Chapter 5 of his thesis, which discusses public and personal aspects of access to child care. In his re-analysis, I suggest that he reconsider his categorisation into "personal" and "public" determinants of access, and determine which of these are more appropriately identified as public policy and market systems of allocation, and which may continue to be seen as personal determinants. Where do locational or spatial issues fit in this analysis? 1-3

Please comment further on your depth of understanding of the concept of community care, in the context of the contemporary debate and critique of current practice.

In Appendix 6 there is a fairly lengthy argument for the delivery of social services (in the case for children) on the basis of the community submission process. In Chapter 7 (the concluding chapter), however, the candidate says the community submission process does notappear to have had much impact on low income families, and implies that the real challenge is to combat the "ideology of inequality". I would like Mr Simpson to tell me how he would now resolve this apparent conflict. 4-20

What new insights into community organisation are provided by the Melba case study? Are your findings not merely a repetition of what is already well known? 21-22

Justify the length at which survey findings are reported, especially in Chapter 3, in the light of their relevance or otherwise to the central research questions. 23-25

Discuss your understanding of the critique of formal structured survey techniques, in the context of the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods in contemporary social science. 26-31

Discuss the sample design and conduct of the survey, as explained in Chapter 2, in relation to the criteria of representativeness and reliability.

Explain why you did not make more use of unstructured survey methods, abandoning conventional random sampling more explicitly (as you seem to have been forced to in practice)?

How do you explain and justify your case study in Chapter 6 as an application of participant observations (a method mentioned, briefly, but not subject to any real examination as an alternative or supplement to a structured survey)? 32-34

Only those references which do not appear in the thesis

QUESTION 1

1.0 In chapter 5 the question of who gets access to child care services was developed within a framework of identifying the public and personal determinants of access. The intention was to demonstrate that supply and demand and locational considerations, while playing an important role in determining access, were often secondary to the influence which the personal social and economic circumstances of households had an access. Hence, if child care policies were to focus on giving priority of access to special need households, particularly those on low incomes, priority had to be given to assisting them to resolve their personal social and economic circumstances as well as providing access to child care.

1.1 Against this background, the question I have been asked is to reconsider my classification of personal and public determinants of access, and assess which of these are more appropriately the result of public policy and market systems of allocation, and which many continue to be classified as personal determinants.

1.2 Essentially, as I perceive it, the challenge being presented to me is whether I acknowledge that so called personal access determinants; knowledge of services, vehicle ownership and income earning capacity, including the related questions of education and job skills (Chapter 3:90-105) are in fact simply an extension, at a personal level, of access to opportunities determined by public policy and market systems of allocation. Obviously if I am to be consistant in my critique of those who believe that opportunity is solely determined by the effort individuals are prepared to invest in pursuing wealth (2.25) I have to agree that an individual's 'starting handicaps' are primarily determined by his or her access to 'positional goods' Hirsch (1976) which are themselves a product of public policy and market systems of allocation.

1.3 For example, income earning capacity depends on the availability of employment and, employment, on job skills which in turn, is determined by educational opportunity. Jobs, income and education in western

systems of allocation. Take education. The state sets education policy and the market, which is a blend of public and private enterprise, allocates according to a range of eligibility criteria: residential location and capacity to pay being two of the most common determinants.

1.4 Since both residential status and capacity to pay are related to income, and income to employment opportunity, which is primarily a function of government policy and market forces; can it be argued that what is personal is really public? If one follows a Marxist line that social relations - the end product of social and economic activity - are determined by the ownership of the means of production, and that these are concentrated in the hands of the state and those who control the market place, even the more complex issues of personal access (Chapter 5) can be tied back to public policy and market considerations.

1.5 While I have no argument with the view that poverty is directly related to inequality in the ownership of the means of production, I still feel that some distinction between public policy and market systems of allocation and those acquired characteristics which convey personal advantage to individuals needs to be made. It may be government policy and the market system which bestow advantage and disadvantage, but is is the individual who is the ultimate recipient.

1.6 Highlighting the personal characteristics of households should not be seem as an attempt to negate the need for redressing the inequalities inherent in public policy or the market place, but as illustrating at a personal level, the issues government policy and the market have failed to address. I acknowledge that this line of argument would have provided much more substance to chapter 5.

1.7 Similarly, the locational dimension of access to child care can also be linked to government policy and the market system of allocation. The case study of public assess to child care in East Queanbeyan clearly demonstates this. Government policy dictates a threshold [illegible] can be located in the area, hence the

area has no child care services. Further, access to services in West Queanbeyan by East Queanbeyan residents is severely restricted by lack of a public transport system because transport, which is determined by private market forces, is considered uneconomic. Under these circumstances, it is a little difficult to argue that locational considerations, in this case distance from child care and transport services, are themselves not the end product of public policy and market considerations.

QUESTION 2

2.0 Chapters 1 and 7 summarize what I considered to be the key elements of the contemporary debate and critique of community social service provision, rephrased in this question as community care, in the context of the development of child care policy in Australia.

2.1 As I perceive it, the debate surrounding the emergence of community care as a social policy issue focuses on five primary issues:

a) Whether the notion of community, as expressed in conservative and social democratic welfare ideology, has validty in contemporary western urban society? (Pinker 1982, Bryson and Thompson, 1972, Bryson and Mowbray 1981)

b) The increasing concern by the critics of conservative governments who view the introduction of community care as an attempt to reduce the role of the State in the public sector and place responsibility for social service provision in the hands of the market, the family and, more particularly, women (Cox 1983, Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1984, Cass 1982, Baldock 1983, Walker 1983).

c) Whether in the light of past experience, the promotion of community care as a social policy initiative has done anything to further the socialist ideal of achieving greater equality within society, or whether in the absence of income redistribution, it is simply a strategy of dreamers (Le Grand 1983).

d) Determining the best course of action for community care given the lack of any viable alternative, in the present political and economic climate, for the delivery of social services.

.2 In Chapter 7 I also address the public and personal determinants of access to services which I believe to be central to the community care debate. However, unlike the other issues, access considerations do not feature prominantly in the literature; an omission which I believe to have an important bearing on the reasons why community care services often fail to reach those most in need. This issue is taken up in my examination of the critique on possible courses of action for the community care movement (d).

.3 The validity of the notion of 'community' in welfare ideology. Because the notion of community is firmly embedded in the welfare ideology of both conservative and social democratic governments (Chapter 1, 36-39) and the current emphasis within western democratic society for fiscal constraint in the public sector favours shifting the responsibility for welfare from the State to the community (Pearson, 1983, Willmott, 1984, Croft, 1986), the question of whether 'the community' is the most appropriate platform for launching social service policy initiatives has been largely ignored by policy makers in recent literature.

.4 In my opinion the reason for this is that governments from both the right and left of the political spectrum are now so bound up politically, administratively and financially to community care that to question the foundations of the strategy presents in the words of Pinker 'an intellectual impass' for policy makers (Pinker 1982, cited in Barclay Report 1982). Walker also reaffirms this view:

> 'the term is here to stay - it is far too convenient and carries too many comfortable and compelling images for politicians and policy makers ever to dispense with it. (1986:4)

.5 The 'impass' which I drew attention to in Chapter 7 (p. 287, para 2) presents problems to those who wish to highlight that the term 'community' has been sanctified with properties it does not possess: concensus as opposed to conflict (Neuwirth 1969); altruism as opposed to self interest (Pinker 1982); personal as opposed to impersonal

care (Department of Social Services:(1979); power sharing as opposed to incorporation (Mowbrary 1983). Does this then mean that any critique of the 'sharing caring community' is irrelevant, particularly if it is being ignored?

2.6 The answer is no and the reason is that these issues are only now coming to the forefront of social policy debate. For example, much of the literature published on community right up to the 1980's has, for the most part, been positive, with the primary focus being on how to 'fine tune' the process, rather than questioning the fundamental ideology. Hence, like all social change, any shift in the perception of the value of community will be slow in coming.

2.7 Clearly the debate is widening, particularly now that feminist writers are focussing their attention on the gender implications of community care (see 2.12). However, it is not surprising that those who were the vanguard of the early critique (Pinker, Mowbray and Bryson) have become more vocal and trenchant in their criticism.

2.8 Pinker has expanded his proselytizing into the public domain through his involvement and subsequent dissention from the findings of the Barclay Report (1982) which argued a case for social workers to become directly involved in social care planning rather than in case work. This proposal has sparked off debate within the social work profession and Pinker's minority report which, among other issues, questions the philosophic underpinnings of community, has received close attention from the people most able to influence community care, namely social workers themselves. (Pearson, 1983).

2.9 Pearson (Op. cit.) in his critique of the Barclay Report has drawn attention to what he perceives as the 'illusion of community'. In particular, the emphasis given to the assumption that 'communities are cosily homogeneous', an attitude which 'flys in the face of everything we know about real communities' (Pearson, Op.cit.: 80-82). In an Australian context Mowbray (1983, 1985) is equally critical of the manner in which the term 'community' is used in sponsoring

> 'Its disarming positive force produces various convenient effects such as through its capacity to command reverence and command things it is attached to, and so militate against the likelihood of critical evaluation. (1983:240)

However, with the exception of feminist critics, the majority of those who are involved in the delivery of community care; primarily social workers, bureaucrats and those working for community service organisations, have little difficulty in perceiving the notion of community as a 'positive force ... beyond critical evaluation'.[1]

2.10 The issue of the need for critical evaluation is taken up by Willmott (1984) and Walker (1986). Willmott, in a paper titled Community in Social Policy warns of 'expecting too much from the community' and draws attention to the inherent problems of adopting a consensus view of community formation in today's fragmented society. In fact, despite Willmott's enthusiasm for pursuing the potential of community care, he notes in his final summation that:

> 'Without further evidence it is difficult to judge the balance of advantages and disadvantages, achievements and difficulties, in order to decide whether to take some particular (community) developments further. (1984:39)

Walker is more blunt in his assessment, arguing that failure to address the inherent contradictions in the notion of community and associated community care programs 'does not overcome conflicts but merely obscures the need to address them squarely' which, for Walker, is typical of welfare initiatives based around 'words that succeed and policies that fail' (Edelman, cited in Walker, Op. cit.: 5).

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1. In an Australian context examples of this literature are to be found in publications such as Impact published by the Australian Council of Social Services, The Australian Journal of Social Issues and The Social Security Journal published by the Department of Social Security.

The welfare state, community, the family and women

2.12 The ascendency of conservative governments in Great Britain and Australia in the mid-1970's sparked off a debate among theoreticians and practicioners of social policy which has as its focus the notion of community. Essentially this debate is about the related issues of reducing the role of the State and public expenditure by returning the responsibility for the provision of welfare services to the market place and the community.

2.13 The 1960s and 1970s saw social democratic governments in Great Britain and Australia firmly committed to social policies which emphasised the obligation of the State to maintaining the welfare of its citizens (Titmuss, 1968; Chapter 1, pp. 12-21., Appendix 1). However, according to its critics, with the rise of the radical right (Gough 1980) the whole issue of State responsibility for the provision of welfare is being 'rolled back' (Laurence 1983:18). In Britain Conservative efforts to divest government of the primary responsibility for welfare have been perceived as an attempt to 'restructure the welfare state' (Leonard 1979) while in Australia Graycar (1983) noted that the Fraser government's policies amounted to a 'retreat from the welfare state'.

2.14 In the 1980s restructuring and retreat have parallelled the rise of the notion of community care as the means of reducing the role of the State and public expenditure in social welfare (Willmott 1984, Walker 1986). However, as outlined in (2.4) the emphasis on community care is not the sole domain of conservative government. Social democrats are just as committed but for different ideological reasons. Whereas the social democratic tradition emphasises a state commitment to providing care in communities outside of an institutional setting, the conservitive strategy is designed to minimise State intervention in the market place and promote care by the community. In sum, the onus for care is transferred from the State to the community.

.15 The emphasis on care by rather than in the community has produced a variable response from factions within the right and left (Laurence 1983 22-29). The conservatives, and to some extent the left in both Australia and Great Britain, have split into factions popularly known as the 'wets' and 'drys'. The wets adhere to the traditional liberal principles of extending State support to the most needy to ensure that they do not become destitute, while the drys or 'radical right' are looking:

> beyond the potential for shared care between the formal and informal sectors to an ideal of completely non-formal provision. (Walker 1986:9)

.16 While the conservative notion to Whittaker and Gabarino (1983) is 'ideologically naive' Whittaker and Gabarino, 1983 at least there is concensus among the conservative factions for shifting welfare away from government to the community. The left cannot claim such unity and is characterised by what Laurence (1983:25-29) identifies as four different responses to the growth of community care.

The defensive or 'Knee jerk' response characterizes those who, in defence of the welfare state, reject community care outright. This is often the domain of radical professionals who see their jobs and professional status threatened by the voluntary sector.

Statists, those who adhere to the traditional socialist principle that the state has the primary responsibility to care for its people, have always viewed the role of community and voluntary action with suspicion and draw support from unionists who perceive volunteers as depriving someone else of work.

The anti statists are representative of the more radical left, sections of the women's movement and community action groups, who perceive the state as a mechanism for social control and have always fought vigorously in defence of their own sectional interests. A major tenent in their philosophy is the belief in the right to state subsidies but with minimal conditions.

The last response is what Laurence defines as pragmatic or a recognition that social democratic governments have themselves been moving towards a partnership between informal and institutional care since the 1960's. The challenge to the pragmatists is how to bring this merger about without reducing the quality of service delivery. This issue is taken up in more detail in 2.24.

2.15 By far the most serious challenge to traditional conservative and social democratic notions of community care is coming from the feminist critique. Finch (1984) summarizes the feminist perspective.

> 'In recent years, feminists have increasingly insisted on making explict the true meaning of community care ... for community read family and for family read women, and have rightly been suspicious of attempts to increase such community provisions, seeing them as part of the political agenda of getting women out of the labour market and back into the home, to provide unpaid health and welfare services for members of their own families (Finch, Op. cit: 6)

2.16 While much of the feminist critique has been about dispelling the myth of community care (Finch and Groves, 1983., Land, 1978., McIntosh, 1981., Baldock, 1983) more recently the debate, although not abandoning the need for achieving non-sexist alternatives to the present system of community care, now includes discussion on the identification of approaches which might minimise the exploitation of women as carers. These approaches involve: the expansion of domiciliary services, alternations in employment legislation modelled on maternity leave which would allow time off to provide care under special circumstances, income and institutional support for carers, and above all, the expansion of real jobs in the welfare sector (Finch 1984, Croft, 1986).

2.17 The question of women and employment has been a major focus in the feminist critique of community care. Cox 1983 has argued that the use of unpaid volunteers in community care 'blunts the need for the government to expand community sector services, while Cass, 1982., Finch and Grove, 1983 and Walker, 1986 perceive that community care

simply disguises the extent of unemployment among women by taking women out of the labour force.

2.18 For conservative ideologues, the drive by feminists and their supporters for more care, including wages for the carers, represents a real threat. Anderson (1981, cited in Laurence 1983:24) raises the fear about the 'hidden expansion' of welfare in voluntary agencies, and the reluctancy of the 'dries' to form any partnership between voluntary agencies because of the dangers of professionalism and unionism developing.

2.19 In a Australian context, Bryson and Wearing (1985) argue that part of the reason for the failure to recognize the relationships between community the family and women is due to the fact that early community studies in Australia (Wild, 1974., Oxley, 1974., Bryson and Thompson, 1972) were conditioned by pictures of male defined and dominated society. However, more recent studies (Williams 1981) have broken away from this tradition because community studies are now being carried out by women. According to Bryson and Wearing, community studies should became a major focus for women to ensure that a more balanced description of gender roles in community organisation is restored.

2.20 In responding to their critique, Wild (1985) argues that the gender debate in community is being carried too far

> 'Essentially Bryson and Wearing are attempting to replace one hegemonic position (studies of males in the public arena) with another equally hegemonic position (studies of females in the private arena) (Op. cit : 370)

For Wild, both positions are equally unproductive and the solution lies in examining the role of gender, both male and female, in community studies.

2.21 From my own perspective, as far as the community care debate is concerned, the feminist critique is by far the most intellectually challenging and constructive, particularly in terms of grappling with

the realities of community care. The feminist critique, if persued, may provide the basis for breaching Pinker's 'intellectual impass' which appears to have beset so many policy makers and politicians in their understanding of the role of community care.

Community Care as a strategy for achieving equality

2.22 Essentially I don't have much more to say on this issue. I feel that the argument presented in chapter 7 is an adequate summary of the problems faced by those who perceive social/community care services as being a focal mechanism for bringing about greater equality in the absence of complementary employment and income redistribution programs.

2.23 In drawing attention to the role of community in social policy Willmott (1984) persues the same theme

> 'It is now recognised that local community activity can do nothing fundamental about poverty. Poverty is mainly a result of low income and the existing distribution of wealth, income and opportunity (Op cit: 38)

Indeed, the major focus of the literature on Australian social policy in the 1980's is about income support and redistribution (Mendelsohn 1982, 1983., Edwards 1983) and employment (Encel and Garde 1984., Cass and Garde 1983., O'Brien, 1982). This is not to say that community care is perceived to be unimportant, but that employment and income redistribution are seen as more important factors in moving towards a more equal society.

Determining the best course of action

2.24 In outlining the debate and critique on current community care practice I also propose to cover the question of whether there is any conflict between my poposal for a regional approach to the delivery of childrens services, based on the submission model of resource allocation (appendix 6), and my critique of the use of community

services as a special policy initiative in persuing the strategy of equality (chapter 7)

2.25 I wish to take issue with the assumption made in question 2 that I perceive the 'real challenge' of the community care/social service debate is to combat the 'ideology of inequality' as enunciated in the view

> 'that the current destribution of resources and wealth is fair and just in that it reflects the affort individuals are proposed to invest in pursuing wealth (chapter 7:285)

Clearly, while I believe that the ideology of inequality is naive, in that it does not take into account the inequalities which individuals face in their access to social and economic opportunity, I do not feel that I have in anyway adopted the premise that the 'real challenge' in the debate over achieving greater equality is to combat the strategy of inequality. This is Le Grand's stance not mine. (Chapter 7, para 2:288). It was included in the text to emphasise Le Grand's position that nothing short of income redistribution will create a more equal society.

2.26 For me, the 'real challenge' as outlined in the concluding pages of chapter 7 (pp 286-289) is how to promote a more effective system of community social service delivery based on the submission process. Which, at the time, was the primary mechanism for delivering children's services in Australia. This challenge was taken up in appendix 6.

2.27 While I conceed that it would have been better to have proceeded directly to the issue of how a regional children's service strategy could be implemented, rather than obscuring it in an appendix, I feel that I have given sufficient acknowledgment to the fact that, although one may not agree with the current emphasis given to the primacy of community care, the notion is certainly here to stay. An issue emphasised by Bryson and Mowbray (1981) in Chapter 7, (para 2:288) and developed further by Walker (1986) and feminist critics such as Finch (1984) and Croft (1986).

.28 In sum, I maintain there is no conflict to resolve. I never sought to suggest, or in my view implied, that the real challenge was to combat the ideology of inequality. Rather, I acknowledged the political realities, of having to live with community care policies, with reservation, and set about demonstrating how one might improve the allocation and delivery of child care services through a regional management program which emphasised the decentralisation of administrative and financial authority (appendix 6).

.29 Appendix 6, Developing a regional children's service strategy was written in 1981 when, as a member of the Canberra Association of Community Based Children's Services I was asked to contribute a paper on how children's services could be more effectively administered by those formulating policy and allocating resources and those directly involved in the delivery of child care services In formulating what I termed 'a regional children's service strategy' I drew heavily upon my experience as a regional planner in Papua New Guinea when I had assisted in the decentralisation of political, administrative and financial power to the country's nineteen provinces.

.30 In my paper I argued that if the community submission model of service allocation, which was the primary mechanism used by state and federal govenment for allocation children's services, was to be more effective, a shift away from the highly centralised procedures for service allocation and management had to be made. Two alternatives were proposed

- Regionalisation through a central management model of resource allocation
- Regionalisation through a decentralised management model of resource allocation

It is not my intention to dwell on the recommendations I made in proposing each of these strategies, but to link my early work to what Price (1985) describes as the 'cliche of the moment' in community

> 'of greater arbitrariness in the allocation of resources reflecting the whims of individual workers in defining provision, the risk of increasing territorial injustice ... the fear that certain favoured client groups might receive excessive levels of resources, reflecting staff preferences, and the risk of loss of budgetary or policy control over the department. (Op cit: 40-111).

2.34 The issue of geographical and/or resources decentralisation goes to the heart of the debate raised in the the Barclay report (1982). Namely, whether social workers should concentrate on their traditional task of carrying out specialist case work or became more involved in social care planning by establishing links between informal community care networks and formal support services. Pinker (1982) and Pearson (1983) argued that the drive for a more generic approach to social work would lead to a depletion of the specialist skills which are required to deal with the diverse problems of the aged, youth, children and minority groups.

2.35 In his analysis of a community care scheme, focussing on a measure of resource decentralisation, Challis (1985) highlights the linkage between the specialist - genericist and the decentralisation debate. Challis argued that while the devolution of control over resources demonstated considerable improvements in the way community care was managed, delivered and received it was not necessarily true that resource and geographical decentralisation go hand in hand.

2.36 For Challis, resource decentralisation works best where the problem and target group is readily identified, expenditure constraints on autonomy are 'clear and unambiguous' and those involved in service delivery have a 'specialist rather then a generic background to community care. Geographical decentralisation, because of its generic approach to community care, has a more limited scope for setting limits and guidelines and therefore greater scope for emersing itself in the problems raised in 2.33.

2.37 The call by Challis for clear guidelines in resource devolution is consistant with the arguments I presented in appendix 6 on the

devolution of financial and administrative powers when I highlighted the need 'to clearly distinguish between regional and central functions' in the administration of a decentralised system of child care services (Appendix 6:367).

2.38 Obviously while decentralisation of community services has potential for the integration of formal and informal service networks and more effective delivery, there is considerable division as to the most appropriate method of doing so. Striking a balance between the all encompassing community generalist and the social work specialist is, as the Melba Flats case study demonstrates, crucial to the development of appropriate community care. The failure of the first community association coordinator to appreciate the child care needs of the residents (Chapter 6:253-255), could be attributed to both her idelogical stance on the provision of welfare services and her generalist training which in no way equipped her to deal with the problems of the women and children in the flats. The fact that the community association is now able to cater more effectively for the needs of women and children in the area is largely due to the efforts of specialst child care workers and the employment of a counsellor with experience in parent-child development.

2.39 From my own point of view, special need groups require special assitance. Unfortunately, this issue is often overlooked by community care enthusiasts, many of whom appear to be caught up in the administration of care rather than in its delivery.

2.40 If decentralisation is to be successful it is also important to recognize the need for 'maintaining an infrastructure of formal services' (Walker 1986:11). If governments persue the issue of decentralisation simply as a means of transferring the responsibility for community care to the informal sector, without providing the necessary support, the prospects for a decline in the quality of service provision becames very real.

2.41 One of the primary tenents of my thesis (Chapters 1 and 6) was that

need households, do not have the time, inclination or skills to provide an effective organisational base for the delivery of community care services. Hence, government must provide adequate resources in the form of funds, training, professional support and advice if the 'community' is to be able to cope with the challenge it is now being presented with. As Walker (1982) rightly points out, the notion of care by the community is unlikely to be successful unless their is care for the community.

2.42 Care for the community is central to the feminist critique. Unless the role of women as the primary providers of community care is acknowledged and measures taken to ensure that they are adequately supported, the drive toward decentralisation can only be seen as an extension of the exploitative process of community care.

2.43 To summarize, given the present political and economic conditions, community care is here to stay. The challenge is therefore how to make community care more effective. Decentralisation offers scope for more effective management and delivery of community care so long as the issues that have to be dealt with are clearly identified and those in the front line of service provision are adequately resourced and supervised.

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QUESTION 3

3.1 Against the preceding background I shall deal with the question which queries whether the Melba Flats care study provides any new insights into community organisation.

3.2 The primary purpose of conducting a case study of the management and operation of a community association was to give credence to my theoretical critique on community and my proposals for improving the allocation of children's services. In this context I feel that the Melba Flats case study adequately serves its purpose.

3.3 In terms of providing new insights into community organisation I make the following comments. When I commenced my research in 1980 I was very aware that there were few case studies of the formation and operation of community associations involved in the provision of child care (Sweeney and Jamrozik 1984:3). The major focus, at least in Australia, was on debating and describing alternative administrative arrangements for developing community services rather than describing the operations and problems of community associations per se (Chapter 1:21-27).

3.4 Given this situation, I felt that a major contribution to the debate on the promotion of community based child care services could be made by carrying out an indepth study of a community actually involved in the delivery of child care services. This tactic would, I assumed, provide me with a detailed insight into the problems and prospects of community formation as it applied to the management and delivery of child care and, in addition, provide a practical basis for evaluating the ideological assumptions surrounding the notion of community.

3.5 From a child care perspective, and in an Australian context, I would argue that the Melba Flats care study, at the time I was carrying out my field research (1981-82) provided me with the insights I required to consolidate the theoretical and policy questions I wished to address, and, if my insights weren't new, they certainly could not be said to follow a well worn path in the Australian critique of

For example, who in Australia in 1981 was challenging the notion of community, the capacity of special need groups to organise, the role of women in community care, and the administrative procedures for allocating resources. A review of the literature quickly establishes that other than for Bryson and Mowbray, the question of community care as a social policy has been, and still is, severely neglected. Mowbray, himself, has recently drawn attention to this issue when he pointed out that the ...

> 'major handicaps in overviewing community work include the absence of any national community work forum - organisation, conference or publication that might link a very diffuse occupational area' (1985:299).

3.6 In the above context, and given the time I was conducting my research, I feel that I am justified in claiming, while not in the forefront of providing new insights into community organisation, I had what few other critics had: empirical data which would allow me to address the question of community care in an Australian situation, rather than borrowing someone else's data from someone else's country. In this context I believe my Melba Flats case study did provide new insight into issues, which although reasonably well identified as points of debate outside of Australia, lacked an emprical basis in the Australian social policy context.

3.7 Finally, in having to defend myself against the assertion that 'my findings are merely a repetition of what is already well known', I feel I have became a victim of the 'publish or perish syndrome'. If I had published the findings of my Melba Flats care study in 1981 instead of in 1985. I feel that my research would have been acknowledged as being well up with the current debate, and, in an Australian context, an expose of a major social policy initiative, the impact of which was neither well known nor understood.

QUESTION 4

4.1 As outlined in 1.0 one of the principle research questions I wanted to address was that access to services was not simply a function of geographical location and the law of supply and demand. Other factors, such as the personal social and economic circumstances of households also had to be considered, particularly when attempting to improve the access of special need groups to services. The primary reason for wanting to make this point was that, inequality in Australia has primarily been perceived as the product of locational considerations and government response tailored accordingly. (Chapter 1:33-35)

4.2 When I commenced my research in 1980, a review of the literature mirrored this pre-occupation. Critics of Federal and State government child care policies constantly focussed on the need to maintain and increase service levels (Burns 1979, Cox 1978, Stamp 1980); the argument being, that this would guarantee access, particularly to those who had special needs. While I have no problem with the need for increased service provision in strategically located areas (Chapter 5:202-205) and, in fact, commenced my research with the intention of persuing a locational perspective, it soon became evident, when I come into contact with social workers in Queanbeyan and Melba Flats, that locational and demand and supply considerations were not the determining factors of access to child care for all families.

4.3 Based on advice from social workers, and the knowledge that questions relating to personal access did not feature in the literature on child care, I decided to pursue the issue. Clearly if I was going to examine the issue in any depth I would require detailed social and economic profiles of each household. My attention was also drawn to the issue that it was highly likely that many special need respondents might have difficulty in articulating their needs and detailed household profiles would at least provide some basis for placing their responses in perspective (Chapter 2:60, para 2). While I acknowledged

necessary to provide a comprehensive profile of the social and economic circumstance of households so that there would be a firm fundation for drawing out the relationships between the use and need for formal and informal care arrangements (Chapter 4).

4.4 Chapter 3 and 4 provided what few other critics involved in the child debate had at the time, empirical data with which to evaluate policy statements against performance. Sweeney and Jamrozik (1984) note that between the the inception of the Child Care Act in 1972 and 1982, the relationship between policy objectives and what was actually happening in 'the community' was not well understood.

> The growing extent in the use of child care and the issues this trend raised for the policy and provision of child care services have been widely noted in journals, articles and research reports. However, apart from the ABS surveys, surveys of the users of care have been usually conducted on small samples, and the issues identified in those surveys have not been explored or analysed to any great depth. (Sweeney and Jamrozik 1984:3)

4.5 Clearly, while I was not the only person concerned with the lack of indepth surveys on child care use and need, nor was I the only person looking at the relationships between policy statements and services delivery, (Dickson and Ferris 1978, Hoy 1979, Esteal 1980) I was one of a handfull of people who recognized the need to provide an empirical base for those who perceived.

> 'a descrepancy between the aim of the stated Government policy and the results the policy was achieving in practice' (Sweeney and Jamrozik 1984:3)

In sum, at the time I commenced my research, the need in the child care debate, and by association the community care debate, was not for more impressionistic description of the relationship been government policy prescriptions and child care use; but for a detailed empirical analysis of a range of households reflecting different social and economic circumstances and their relative access to child care. Chapters 4 and 5 provide this analysis, and while some may argue that it was excessive, I would argue that it was necessary.

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QUESTION 5

5.0 The contemporary critique of formal structured survey techniques has its origins in the historical debate over the value of positivism as the primary theoretical basis for describing society and social relations. Positivism, as expoused by nineteenth century social philosphers such as Mill, Conte and Popper (Bynner and Stribley 1978:2-25), was developed around the premise that scientific method should form the basis of the analyis of the casuality of social interaction and that this explanation could be utilised for deducing general principles of social behavior. This view was opposed by the anti-positivists such as Droysen and Weber (Opit:13) who

> 'rejected methodological monism ... and refused to view the pattern set by the exact natural sciences as the sole and supreme ideal for a rational understanding of reality (Van Wright 1978:13)

5.1 While the positivists and anti-positivists of last century were more concerned with the philosophical tenents of method, than with instrumentation, their ideologic positions have laid the foundations for the development of two separate approaches to conducting social science research, namely, quantitative and qualitative method. Of these approaches, quantitative methodology is strongly allied to positivist theory because of its linkages with statistical theory and mathematical modelling. According to its practicioners, it provides the instrumentation necessary to cut through 'the seemingly endlessly contestable character of social science' (Sayer 1984:158)

5.2 The appeal of quantitative methodology has been greatly enhanced by developments in statistical methods, mathematical modelling and data management in the post war period. A major feature of this quantitative revolution was the move away from descriptive to inferential statistics which, it is argued, provide verifiable relationships between variables and, more importantly, enable findings to be extrapolated to a wider population.

5.3 For this purpose, much attention was given to methematically determining the representative nature of survey populations so that the reliability and validity of the results could be statistically tested. Techniques such as correlation coefficients regression analysis and, to a lesser extent, cross-tabulation and contingency tables form the basis of inferential statistics. (Chadwick, 1984:Chapter 13)

5.4 While positivism and quantitative method have been the primary influence on social science research, it has by no means won universal acceptance and, since the mid 1960's, has undergone substantial critical review. The critique focuses on two fundamental issues. First, whether causality in social science can be adequately explained by the logic of scientific method (Sayer, 1984). Second, whether research method, particularly quantitative method, is itself the product of social theory and therefore subject to qualitative interpretation (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1981).

5.5 On the first issue, Sayer 1984 maintains that the mathematical foundations of scientific method are acausal.

> 'mathematical operations provide a way of calculating, deducing or deriving certain results from assumptions and data but not a way of causally explaining phenomena.' (Op. cit.:161)

Hence for Sayer, mathematics, and by association quantitaive method, is divorced from the primary objective of social science, to explain the causes of social interaction. Further, the major limitation of scientific method as an explanation of causality is its requirement for constancy in the system which is being investigated.

> 'If the mathematical functions are fitted to relationships which are not constant or which do not change in constant ways - i.e. if the system is open - then the model will not have much success at prediction.' (Op. cit.:165)

5.6 Since social activity is usually considered to be dynamic, in that behavior is constantly being modified and, inferentral analysis

requires constancy, analogous to the operation of a closed system, quantitative methods are considered by some to be inappropriate measures of assessing causality in social science.

5.7 The second part of the critique relates to the contention that research methods and the data they generate are developed within a particular theoretical tradition (Cicoural 1964, Phillips 1973). As such, it is difficult to maintain the stance that method, even quantitative method, is atheoretical or neutral in its application. Ackroyd and Hughes (1981) provide a number of illustrations on the relationship between research method and theory. For example, early British sociological surveys (Bowley and Burnett 1915, Hogg 1925) focussed on providing descriptions of social structure. These surveys were essentially factual descriptions of what was believed to be a static social fabric which could be utilised to highlight the condition of society and provide the focus for government intervention. The perception that factual descrptions of society were sufficient foundation for the intervention by government to alleviate poverty was consistent with the welfare ideology prescribed by the Fabian socialists and social liberalists who at the time, were the driving force behind social reform (Abrams 1951, Moser 1958).

5.8 In contrast to the English tradition of the primacy of the State in influencing social activity, social research in America, focussing on the primacy of the individual and free enterprise, was pre-occupied with behavioural research. Beliefs, attitudes, feelings and opinions in the American social context were seen as the means of predicting behaviour and guiding government and corporate strategies (Abrams 1951). Market and opinion research, utilising increasingly sophisticated statistical techniques, became the hallmark of American social science research in the 1930's and 1940's (Lazarfeld and Rosenberg 1955).

5.9 Perhaps the most explicit relationship between method and theory is to be found in qualitative social research method. Qualitative method is essentially 'anti-positivist', the basic tenent being

that causality in social relations is inadequately explained by inferential mathematical models.

> 'Qualitative methodology refers to those research strategies, such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, field work ... which allow the researcher to obtain first hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to 'get close to the data' thereby developing the analytical, conceptual and categorical components of explanation from the data itself - rather than from the pre-conceived, rigidly structured, and highly quantified techniques that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the operational definiations that the researcher has constructed' (Filstead 1971:6).

5.10 Qualitative research method was largely developed in the United States in the period between 1920-1940 by sociologists who perceived that authentic knowledge could only be provided by immediate experience and not by scientific method (Rock 1979). Foremost in promoting this theory and the methodology to develop it were the 'symbolic interactionists' who built their arguments around participant observation (Whyte 1955, Hughes 1958).

5.11 Symbolic interactionism developed out of the view that if the researcher was to gain true knowledge they had to personally interact with the people who were the object of study. Only by participating and observing could one gain a true insight into causality and reality. Unlike positivists, who saw their role primarily as the providers of data from which objective decisions about society could be made, interactionists were committed to change and reform. Hence the potential in the method for activism and conflict.

5.12 Ackroyd and Hughes (1981) note that the primacy of quantitative method in social research is a product of bureaucratisation and professionalism within government services and academic institutions and propose that: bureaucratic and professional mistrust of qualitative techniques is directly related to attempts to minimise activism and conflict and maintaining professional closure.

5.13 'When you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind.' (Lord Kelvin)

'When you can measure it, when you can express it in numbers, your knowledge is still of a meagure and unsatisfactory kind.' (Jacob Viner)

(Cited in Sayer 1984:158)

Is there a compromise? Smith (1985) believes there is. The problem is how to overcome the rigidity of quantitative method, its atheoretical approach and inappropriate use of formal survey design. Further, while quantitative approaches may have strong internal reliability their external validity is often weak. On the other hand, qualitative case studies 'exhibit a combination of strong external validity and weak reliability'. (Op. cit.:2)

5.14 For Smith the objective is to 'articulate both quality and quantity' and to combine 'validity and reliability'. Validity will stem from qualitative method while reliability from the 'rigorous designs, measurements and statistics of quantitative method'. The most appropriate approach to blending methodology, according to Ianni and Orr (1979), is to commence research with 'ethnographic and clinical fieldwork and use the results of these studies to clarify the analyses of the survey findings'. In this way quantitative research becomes 'grounded with site-specific validity' and avoids according to Baldwin and Baldwin (1978:346), 'hostility, sterility and discontinuity' in the critique of method in social science.

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QUESTION 6

6.0 Section 2.5 (Chapter 2) outlines my initial response to the issue of representativeness and reliability of my survey results.

> 'Since the total number of family types in each study area could not be reliably estimated, it was impossible to adhere to the usual conventions of statistical sampling by drawing a sample from a known population, calculating margins of error and determining the representative nature of the survey' (p. 65).

6.1 As implied but not made as explicit as it could have been, it was never my intention to claim that my survey findings were either representative or, in statistical terms, reliable. Essentially I saw the survey as providing information which could be interpreted as indicative of the issues and concerns of the households I was dealing with. The reason being, that all efforts to establish a sample population were frustrated by the lack of data on the target population, namely households with children under five. Indeed, it is worth noting that because of the difficulties in sample selection I deliberately avoided using the words 'sample population' so that the normal statistical inferences involved would not be made. Instead, I framed my analysis within the context of establishing a 'survey population' which would, I thought, give me greater latitude for interpretation.

6.2 Because of the field problems of proceeding with the conventions of standard survey design, and the time it took to establish the survey population, I chose to opt for the use of descriptive statistics which, through the analysis of individual families, could be documented and used indicitively to highlight the types of issues and problems which form the basis of the analysis presented in my research.

6.3 The question is whether, in the absence of being able to fulfill the requirements of establishing a sample population, the data I collected and the interpretations I made are of no consequence? I would strongly argue that my data and interpretations are of

consequence and, as stated elsewhere (3.5), the information provided a comprehensive empirical base from which to assess the relationship between child care needs, use of services and government policy.

The preceding discussion has relevance to the question of why I did not make more use of unstructured survey methods abandoning conventional random sampling more explicitly.

6.4 As outlined above, for the household survey, I did abandon conventional random sampling in favour of descriptive analysis, focussing on measures of dispersion and association commonly employed in non-parametric data analysis. The problem was, that by the time I realised that the 'elusive sample population' was not going to materialise, I was already well into my first year of research. To abandon my survey, as descriptive in application as it was, would have made little sense. Besides, as outlined in 3.4 I also saw merit in providing a comprehensive data base because of the lack of such data in the literature in child care.

6.5 In retrospect, with more care and time, there are a lot of changes I would make to the way I approached my survey method. For example, the approach outlined by Ianni and Orr (1979) of carrying out basic ethnographic and field studies prior to quantitative analysis would have been helpful.

This brings me to the final question: how I explain and justify my case study in Chapter 6 as an application of participant observation, a method mentioned briefly but not subject to any real examination as an alternative or supplement to a structured survey.

6.6 I feel that the major methodolgical problem in my thesis is not that the methods I used were inadequate for the task, but that the assumptions underlying their use were not made sufficiently explicit. This is equally true for the household survey and my treatment of the Melba Flats case study as a participant observer.

6.7 Although the relationship between participant observation and more formal quantitative techniques is only addressed in very general terms in Chapter 2, I did express the view that in order to describe community management a formal questionnaire would be inappropriate. Accordingly, I chose participant observation as the most suitable method (Chapter 2:69-71). The problem is, however, that in raising the legitimacy of participant observation I have been somewhat contradictory by minimising the discussion concerning my own role in the events which form the basis of the Melba Flats case study (Chapter 6).

6.8 This contradiction is a direct result of debate between my principle supervisor and myself over the legitimacy of participant observation as a research method. While it should be obvious that the Melba Flats case study was constructed around a series of observations and my 'less obvious' participation in events, I accepted the arguments of my supervisor, that to make my role explicit would be seen as relying on a technique which was 'soft, subjective and egotistical'. While I accept that I did not explore the literature on social research method as well as I should, I would like to add that I was not actively encouraged to do so.

6.9 As an application of the participant observation method, Chapter 6 is very strong on observation but weak on participation. This, as stated, was the end result of accepting advice that Chapter 6 would be perceived as being more objective and my research therefore more valid, if I deleted all reference to my own involvement in shaping the events which led to changes in the way the Community Association functioned and the establishment of the Day Care Centre.

6.10 In reality I played a major role in bringing about change to the management of the community and upgrading of child care. With hindsight, had I been better read on the theoretical foundations of participant observation I would have been more confident about describing and defending my role as a participant observer.