

TTPI

Tax and Transfer Policy Institute

Social policy Inquiries in Australia: the Henderson Poverty Inquiry in context

TTPI - Working Paper 8/2018 May 2018

Sue Regan, Phd Candidate

Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University

David Stanton, Honorary Associate Professor

Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University

Abstract

This paper situates the Henderson Poverty Inquiry in the context of other social security reviews occurring at the time and subsequently. Insights are drawn on the influence of these inquiries by exploring their characteristics, activities and findings and by reflecting on ensuing policy change. The analysis suggests that inquiries make diverse policy contributions across at least three dimensions: nature (inquiries contribute in different ways); extent (inquiries make different degrees of contribution); and temporality (some contribute in the short term; others exhibit a slow burn over many decades). With respect to the Henderson Poverty Inquiry, its contribution included influencing immediate policy change as well as providing an evidence base and strategic approach of value to subsequent policy development and inquiry activity. Its contribution was significant and enduring. This paper concludes by reflecting that wide-ranging social security inquiries have been very rare. Arguably, the last inquiry with breadth was the Henderson Poverty Inquiry. When considered in light of the extensive piecemeal reform of the social security system that has occurred over recent decades, this suggests a comprehensive and integrated review of social security policy in Australia is long overdue.

JEL Codes: I13

Keywords: Inquiries, Henderson Poverty Inquiry, social security reviews

** This paper was presented at the 'Social Security Reform: Revisiting Henderson and Basic Income' Conference 15-16 February, 2018, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Australian Social Policy Conference, 25-27 September, 2017 at The University of NSW, Sydney Australia. The paper has benefited from comments received at those conferences. Any correspondence can be sent to david.stanton@anu.edu.au or sue.regan@anu.edu.au.*

Tax and Transfer Policy Institute
Crawford School of Public Policy
College of **Asia and the Pacific**
+61 2 6125 9318
tax.policy@anu.edu.au

The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200 Australia
www.anu.edu.au

The Tax and Transfer Policy Institute in the Crawford School of Public Policy has been established to carry out research on tax and transfer policy, law and implementation for public benefit in Australia. The research of TTPI focuses on key themes of economic prosperity, social equity and system resilience. Responding to the need to adapt Australia's tax and transfer system to meet contemporary challenges, TTPI delivers policy-relevant research and seeks to inform public knowledge and debate on tax and transfers in Australia, the region and the world. TTPI is committed to working with governments, other academic scholars and institutions, business and the community.

The Crawford School of Public Policy is the Australian National University's public policy school, serving and influencing Australia, Asia and the Pacific through advanced policy research, graduate and executive education, and policy impact.

“Whilst I am realistic enough to know that all recommendations of committees of inquiry cannot be adopted - at least immediately - our intention is a positive one. Most reports are published and acted upon, not shelved and forgotten. A real contribution is made to public administration and to the development of policies acceptable to the community.”

The Hon. E. G. Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia, “Australian Public Administration and the Labor Government”, The Robert Garran Memorial Oration, Royal Institute of Public Administration, Canberra, 12 November 1973, p.12.

Introduction

Chaired by Professor R F Henderson, the ‘Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in Australia’ (referred to subsequently as the ‘Henderson Poverty Inquiry’) was announced by the then Prime Minister, Mr W McMahon on 29th August 1972 (Kewley 1980, Stanton 1973). This inquiry followed public concern over the levels of poverty in Australia, partly as a consequence of research undertaken by Henderson and colleagues in Melbourne in 1966 (Harper 1967, Henderson et al 1970).

In the lead up to the announcement of the Poverty Inquiry there had been much discussion about the need for a review. The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) had pressed for a wide-ranging inquiry into social welfare. The proposal by ACOSS was supported by many in Australia, including church leaders, social workers and local government representatives (Stanton 1973, Hutchinson 2014). The then Leader of the Opposition, Mr G Whitlam, had also proposed “a national and independent public inquiry into poverty and all related areas of social need” (Whitlam 1972, p. 2288).

This paper explores the role of the Henderson Poverty Inquiry in the context of other inquiries taking place during the same period, and subsequently, and considers the policy contribution of this type of ‘public inquiry’ to social policy processes and outcomes.

Public inquiries are ad hoc and temporary advisory bodies. Commissioned by executive government but operating to varying degrees independently of government, inquiries draw in external experts, consult publicly and provide policy advice (Prasser 2006). Whilst the popularity of public inquiries has waxed and waned over time, they remain a resilient feature of contemporary governance in many countries (Marier 2009). The organisational forms and nomenclature that reviews take are highly varied. Those referred to in this paper include taskforces, commissions of

inquiry, review panels, reference groups and Royal Commissions. The focus is on reviews commissioned by the Commonwealth government and undertaken largely by external experts not those conducted in Parliament, so the many House of Representatives, Senate and Joint inquiries that have considered aspects of social security policy are not covered. Similarly, the numerous internal policy reviews and policy advisory processes undertaken within government are out of scope.

This paper covers inquiries during and since the 1970s in which social security policy was a primary concern. Much has been written about the workings and influence of some individual reviews, for example, Saunders (1998, 2017) and Manning (1975, 2000) on the Henderson Poverty Inquiry; and Smyth (2005) and Stanton (2005) on the Child Support Taskforce. This paper explores inquiries individually, collectively and over time (from the 1970s to the present day) to provide insights into their policy contribution. By using the term ‘policy contribution’, the different ways in which public inquiries may (or may not) be making a difference to policy processes and policy outcomes can be considered. The data used is primary inquiry documentation: inquiry reports (interim and final) and associated research and discussion papers. Commentary by people directly involved in some of the inquiries is drawn upon. The authors were also both directly involved in specific inquiries in the period of study.¹

Overall, the analysis shows that the policy contribution of public inquiries in the social security domain is highly diverse. Some inquiries generate extensive policy knowledge through research activities and synthesis of domestic and international practice. Others major on public and stakeholder engagement and present findings with broad support. Examples are observed of inquiries where recommendations are adopted by government and policy change seems to flow seamlessly, although these are rare. In other examples, the findings of an inquiry seem influential in the long-term and/or policy change occurs over an extended period. In others still, whilst the inquiry may have contributed to an improved evidence base or brought the voices of the public into the policy process, the findings of an inquiry are ignored or rejected by government and the inquiry report ends up on the proverbial shelf (although it can also be shown that it may get taken off the shelf when a new inquiry is established). This suggests that the policy contribution of inquiries has at least three dimensions: its nature (the different ways in which the inquiry relates to process and outcomes); its extent (the degree of its contribution); and its temporality

(consideration of its contribution over time.) With respect to the Henderson Poverty Inquiry, its contribution included influencing immediate policy change as well as providing an evidence base and strategic approach of value to subsequent policy development and inquiry activity. Its contribution can be considered as significant and enduring.

This paper proceeds by briefly introducing the study of public inquiries before setting out the characteristics, activities and findings of social security inquiries in Australia since the early 1970s in Australia. This leads to a discussion of the diversity of the policy contribution of inquiries and the various dimensions of this diversity. The Henderson Poverty Inquiry along with the other inquiries in the period of study are viewed collectively and over time. This allows some reflections on what has changed and what has stayed the same in the social policy domain in Australia. Finally, the observation is made that wide-ranging social security inquiries have been very rare. Arguably, the last inquiry with breadth was the Henderson Poverty Inquiry. When considered in light of the extensive piecemeal reform of the social security system that has occurred over recent decades, this suggests a comprehensive and integrated review of social security policy in Australia is long overdue.

Public inquiries and their policy contribution

Typically, public inquiries involve external experts, undertake research and evidence-gathering activities and are ‘public’ with public terms of reference, published reports and processes of public engagement. They are designed to serve the purposes of government and yet they operate (to varying degrees) independently of government (Salter 1989). It is worth noting that permanent advisory bodies also undertake ad hoc public inquiries. So for example, in Australia, the Productivity Commission frequently undertakes inquiries into public policy problems at the behest of executive government (Banks 2013). These inquiries bear similar hallmarks to ‘public inquiries’, as defined in the academic literature. Parliamentary committees also undertake inquiries involving the public. These inquiries are of a different ilk (taking place in Parliament and undertaken by Parliamentarians with the assistance of a Secretariat) but there is frequently an interplay between parliamentary inquiries and the sort of public inquiries being examined here with policy problems frequently being sequentially, or even sometimes simultaneously, examined by both parliament and the executive.

Whilst public inquiries share the common features of being ad hoc, temporary and external advisory bodies appointed by the executive, it is difficult to over-estimate their diversity. Public inquiries have been deployed in relation to a vast array of policy issues, covering environmental, economic, social, criminal justice and public administration matters. Public inquiry bodies come in many forms: a single commissioner or a diverse multi-person taskforce; a highly formal Royal Commission with statutory backing and authority or an informally-appointed reference group. The reasons why governments appoint inquiries can vary widely and include a genuine desire to seek impartial advice in a contested policy area or assisting a move towards a desired policy outcome, through to ‘parking’ a politically controversial issue through an illusion of action (Prasser 2006). Public inquiries can be classified as ‘inquisitorial’ (investigating allegations or catastrophic events) or ‘policy-advisory’ (which advice governments on a particular policy problem. This paper considers the latter.

The research literature on public inquiries and how they relate to policy processes and policy change is eclectic, but limited. As others have commented (Rowe and McAllister 2006; Prasser 2006; Inwood and Johns 2016), much of the public inquiry literature is descriptive and largely focuses on particular inquiry case-studies and their role in specific reform agendas. There are notable exceptions. Stutz (2008), Rowe and McAllister (2006) and Inwood and Johns (2016) look at multiple inquiries to explore how inquiries influence policy. Other studies look at the role of inquiries in a particular policy domain: Brunton (2005) analysed the processes and outcomes of five inquiries into New Zealand’s mental health services (between 1858 and 1996) and Eburn and Dovers (2015) reflect on the repeated use (and, in their assessment, limited efficacy) of inquiries following extreme weather events and other emergencies in Australia. Rough (2011) and Marier (2009, 2013) both take a ‘policy learning’ perspective and consider the conditions under which commissions succeed in influencing policy change. These studies paint a complex picture of the possible dimensions and conditions of inquiry influence, with perhaps a shared recognition that influence is highly contextual and contingent upon factors both internal and external to an inquiry.

These recent studies also point to the methodological and practical challenges of examining the policy influence or impact of inquiries. Public inquiries are only one element of many evaluative, policymaking and advisory processes and institutions of government which, when mixed with a cocktail of economic, political and social forces, may lead to policy decisions and policy outcomes.

As Inwood and Johns (2016, p401) remark in the Canadian context, “commissions of inquiry are complex, their role in the policy process is complex, and policy change is complex.” Rowe and McAllister (2006) consider the different roles that commissions of inquiry play in public policy, exploring their import in relation to both policy process and policy outcome. Their research (p111) suggests that “no simple ‘measure’ of value is appropriate, in terms of numbers of recommendations and proportion accepted compared to cost and time, or any other elaborate formula. Nor are short-term assessments entirely appropriate.” Recent work that has explored the relationship between commissions of inquiry, ‘policy learning’ and policy change has illuminated the policy potential of inquiries (Marier 2009, 2013), but also demonstrated the challenges of this research endeavor.

Building on these lessons, the approach used here is to adopt the term ‘policy contribution’ in order to encapsulate the broad range of ways that inquiries might relate to policy processes and policy outcomes. This approach is also partly inspired by recent scholarship in the ‘research impact’ field (Morton 2015), drawing from ‘contribution analysis’ (Mayne 2012), and which advocates a ‘contributions’ approach to research impact, capturing both process and outcome evaluation. Morton (2015, p 416) suggests that “the language of contribution overcomes some of the problems with attribution and provides a more practical way of looking at how research interacts with other drivers to create change.” To illuminate the policy contribution of the inquiries, each inquiry is considered in context and its characteristics (what it looked like), activities (what it did), findings (what it reported) and subsequent policy reform (what it may have influenced) are reviewed.

Social policy inquiries from the 1970s to the present day

The Henderson Poverty Inquiry amidst extensive review activity

A nation-wide inquiry into poverty was announced by Prime Minister McMahon on 29 August 1972 (Kewley 1980, Stanton 1973). Following the election of the Whitlam Government in December 1972, Professor Henderson continued as chair of the inquiry and four additional members were appointed – Professor R Sackville, Professor R C Gates, Reverend G S Martin and Dr. R T Fitzgerald who each considered a particular area of concern and had his own Terms of Reference.ⁱⁱ The expansion of the inquiry was in response to the incoming government’s aspiration

for the inquiry to be broad and wide-ranging, reflecting ongoing concerns that the inquiry previously had risked a too narrow definition of poverty (Stanton 1973).

The inquiry undertook extensive research (which involved two national surveys and the publication of 42 research reports) and a national consultation exercise, with the Australian Council of Social Service being funded to support the contribution of groups requiring assistance (Henderson 1975; Stanton 1973). The inquiry published an Interim Report in March 1974. The Interim Report was only 24 pages long and focused on areas for urgent action, in the context of the existing social security system, and sought to influence the 1974-75 Budget. This was followed by four further Main Reports and, overall, the inquiry produced a raft of recommendations that related to income security, housing (supply and affordability), urban policy, employment services, welfare services, and which related to different groups of people – the aged, families, sole parents, juveniles, Aborigines, migrants, the sick and people with disabilities.

The inquiry is probably most remembered for the recommendations contained in its First Main Report and its measures to tackle income poverty (Henderson 1975). This consisted of a proposed ‘dual strategy’ to raise people’s incomes - increased access to employment and higher social security payments. Proposals centred on a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) Scheme which the Commission thought should be introduced in the medium-range future and funded from part of the additional resources generated by economic growth (Henderson 1975). Alongside the GMI Scheme were other proposals that supported work, including encouraging greater part-time work and targeting training assistance to the long-term unemployed. The inquiry also recommended a new national social research institute and a powerful committee structure within government to support integration of social policies. Furthermore, the Committee was concerned with keeping the issue of poverty in the public mind suggesting the use of films and television, education in schools and tertiary colleges and through the provision of opportunities for young people to learn about poverty and social welfare in programs of action research during vacations (Henderson 1975).

The 1970s witnessed a plethora of inquiries in Australia across the full array of public policy, not just in the social policy arena (Prasser 2006). Like the Henderson Poverty Inquiry, a number of other social security reviews occurring at the same time were concerned with the ‘fundamentals’ of the system. These included the Committee of Inquiry into a National Rehabilitation and

Compensation Scheme in Australia, chaired by Mr Justice Woodhouse (the Woodhouse Inquiry); the Committee of Inquiry into National Superannuation, chaired by Professor K J Hancock (the Hancock Inquiry); the Independent Enquiry into the Repatriation System, chaired by Mr Justice Tooseⁱⁱⁱ; and the Taxation Review Committee, chaired by Mr Justice KW Asprey.

Around the same time that the Henderson Poverty Inquiry was reporting, some of these inquiries were also reaching their conclusions. The Woodhouse Inquiry that had been established by the Whitlam Government in 1973 was tasked with reporting on the ‘desirable scope and form of a nationwide system of rehabilitation and compensation for all injured persons’ (Woodhouse 1974); the Government having already made an in- principle commitment to a comprehensive scheme. Following its deliberations, the Committee published its report in three volumes (Woodhouse 1974) with the central recommendation being the proposed introduction of a universal scheme of social insurance. The Hancock Inquiry into superannuation was also established by the Whitlam Government in 1973. The Committee presented a unanimous Interim Report in June 1974 (Hancock 1974) and a Final Report (Part One) in April 1976 (Hancock 1976) following the election of the Fraser Government earlier that year. The Final Report contained a majority recommendation supported by Professor Keith Hancock and Mr Richard McCrossin and a minority position supported by Mr Kenneth Hedley. The majority report indicated that, given existing revenue resources, it would not be possible to meet the Government’s two objectives of abolishing the means test and increasing the basic pension to 25 per cent of average weekly earnings. The majority report recommended a scheme that comprised a partially contributory, universal pension system with an earnings-related supplement (Hancock 1977). The minority scheme rejected the concept of a contributory scheme and recommended a widening of existing arrangements and included a flat rate universal pension, a means-tested supplement and an expansion of occupational superannuation (Treasury 2001).

Partly in response to the multitude of advice emanating from the various inquiries, in September 1975, Prime Minister Whitlam^{iv} set up an internal Income Security Review (ISR) and appointed Ian Castles as chair (Podger 2013). It is worth noting the work of the Income Security Review here, although it bears few of the hallmarks of a ‘public inquiry’ method of review. The ISR drew on the work of the previous major external inquiries and prepared reports on family allowances, social security means tests, sole parents pensions, payments to those overseas, the taxation

treatment of payments and issues associated with a GMI. The Whitlam Government also received advice from its 'think tank', within the Prime Minister's Department, the Priorities Review Staff (PRS) on possible directions for reform consequent on the 'complex array of proposals' that had been received (Priorities Review Staff, 1975, piii).

Ultimately, none of the main recommendations of the various external reviews was adopted by the government of the day. The National Compensation Bill was passed by the House of Representatives but met much opposition in the Senate. There was considerable self-interested opposition to the Bill by lawyers and the insurance industry. The Bill was reviewed by a Senate Committee for some time, before being rejected. A new National Rehabilitation and Compensation Bill was due to be introduced by the Attorney General, but the Whitlam Government was dismissed and the Parliament prorogued in November 1975 (Whitlam 1975, 1986). Gough Whitlam had always been a strong supporter of a National Rehabilitation and Compensation Scheme and stated that "One of the great disappointments of my life has been the ALP's failure to initiate a national rehabilitation and compensation scheme" (Whitlam 1985, p.635). He described the Woodhouse Report as "...one of the most convincing and stimulating reports ever presented to the Parliament" (Whitlam 1985, p.639). Whitlam introduced a National Compensation Bill in February 1977, whilst Leader of the Opposition, but was not successful as it lacked the support of the Fraser Government. Brian Howe (Minister for Social Security in the Hawke Government 1984-90) has noted that the Woodhouse proposals "...did impact on both accident insurance and workers compensation over time" (Howe, 2004, p4) and that "...Woodhouse's recommendations have had a continuing relevance at the State level in areas of both accident and workers' compensation. Even today, in the current proposals for a National Disability Insurance Scheme, the essence of Woodhouse's recommendations can be seen" (Howe 2013, p. 202) and that the report "...was also responsible for shaping the path of reform in both workers and accident compensation in most jurisdictions" (Howe 2013, p. 205).

The Hancock proposals for national superannuation (Hancock 1976) were also side-lined. The Treasurer announced on 12 July 1977 that the Government had decided not to proceed with a national superannuation scheme. However, subsequent decades saw the adoption of private superannuation to secure retirement incomes – developments more in line with the minority report. Brian Howe has noted that "...aspects of Hancock's contributory insurance model were eventually

implemented in the occupational superannuation scheme of the Hawke Government” (Howe 2013, p. 204).

As for the Henderson Poverty Inquiry, the central recommendation for a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) Scheme was not taken forward, much to Henderson’s disappointment (Henderson 1981 p.2). Saunders noted that the “... most radical recommendation – the GMI scheme - was virtually ‘dead in the water’ as soon as it was announced...” (Saunders 1998, p.65). None of this is perhaps surprising given the political and economic context. Whitlam lost office not long after the Poverty Inquiry submitted its First Main Report and the new Fraser Government had a different set of priorities and the economic situation had changed. Brian Howe has claimed that “many of Henderson’s valuable recommendations would go unheeded, and the Fraser Government never gave the Commission’s final report any serious consideration” (Howe 2013, p. 200).

However, as Saunders (1998) concludes in his evaluation of the impact of the Henderson Report on policy and research, ‘There can be little doubt that the overall impact of the Henderson Report has been considerable (Saunders 1998, p. 69).’ In addition to a GMI, Professor Henderson had recommended a detailed set of measures that “...might be carried out in the relatively near future, bringing improvement to the system without fundamental change” (Henderson 1975, p.46). Henderson recognized that the existing system had many strengths. Some of the recommendations were reflected in later policy developments such as the automatic indexation of most social security payments and the abolition of tax rebates for children in favour of increased direct payments to mothers, which became policy incrementally between 1974 and 1976 (Kewley, 1980, Stanton & Herscovitch 2013, p.5)). Indeed, many of the recommendations for enhancement of the existing system were subsequently introduced, including:

- a suite of changes to payments for sole parents, including the abolition of the six months waiting period, full pension conditions for all sole parents (including fringe benefits) and extension of payments to sole fathers (1973, 1977 and 1980);
- increases in supplementary (rent) assistance (1974, 1982 and 1985);
- increases in the rate of unemployment benefit (1975, 1976 and subsequently);
- cashing out of tax concessions/rebates for families and increasing universal payments for children (1976);
- an income only test on pensions (1976);

- automatic indexation and adjustment of pensions, initially by CPI and then by AWE (1977 and 1997);
- the maintenance of the basic pension rate to have priority over further easing of the means test (1978);
- increases in mothers/guardians allowance (1980 and 1984);
- abolition of Class B Widows pensions (1987); and
- ceasing age pensions for women 60-64 years (1994).

Margaret Guilfoyle (Minister for Social Security in the Fraser Government 1975-80) noted that “...the Poverty Inquiry has been the most comprehensive and significant social inquiry in Australian history” (*Senate Hansard*, 3 June 1976, p. 2296). Guilfoyle also acknowledged the influence of the Poverty Inquiry on the Fraser government’s family allowance reforms in 1976. Guilfoyle noted that “...The recommendations of Professor Henderson have been very significant in the way in which we have developed our system of family allowances” and that “We were influenced in this decision very strongly by the poverty report of Professor Henderson which talked of the way in which we could direct assistance to families by abolishing tax rebates, thus enabling a larger amount to be distributed amongst the children in Australia” (*Senate Hansard*, 26 May 1976, p. 1958). Guilfoyle subsequently provided a detailed account of the progress of the Fraser Government in implementing the recommendations of the Poverty Inquiry in a Ministerial Statement “Poverty Inquiry: Progress Towards Implementation of Recommendations” (*Senate Hansard*, 8 November 1977, pp. 2303-2307). Guilfoyle noted that “Significant progress, especially in the income security area, has already been made in implementing a number of important recommendations, or in proceeding towards the objectives which underlie them” (*Senate Hansard*, 8 November 1977, p.2304).

The 1980s and the Social Security Review

The next major social policy inquiry was the Social Security Review established by the then Minister for Social Security, Brian Howe, in February 1986. Associate Professor Bettina Cass of the University of Sydney was appointed Consultant Director of the Review. Cass worked closely with officials in the Department of Social Security^{vi} and a Social Security Review Advisory Committee was established to provide on-going guidance to the Review. The Review focused on three major aspects of social security policy: income support for families with children; social

security and workforce issues; and income support for the aged (Cass 1986 and Donald 1986). Brian Howe has stated “... I established the Social Security Review...as a means of building a strategic policy framework on the basis of which I hoped that it would be possible to encourage significant policy reform’ (Howe 2003, p242).

The review had a strong focus on generating research evidence and on public consultation. Six major Issues Papers were published (Cass 1986, Crompton 1986, Raymond 1987, Cass 1988, Cass et al 1988, and Foster 1988), each with the aim of promoting debate and consultation. A series of research and discussion papers were also produced. The Social Security Review was well-aligned with government policy development, with Cass working closely with officials in the Department of Social Security. Brian Howe has also noted that ‘This was an innovative approach to public policy development as, unlike in the United States, it was rare at that time in Australia for an academic to be situated within the bureaucracy.....sitting inside Social Security and using the existing staff enabled her to bring research and other policy making processes together to praiseworthy effect’ (Howe 2002, p116). There was no final report of the review with a consolidated list of recommendations and no integrated set of recommendations for the tax and transfer system as a whole. However, each Issues Paper put forward proposals for policy reform on a key aspect of social security policy which, following consultation, were then taken forward within Government and influenced (to varying degrees) future policy development (Yeend 2000). Yeend has noted that “...Many of the changes to existing programs and new programs initiated from the mid -1980s to the mid-1990s can claim to have their origins wholly or partly in the Social Security Review” (Yeend 2000, p6).

At this time, income support and labour market programs were increasingly being recognised as partners in alleviating poverty. The Social Security Review made a raft of recommendations in relation to improving the adequacy of social security payments, reforming the family payment system and in supporting the introduction of new active labour market policies to help particular groups into employment, education or training (Cass 1988, Cass et al 1988). The Review also shed light on the changing role of women and recommended that the social security system should treat people more as individuals. A number of policy reforms followed the Social Security Review, including the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Scheme for lone parents (Herscovitch & Stanton 2008), the Family Allowance Supplement introduced in 1987, the Newstart Allowance and the

Disability Support Pension (Yeend 2000). Herscovitch and Stanton (2008, p57) summarise the Review's main influence as having 'refocused attention on the need to encourage and facilitate economic and social participation among people who were receiving social security payments, particularly people with disabilities, lone parents and the unemployed.'

Two other reviews from the 1980s warrant interest: the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs, chaired by Mr Peter Kirby (Kirby 1985) and the Panel of Review of the Proposed Incomes and Assets Test, chaired by Professor Fred Gruen (Gruen 1984). The latter is a notable example of a review aiming to foster consensus across a diverse group of people, with the nine-person panel being drawn from academia, voluntary associations, pensioner groups, consumer bodies and church organisations (Prasser 2006) and followed a controversy over the proposed re-introduction of an assets test on pensions.

The 1990s, McClure (the first) and 'Welfare Reform'

The dominant influence on policy reform in the 1990s was the context of rapid economic change. The numbers of people receiving social security payments grew in the recession of the early 90s, with the extent and duration of unemployment rising dramatically. Following the 1993 election, the re-elected Labor Government set up an expert committee to advise how best to deal with the unemployment crisis. The Committee on Employment Opportunities was chaired by the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and included the Secretaries of the Departments of Social Security and Employment, Education and Training, the senior social policy adviser in the Office of the Prime Minister and three academics – two labour economists and a social policy analyst (Saunders 1995, Edwards 2001). The Committee released a discussion paper which was followed by *The White Paper on Employment and Growth* (Keating 1994a) and the companion report *Working Nation: Policies and Programs* (Keating 1994b).

As the 1990s progressed, the economy recovered significantly but the numbers of people receiving social security payments continued to increase. In 1996, the incoming Coalition Government abandoned the Working Nation initiative and a new reform program was introduced. This included a reshaping of employment services into a fully contestable market, with the Commonwealth Employment Service being replaced by the Job Network. As the decade ebbed, the Government remained concerned about certain groups (lone parents and people with disabilities, in particular)

receiving pension-type payments (Herscovitch & Stanton 2008) which spurred further review activity.

In 1999, the Reference Group on Welfare Reform was established by the Howard Coalition Government. The Reference Group was chaired by Mr Patrick McClure of Mission Australia and tasked with providing advice on income support and associated services that would prevent and reduce 'welfare dependency' among people of working age. The Government placed a strong emphasis on community consultation in the Review's establishment, with the membership of the Reference Group including representatives from the community sector, business, academia and government to support this broad consultation. The Reference Group's final report (McClure 2000) advocated a Participation Support System, with a central theme of social and economic participation. Specific proposals focused on a simplified and integrated income support system and more individualised support services. The report also suggested enhanced obligations on parents of school-aged children to seek work and improved financial incentives for participation in work. The report pointed to the strong community feedback that secure and adequate income support should be the basis for social and economic participation and that reform of the income support system should be in the context of all parts of society playing a role, through mutual obligation and social partnerships (McClure 2000).

In late 2000, the Government responded by endorsing the broad approach and, in the 2001-02 Budget, a package of measures titled 'Australians Working Together' was announced. Aspects of the Reference Group's vision and reform proposals were evident in this initiative, including a 'Working Credit' and new job search programs (such as the Personal Support Program and the Transition to Work Program). Measures to introduce a simplified income support system plus other recommendations were not, however, taken forward.

Before turning to the new century, it would be remiss not to mention the National Commission of Audit (Officer 1996) established in March 1996 by the incoming Howard Government. Commissions of Audit are bodies established by Government (Federal and State) to examine the finances of the state. The 1996 Commission of Audit, whilst not a review of social policy, was asked to scrutinise relevant issues such as 'assistance programs' for individuals and families and the scope for further contracting-out of welfare services. The Commission of Audit was specifically tasked with determining the most appropriate basis for benchmarking the level of the

age pension and presented options for this, but recommended a further review was necessary. The themes of the McClure Report, particularly around mutual obligation, continued into the policy agenda of the 2000s. In the 2005-06 Budget, the Government announced a new set of policies called 'Welfare to Work'. This package was consistent with some of the Reference Group's findings (increased obligations on participants and investment in training, child care assistance and other support measures).

The Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support

Another focus of social policy in this decade was child support. There have been many advisory groups and reviews of child support which include reports and evaluations from the Child Support Consultative Group, the Child Support Evaluation Advisory Group (chaired by Justice Fogarty) and by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. In December 2003, the House of Representatives Committee on Family and Community Affairs published a report of their review of child custody issues (HRSCFCA 2003). This report made a number of recommendations, including that a Ministerial taskforce be set up to examine the child support formula. It gave further impetus to calls for a review that had been made by fathers' groups over many years, based on what they perceived as the unfairness of the Child Support Scheme.

In July 2004, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a taskforce to review the scheme, and subsequently a Taskforce and Reference Group were set up. The groups were chaired by Professor Patrick Parkinson of the University of Sydney (Smyth 2005). A notable feature of the Taskforce was the complementary use of a Reference Group. The Taskforce was an 'expert' body made up of people with a wide breadth of expertise in social and economic policy, family law, family policy, and research. Membership of the Reference Group was drawn from advocacy groups and professionals with experience particularly in issues concerning parenting after separation, relationship mediation and counselling (Smyth 2005). Whilst experts in the broader sense, the Reference Group helped the Taskforce to be well informed of community views and the realities of the operation of the current child support system. As the work of the Taskforce progressed, that work could be tested with and informed by the Reference Group. At the same time, it was clear the Reference Group was advisory and not responsible for the recommendations of the Taskforce (Stanton 2005).

Following much research and analysis (including a review of domestic and international research and practice and the development of a new microsimulation model (Harding & Percival 2007)), the Taskforce reported in May 2005. Their report had 30 recommendations with the first of these being a detailed description of a proposed new child support formula. The Government announced reforms to the Child Support Scheme in February 2006, which closely mirrored the recommendations of the Taskforce. It is certainly unusual to see a Government adopting the recommendations of a Committee in almost their entirety. The recommendations of the Taskforce were well researched and timely and could be seen as a good model of ‘evidence-based policy’ development.

Australia’s Future Tax System Review and the Pension Review

After Labor came to power in 2007, welfare concerns continued to be a significant theme, including at the Australian 2020 Summit held in 2008, which in turn paved the way for Australia’s Future Tax System (AFTS) Review. The AFTS review was undertaken by a Review Panel, chaired by Dr Ken Henry, Secretary to the Treasury. The panel was asked to consider ‘how Australia can best structure its tax and transfer system to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to enhance its economic and social outcomes’ (Henry, 2009, executive summary). In the context of the AFTS review, the Government also established a Pension Review, chaired by Dr Jeff Harmer, Secretary of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to inquire into ‘measures to strengthen the financial security of seniors, carers and people with disability’. Whilst not unprecedented, it was somewhat unusual for Heads of Departments to be appointed to run ‘independent’ reviews. The final report was published in May 2010 and included a vision for how a 21st century tax and transfer system could work. One hundred and thirty-eight specific recommendations were made, grouped under nine broad themes with the fourth theme being ‘a fair, adequate, and work supportive transfer system’ (Henry 2010).

The review concluded that the overall architecture of the Australia’s transfer system ‘is well founded being focused on poverty alleviation, clear targeting and sustainability’ (Henry 2010, p. xx). The Pension Review had already reported and had developed adequacy benchmarks for age, disability and carer pensions. The AFTS review determined that adequacy benchmarks were also needed for other payments, but that they must also address incentives to work, and suggested three levels of primary support payments—pensions for the aged, for people with disabilities and for

carers; lower rate participation allowances for those of working age not eligible for a pension; and assistance payments for young people and students. The review recommended that common indexation arrangements be applied to each of the main payment types, once adequacy benchmarks are reached, and that the current income and assets tests be abolished and a comprehensive means test established for the main pension and allowance payments (with income from savings taking the form of a deemed return on assets). Furthermore, the review set out how family assistance should be paid through a single program based primarily on the additional costs of children, and increasing with age.

The most significant proposal to be taken forward following the review was a resource rent tax, with the Mineral Resource Rent Tax being implemented by the Gillard Labor Government in 2010 (a re-design of the original Resource Super Profits Tax). The government of the day did not, however, proceed with most of the proposals. The review was framed explicitly as a long-term vision, and set out to identify the necessary reform pathways to realise that vision, rather than recommending a specific package of short and medium-term policy recommendations. As Stewart et al have observed “...Most of the reforms proposed by the Henry Review were intended to be considered in a holistic way with other recommendations rather than separately, and as guidance for future tax policy and law development rather than a discrete package of tax reforms. Around a third of the Recommendations have been implemented by governments in the last five years. However, no coherent package of reform has been based on the Review...” (Stewart et al 2015, p. 3).

The Pension Review’s main finding was that the rate of payment to single pensioners was too low and, in the 2008-09 Budget, the government announced that this would be increased. The Pension Review was qualitatively different to the AFTS review, given its concern with short-term policy reforms designed for immediate implementation (in addition to proposals addressing longer-term challenges). The Government also made other changes set out in the review’s findings, most notably to increase progressively the qualifying age for the Age Pension (to reach 67 in 2023) and closing the Pension Bonus Scheme to new members.

Another Audit Commission and McClure (the second)

As promised in opposition, on coming to power in 2013 the Abbott Government set up a new Commission of Audit. Tony Shepherd, President of the Business Council of Australia, chaired the

Commission and, as with previous Audit Commissions, it had a very wide remit to scrutinise government expenditure, including welfare spending. The Commission reported on 1 May 2014 and its recommendations included changes to the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Family Tax Benefits and benefits for carers. The 2014 Budget endorsed a number of the Commission of Audit's welfare proposals, many of which have subsequently been dropped (for an account of the fate of the so called 'zombie' measures, see Nethery and Whiteford 2016).

Shortly after taking office, the new Coalition Government also established a new welfare review. An internal Welfare System Taskforce was set up within the newly formed Department of Social Services and an independent Reference Group was appointed, chaired again by Mr Patrick McClure. The review covered a broad range of payments and services for people of working age, excluding some forms of family assistance, with its aim being "to identify improvements to ensure the social support system is sustainable, effective and coherent, and encourages people to work" (McClure 2014, p19). This review started life as an essentially internal process within the Department of Social Services (Buckmaster 2014), but took on more of the characteristics of a public inquiry over time with the publication of an interim report, a call for submissions, a consultation exercise with stakeholders and roundtable discussions with social security recipients. The final report of the Reference Group was published in February 2015, and made recommendations under four pillars of reform: a simpler and sustainable income support system; strengthening individual and family capability; engaging with employers; and building community capability. The main proposals were a suggested new architecture for the payment system (with five primary payments) and a new investment approach for the social support system, based on actuarial valuations akin to a reform adopted recently in New Zealand (McClure 2015). Since the publication of the final report, the Government has further developed the investment approach. In the 2016 Budget, the Government committed to a \$96.1 million 'Try, Test and Learn Fund' as part of its new 'Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare'. In the 2017 Budget, a consolidated JobSeeker Payment was announced to simplify payments for people of working age, with Budget documentation citing they were "using the recommendations from the 2015 McClure Review as an essential blueprint" (DSS 2017).

The diverse contributions of social policy inquiries

The policy contribution of public inquiries in the social policy domain would seem to be highly diverse, with inquiries varying in how they interrelate with policy processes and outcomes. Some inquiries, like the Henderson Poverty Inquiry, generate extensive policy knowledge through numerous research projects and the synthesis of domestic and international practice. Others, such as the first McClure welfare review, major on public and stakeholder engagement activities and present findings with broad support. We observe examples of inquiries where recommendations are adopted by government and policy change seems to flow seamlessly, although these are rare. In other examples, the findings of an inquiry seem influential in the long-term and/or policy change occurs over an extended period. In others still, whilst the inquiry may have contributed to an improved evidence base or brought the voices of the public into the policy process, the findings of an inquiry are ignored and the inquiry report ends up on the proverbial shelf. Nevertheless, viewed collectively and over time, the contribution of public inquiries in the social policy domain would seem to have been significant and enduring, with a number of inquiries remaining relevant and influencing debate decades after they have reported.

The picture of diversity that we have painted suggests at least three dimensions to the policy contribution of inquiries: the nature of the contribution; its extent; and its temporality. The *nature* of the contribution refers to the ways in which the inquiry relates to policy processes and outcomes. Our analysis reveals the nature of the contribution differs for each inquiry. So, for example, the Henderson Poverty Inquiry seems to have been powerful in generating new policy knowledge through its extensive research agenda and engagement of diverse expertise. The publicness of its work and the extent of its public engagement practices contributed to an active public debate. Despite these attributes, many of its key recommendations including the central proposal for a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) were not adopted. The first McClure welfare review presented a reform agenda with wide stakeholder support, which came from a strong focus on public engagement but with less emphasis on producing new research knowledge. The Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support presented a package of practical recommendations based on research evidence and detailed discussions with a diverse range of interest groups, and the Taskforce's recommendations were accepted and implemented in full. The *extent* of contribution simply refers to how different inquiries make different degrees of contribution. So, for example, it could be

argued that the Commissions of Audit had less policy contribution (of any nature) than focused inquiries on social security. The *temporality* of contribution reflects that the process and influence of an inquiry occurs over time. Whilst a number of the short-term proposals made by the Henderson Poverty Inquiry were adopted, its major recommendation for a GMI was rejected. However, forty years later, Henderson's proposals for a GMI remain relevant given current global interest in universal basic incomes and it could be argued that Henderson's influence on social policy development in Australia is still being felt (Saunders 2017). Conversely, the contribution of the Social Security Review was more immediate and direct. Several new policies in the 1980s and early 1990s can be traced directly to the Social Security Review (Yeend 2010). Some elements of the first Reference Group on Welfare Reform's recommendations were adopted by Government but others such as benefit simplification and the emphasis on broad community responsibility were overlooked. However, some of these themes were picked up by the second McClure review (more than a decade later) and the need to simplify the benefit system has gained some traction, illustrated by the 2017 Budget announcement of a consolidated working age payment – a new Jobseeker Payment (DSS 2017). This suggests a cumulative effect with inquiries building on each other over time.

This diversity of the policy contribution of inquiries can be attributed to a raft of factors largely internal and external to each inquiry. Internal factors include the chair and membership of the inquiry, its terms of reference, resourcing and activities. External factors might include the original motivation for the inquiry and the wider political and policy context. We have seen that the fate of recommendations emanating from the Henderson Poverty inquiry were strongly influenced by a change of government and the prevailing political and economic priorities of the time.

It is worth noting that many of the inquiries encountered very similar social policy themes and challenges. These include the obligations placed on welfare recipients, the adequacy of payments and incentives to work, whether to adopt contributory financing, the balance between universality and selectivity, and the relationship between the tax and transfer systems. It could be suggested that such issues are important but intractable given their recurrence. But it also could be argued that the repetition of inquiries covering similar themes is an indicator of weak policy learning: we keep returning to the same debates! Marier (2013) argues that inquiries need to be set up to promote policy learning and that this occurs only under certain conditions. However, repeat inquiries may

also be a reflection of the iterative nature of policymaking rather than a sign of ineffectiveness (Prasser and Tracey 2014). A recent report by Norris and Adam (2017) in the U.K. notes the extent of “policy churn”. They suggest the need to strengthen “institutional memory” and note the “...importance of establishing both a clear evidence base and a wider coalition for change before embarking on reform....” (p. 30).

Conclusion

Mapping social policy inquiries from the Henderson Poverty Inquiry to the present day has illuminated the diverse ways in which these inquiries contribute to policy-making processes and outcomes. It supports a rejection of simplistic measures of inquiry impact which view ‘success’ as the number of inquiry recommendations adopted by the commissioning government. Instead, it reveals a rich and nuanced picture of the policy contribution of inquiries, which includes how they might contribute to the generation of policy-relevant knowledge, public debate, political compromise and policy learning over time.

Through exploring these social policy inquiries over time, it is also possible to see the imprint of how social security concerns have evolved since the 1970s. Australia has ended up with a targeted welfare system, funded through general taxation, which has not been the subject of a thorough, comprehensive and independent review since the 1970s. The reviews of the 1970s and 1980s were particularly concerned with adapting the welfare system to new models of family life – a reform agenda which had (arguably) worked its way through by the end of the 1980s. There was increasing concern throughout the 1990s around so-called ‘welfare dependency’ and that the availability and levels of payments were acting as a disincentive to work and self-provision. Henderson’s recommendation in the 1970s to increase benefit levels at the same time as supporting people into work shifted to a ‘make them work’ agenda during this later period.

What is also striking in collectively considering social security reviews since the 1970s, as discussed, is the degree of commonality of themes and challenges across the period. All inquiries were concerned to some degree with the relationship between the welfare payment system, employment and the labour market. This includes concerns around the adequacy and targeting (and means-testing) of payments and the impact on incentives to work and save. There was also

continuing concern about the complexity of the system. Whilst ‘mutual obligation’ is more recent terminology, debate around the obligations of welfare recipients and others (and questions of conditionality and reciprocity) was prevalent throughout the reviews. Likewise, the sustainability and distribution of social security spending; the differentiation of payments and services for different ‘client groups’; and the relationship between the tax and transfer systems are all recurring themes. Whilst these themes prevail, the recommendations made by the various inquiries differed significantly in how they resolved or negotiated the tensions and trade-offs at the heart of these debates.

What is it about this type of external inquiry that enables their policy contribution? Prasser (2006) points to their ‘publicness’ as a determining feature of their value – involving stakeholders and the wider public, publishing terms of reference and reports, engendering transparency in process and findings. Reviews also provide earmarked space beyond the day-to-day demands of government (and beyond the limits of departmental or institutional boundaries). They are usually led by and involve external experts and so bring in expertise not always available within government. That they also operate independently from executive government (to varying degrees) perhaps provides freedom to think creatively and beyond received wisdom, and yet reviews are connected to government (commissioned by, resourced by, and frequently involving public servants in their membership) and therefore can be wise to political and practical realities.

This review of reviews has illustrated the scale of activity since 1970s, with numerous reviews being undertaken on a wide variety of aspects of the social security system. Finally, however, what seems surprising from our ‘review of reviews’ is not how many have involved aspects of the social security system, but how few (as noted by Yeend 2010) have been broad and strategic. Most reviews have focused on a particular aspect or parts of the system, or considered this in the context of a wider review (for example, a tax review or Commission of Audit). Arguably, the last review with breadth was the Henderson Poverty Inquiry which reported four decades ago. Australia’s social security system has been subject to much piecemeal reform since then (particularly in the area of family payments), the application of conditionality has grown (Taylor et al., 2016) and the adequacy of unemployment and sole parent benefits is of increasing concern. An overarching and comprehensive review of social security in Australia, undertaken in an integrated fashion and including the entire tax and transfer system, is becomingly increasingly overdue.

References

Banks, G. (2013). Public inquiries, public policy and the public interest. *Academy Papers*, 18.

Brunton, W. (2005). The place of public inquiries in shaping New Zealand's national mental health policy 1858–1996. *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*, 2(1), 24.

Buckmaster, Luke (2014), 'What's happening with the McClure welfare review?', *Flagpost*, Parliamentary Library, Canberra.

Cass, B. (1986), 'The Case for Review of Aspects of the Australian Social Security System', *Background/Discussion Paper No. 1*, Social Security Review, Department of Social Security.

Cass, B. (1986), 'Income Support for Families with Children', *Issues Paper No. 1* (Social Security Review), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Cass, B. (1988), 'Income support for the Unemployed in Australia: Towards a More Active System', *Issues Paper No. 4* (Social Security Review), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Cass, B., Gibson F. & Tito F. (1988), 'Towards Enabling Policies: Income Support for People with Disabilities', *Issues Paper No. 5* (Social Security Review), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Crompton, C (1986), 'Too Old for a Job Too Young for a Pension? Income Support for Older People Out of Work', *Issues Paper No. 2* (Social Security Review), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Department of Social Services (2017), *Welfare Reform*, Budget and Additional Estimates Statements, Budget 2017. <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/publications-articles/corporate-publications/budget-and-additional-estimates-statements/budget-2017/welfare-reform>

Donald, O. (1986), 'Social Security Reform', *Background/Discussion Paper No. 2*, Social Security Review, Department of Social Security.

- Eburn, M., & Dovers, S. (2015). Learning Lessons from Disasters: Alternatives to Royal Commissions and Other Quasi-Judicial Inquiries. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 74(4), 495-508.
- Edwards M. (with Howard C. and Miller R.) 2001, *Social Policy, Public Policy. From Problem to Practice*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest.
- Foster, C. (1988), 'Towards a National Retirement Incomes Policy', *Issues Paper No. 6*, Social Security Review, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Gruen, F. (1984), *Report of the Panel of Review of the Proposed Income and Assets Test*, May 1984, Panel of Review of the Proposed Income and Assets Test (Australia), Government Printer, Canberra.
- Hancock, K. (1974), *Interim Report of the National Superannuation Committee of Inquiry*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Hancock, K. (1976), *A National Superannuation Scheme for Australia: Final report of the National Superannuation Committee of Inquiry, Part One*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Harding, A. and Percival, R. (2007), 'Australian Child Support Reforms: A Case Study of the Use of Microsimulation Modelling in the Policy Development Process', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 60, No.4, pp. 422-437.
- Harmer, J. (2009), *Pension review report*, Australia Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra.
- Harper, J. (1967), 'Survey of Living Conditions in Melbourne-1966', *The Economic Record*, Vol. 43, No.102, June, pp.262-288.
- Hayden, Bill (W.G.), (1996), *Hayden: An autobiography*, Angus and Robertson, Pymble, NSW.
- Henderson, R., Harcourt A. and Harper R.J.A (1970), *People in poverty: a Melbourne survey*, Cheshire for the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, Cheshire, Melbourne.
- Henderson, R. (1974), *Poverty in Australia: Interim Report*, Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Henderson, R. (1975), *Poverty in Australia: First Main Report*, April 1975, Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, Volumes One and Two and the Outline Report.

Henderson, R. (1981), *The Welfare Stakes. Strategies for Australian Social Policy*, Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

Henry, K. (2008), *Australia's future tax system: consultation paper*, Australia's Future Tax System Review Panel, The Treasury, Canberra.

Henry, K. (2009), 'Lessons from tax reform past', Address to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 15 October.

Henry, K. (2010), *Australia's future tax system: final report*, Australia Treasury Australia's Future Tax System Review Panel, The Treasury, Canberra.

Herscovitch, A. & Stanton, D (2008), 'History of social security in Australia', *Family Matters*, No. 80 pp 51-60.

Howe, B. (2003), 'Restraint with Equity', in Ryan, S and Bramston, T. *The Hawke Government: A Critical Retrospective*, Pluto Press, Australia, pp. 241-254.

Howe, B. (2004), "Empowering the Disabled", Paper presented at ACE National Conference, September.

Howe, B. (2013), 'Social Policy', in Bramston, T (Ed), *The Whitlam Legacy*, The Federation Press, Sydney, pp. 196-205.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs (HRSCFCA), (2003), *Every picture tells a story: report on the inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separation*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Hutchinson, C. (2014), *Always Say Yes. The Life of David Scott*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, Australia.

Inwood G.J. and Johns C.M. (2016), Commissions of inquiry and policy change: Comparative analysis and future research frontiers, *Canadian Public Administration*, Volume 59, Issue 3, September 2016, Pages 382–404.

Keating P. (1994a), *Working Nation: The White Paper on Employment and Growth*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Keating, P. (1994b), *Working Nation: Policies and programs*, presented by The Prime Minister, The Honourable PJ Keating, MP, House of Representatives, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Kewley, T.H. (1980), *Australian Social Security Today: major developments from 1900-1978*, Sydney University Press.

Kirby, P. (1985), *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs*, Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Manning I. 1975. "Reflections on the Poverty Report", Paper delivered at Urban Research Unit Seminar, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, 13 October.

Manning, I. 2000, 'The Henderson Report: Still a Blueprint for Social Policy?' in Hancock L., Howe B. and O'Donnell, A. (Eds) *Reshaping Australian Social Policy. Changes in Work, Welfare and Families*, Growth 48, Centre for Economic Development of Australia, Melbourne, pp 46-56.

Marier P. (2009) 'The power of institutionalized learning: the uses and practices of commissions to generate policy change', *Journal of European Public Policy* 16:8 December 2009: 1204-1223.

Marier P. (2013). Policy feedback and learning. *Routledge handbook of public policy*, 401-414.

Mayne, J. (2012). Contribution analysis: Coming of age?. *Evaluation*, 18(3), 270-280.

Morton, S. (2015). Progressing research impact assessment: A 'contributions' approach. *Research Evaluation*, 24(4), 405-419.

McClure, P. (2000), *Participation support for a more equitable society: final report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform*, Reference Group on Welfare Reform (Australia), Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, July.

McClure, P. (2014), *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform. June.

McClure, P. (2015), *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform. February.

Neild, J. (1898), *Report on old age pensions, charitable relief and state insurance in England and on the Continent of Europe*, Government Printer, Sydney.

Nethery, D and Whiteford, P. (2016), “Where to for Welfare?” *Inside Story*, 9 September.

Norris E and Adam R. (2017), *All Change. Why Britain is so prone to policy reinvention, and what can be done about it*, Institute for Government.

Officer, R. (1996), *National Commission of Audit: report to the Commonwealth Government*, National Commission of Audit (Australia), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Parkinson, P. (2005), *In the best interests of children: reforming the Child Support Scheme: report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support*, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Podger, A. (2013), “Ian Castles and the Henry Tax/Transfer Review” pp. 28-36 in Podger A, Trewin D, Wanna J, and Whiteford P. 2013, *Towards a Stronger, More Equitable and Efficient Tax-Social Security System*, Academy Papers 1/2013, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

Prasser, S. (2006), *Royal Commissions and Public Inquiries in Australia*, LexisNexis Butterworths, Chatswood, Australia.

Prasser, S., & Tracey, H. (Eds.). (2014). *Royal Commissions & Public Inquiries: Practice & Potential*. Connor Court Publishing.

Priorities Review Staff (1975), *Possibilities for social welfare in Australia*, July 1975 / Priorities Review Staff, Government Printer, Canberra.

Pritchard, H. and Saunders P. (1978), ‘Poverty and Income Maintenance Policy in Australia - A Review Article’, *The Economic Record*, Vol. 54, April, pp.17-31.

Raymond, J. (1987), ‘Bringing Up Children Alone: Policies for Sole Parents’, *Issues Paper No. 3* (Social Security Review), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Rough, E. (2011). Policy learning through public inquiries? The case of UK nuclear energy policy 1955–61. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 29(1), 24-45.

Rowe M and McAllister L (2006) The Roles of Commissions of Inquiry in the Policy Process *Public Policy and Administration* December 2006 vol. 21 no. 4 99-115

Salter, L. (1989). The Two Contradictions in Public Inquiries. *Dalhousie LJ*, 12, 173.

Saunders, P. (1981), 'The Committee of Inquiry into Poverty's Guaranteed Minimum Income Scheme: A Perspective from the 1980's', *The Australian Economic Review*, 1st Quarter, pp. 20-28.

Saunders, P. (1998), 'Setting the Poverty Agenda: The Origins and Impact of the Henderson Report' in Fincher, R & J Nieuwenhuysen (eds), *Australian Poverty: Then and Now*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, pp 52-70.

Saunders, P. (1995), 'Improving Work Incentives in a Means –Tested Welfare System: The 1994 Australian Social Security Reforms', *Fiscal Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 45-70.

Saunders P. 2017. "The Henderson Legacy: Four Decades of Australian Poverty Research", in Durbach A, Edgworth B, and Sentas V. (Eds). 2017. *Law and Poverty in Australia. 40 Years after the Poverty Commission*, The Federation Press, pp. 29-44.

Senate Community Affairs References Committee (SCARC)(2004), 'A hand up not a hand out: renewing the fight against poverty: report on poverty and financial hardship', Canberra.

Smyth, B. (2005), 'Modernising the Child Support Scheme', *Family Matters*, No. 71 Winter, pp. 58-61.

Stanton, D. (1973), 'Comprehensive Inquiry into Poverty, *Social Security Quarterly*, Winter, pp. 26-32.

Stanton, D. (1973), 'Determining the poverty line', *Social Security Quarterly*, Spring, pp 18-32.

Stanton, D. (2005), 'The Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support', Speech to Institute of Public Administration Australia (ACT Division) Conference on 'Public Inquiries and Royal Commissions: Issues and Trends', 22 September, Canberra.

Stanton, D. and Herscovitch A., 2013, "Social Policy and Programs: From Principles to Design", *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies (APPS) Working Paper Series*, 01/2013, April 2013. (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=22588099>)

Stewart, M., Moore A., Whiteford P. and Grafton Q. (2015), *A Stocktake of the Tax System Five Years After the Henry Review*, Tax and Transfer Policy Institute, Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, Canberra, February.

Stutz, J. R. (2008). What gets done and why: Implementing the recommendations of public inquiries. *Canadian public administration*, 51(3), 501-521.

Taylor, D., Gray, M. and Stanton, D. (2016), 'New Conditionality in Australian Social Security', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 51, No.1, pp. 3-25.

Toose, P (1975), *Independent Enquiry into the Repatriation System: report*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

The Treasury, (2001), 'Towards higher retirement incomes for Australians: a history of the Australian retirement income system since Federation', *Economic Roundup*, Commonwealth Treasury of Australia. <http://archive.treasury.gov.au/documents/110/PDF/round4.pdf>

Wettenhall, R. and Nethercote, J. (eds) (1988), *Hawke's Second Government: Australian Commonwealth Administration 1984-1987*, Canberra College of Advanced Education and Royal Australian Institute of Public Administration (ACT Division).

Whitlam, G (1972), *House of Representatives Hansard*, Parliament of Australia, 10 May.

Whitlam, G. (1973), 'Australian Public Administration Under a Labor Government', The Sir Robert Garran Memorial Oration, Institute of Public Administration, Canberra.

Whitlam, G. (1985), *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, Penguin Books, Ringwood.

Whitlam, G. (1986), "Future Directions", in *The Whitlam Phenomenon*, Fabian Papers, McPhee Gribble/Penguin Books, pp. 178-197.

Williams, R. (2012), *The Policy Providers. A History of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, 1962-2012*, Melbourne University Press.

Woodhouse, A. & Meares, C. (1974), *Compensation and rehabilitation in Australia: report of the National Committee of Inquiry*, National Committee of Inquiry on Compensation and Rehabilitation in Australia, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra. (3 Volumes).

Yeend, P. (2000), *Welfare review e-brief*, Parliament of Australia.

ⁱ David Stanton had some involvement in virtually all of the social security inquiries since the early 1970's, but had a particularly close involvement in the Poverty Inquiry, the Income Security Review, the Social Security Review and the Ministerial Task Force on Child Support. Sue Regan was involved with the second McClure Review and has researched in detail the various Inquiries as part of her PhD studies.

ⁱⁱ The new Commissioners were announced by the Minister for Social Security, Bill Hayden, on 7 March 1973. Their general areas of responsibility were: Professor Sackville: Law and poverty; Professor Gates: Selected economic issues; Reverend Martin: Social/Medical aspects; and Dr Fitzgerald: Education and poverty. Professor Henderson was to exercise general oversight and co-ordination. Hayden has subsequently commented that Professor Henderson "...was angry and peeved" about the new arrangements (Stanton, 1973, p.27 and Hayden, 1996, pp186-187). There is an interesting discussion of the Melbourne poverty study and further background on Professor Henderson's work and contribution in Williams, 2012.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Report by Justice Toose was essentially a further report on an aspect of income security. He was commissioned in October 1971 to undertake an inquiry into all aspects of the repatriation system. His Report was tabled in February 1976. Toose considered that separate arrangements for the compensation of veterans and their dependents continued to be justified. However he advocated consolidation of legislation into one Statute; a restructuring of administration; and a revision to the methods of assessing disability and associated compensation. Subsequently, the Department of Veterans' Affairs was created (October 1976) and a range of administrative reforms introduced. The time taken for the preparation by Justice Toose of his report was a source of frustration for the Whitlam Government. On 29 October 1975 the Minister for Repatriation and Compensation, John Wheeldon, was compelled to remark that "...the time taken for Mr Justice Toose's Inquiry and the preparation of the report has now lasted almost as long as the First World War did" (Whitlam 1985, p.367)

^{iv} This was foreshadowed by Prime Minister Whitlam in the course of his Chifley Memorial Lecture, Melbourne, 14 August 1975.

^v See also discussion of GMI proposals in Saunders (1976), Pritchard and Saunders (1978) and Saunders (1981).

^{vi} Brian Howe has noted that '...I intended that Dr Cass would work closely with the department, especially the "Development Division" or social policy area, under David Stanton'(which was) '...well staffed and included a number of outstanding researchers' (Howe, 2003, p. 243).