The Influence of National Competition Policy in Reshaping Human Service Delivery

Pendo Mwaiteleke, BSW; Post-grad Dip Welfare; MA in Public Policy

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia

June 2007
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Pendo Mwaiteleke
Abstract

This thesis sets out to look at the influence of Australia’s National Competition Policy reform in reshaping human services. In trying to understand this influence, the research explores the main threads of National Competition Policy – including concepts of contestable markets, Competitive Neutrality and Competitive Tendering and Contracting. It also notes the dominance of neoclassical economics and public choice theories underpinning the framing of this reform.

More specifically, the work tracks down the way in which National Competition Policy is impacting on human service delivery through using particular contractual arrangements with non-government providers in a bid to foster value for money through competition and market choice arrangements. This part of the research rests on two case studies, an employment assistance service (Labour Market Programs) known as Job Network and a crisis accommodation service (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program - SAAP). Through them the thesis explores and locates the parameters and the terms under which federal and state funding is accessed and the new organisational arrangements which regulate the terms of client treatment and the scope of professional practice.

In theoretical terms, the thesis draws on mainly a governmentality literature to illuminate the emerging modes of neo-liberal governance, particular attention is given to patterns of self regulation and the conditions governing distant actors.
Acknowledgements

There are many people who have variously contributed in making this research study possible.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the study participants and to two agencies and their staff, namely Peel Training and Employment and Swan Emergency Accommodation, for their time and generosity in sharing their experiences.

Entry into the field was made so much easier with the support of Ian Carter (Job Futures) and the late Geoff Smith (formerly with the Department for Community Development). I am very grateful to both Ian and Geoff. Before his passing, the latter colleague left me with inspiring thoughts about the importance of social workers playing their part in researching the theme of contracting practices in relation to service design and client treatment as he also saw these matters as having a great deal of relevance at the level of everyday practice.

My Supervisor, Professor Patricia Harris, has taken me throughout my PhD study from the beginning. She greatly assisted in clarifying my thoughts as I went through research conceptualisation to data collection. More significantly, she was responsible for introducing me to governmentality literature – a significant framework of analysis for my social policy interests and sharing a range of her resources in the area. I experienced conceptual challenges in this process, but I feel richer for it. I am also very grateful to Dr Loraine Abernethie, a co-supervisor who also offered invaluable guidance and promoted my appreciation of scholarship. The interest she showed in the progress of my thesis is appreciated.

My former field colleagues who had worked in the area of Labour Market Programs also offered me assistance during the initial research exploration phase. My sincere gratitude to George Camilleri, Gemechu N’Dembali, Dr Joy Puls and Ben Agius.
During 2003 – 2004 I was actively involved with a Globalisation Roundtable network. I am grateful to Dee Margetts, the former WA Member of Parliament and her staff Bridget Blackford who hosted the secretariat that drew this group together. My interaction with this network included a range of people from farming, water resources, government trading enterprises and public policy at large who had some familiarity with the practices of National Competition Policy in their particular sectors – this space helped to minimised a sense of isolation in tackling a study on a reform which is not commonly discussed in most areas of my social work and social policy practice.

I am indebted to all the academic staff who took me through my MA (Public Policy) at Murdoch University in the mid 1990s. It was during this period that many questions arose in relation to the way managerialist and neo-liberal economic ideas seemed to be implicated in reforming human services and beyond - a background that was instrumental in influencing my PhD subject choice. In addition, thanks are due to all Murdoch Postgraduate Research staff for providing excellent ongoing support throughout the course of my study.

To my employer, the Division of Humanities - Curtin University, my sincere gratitude for extending to me a semester of study leave, which allowed me to commence my PhD write-up. The teaching and interactional experience at the Department of Social Work Social Policy has also over the years provided a fertile environment to think through a range of ideas on social theory and professional practice. Professor Richard Hugman, formerly the Head of the then School of Social Work & Social Policy at Curtin University deserves a special mention. His initial encouragement and intellectual thoughts played a significant role in my decision to undertake my doctorate. Later, I also benefited from his suggestions pointing to engagement with the Schumpeterian thoughts and other notions of workfare. I would also like to acknowledge Professor Dani Stehliek (Stronger Communities, Curtin University) for lending me some of her valuable literature resources on governmentality, which also proved very useful as I was trying to unravel the thinking behind governmentality techniques.
My twin daughters Exilema and Lovenia, I’m blessed. And Exy, my appreciation for the extra load you took around the house. Finally, my parents – thank for you everything. To my father, for his life-long encouragement that girls should make the most of education – as they say, we stand on the shoulders of giants.
# Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

## Introduction

### Chapter One: Conceptual Framework – Governmentality and Pusey

- Background
- Introducing Complementary Analytical Framework
  - Conceptualising governmentality
  - Management of national economy
- Miller and Rose’s approach to governmentality
- Rose’s Characterisation of advanced liberalism
- Rationalities and technologies of rule
- Disciplinary technologies and self-regulation
- Language
  - Discursive character of policy
- Pusey’s approach
- Subjecting Society to economic goals
- Concluding remarks

### Chapter Two: Development of Competition Policies and related Managerialist Reforms

- Introduction
- Global Economic Change, Neo-liberalism and the Welfare State
New Managerial Techniques 57
Mechanisms of National Competition Policy 59

*Putting the pieces in place* 59
The Hilmer Framework 64
Constructing Authoritative Calculations – the McCarrey Report 68
Homeswest and the new accounting calculations 72
Competitive Neutrality 76
Competitive Tendering and Contracting (CTC) 80
Shifts in Public Sector Practices 84
The Impact of Competition Policy on Non-Government Organisations 91

*Competitive Tendering and Contracting of Labour Market Programs* 92
*Contracting of Family Support Services Under the Department of Community Development* 97

**Chapter Three: Methodology** 100

*Research topic* 104

*Objectives* 104

A case study 105

*Sampling procedures* 107

Data Collection Methods

*Structured and In-depth Interviews* 111

*Observation* 113

*Official Texts* 114

Methods of Data Analysis 115

Ethical Considerations and Research Limitations 117
Chapter Four: Contracting labour Market Programs – Job Matching, Job Search and Intensive Assistance

Introduction 124
Data Collection 125

Background 126

Broad Shifts in the Employment Assistance Programs 127
Peel Training and Employment Inc. 130
Program Description 133
Job Search Training 134
Intensive Assistance 134
Job Matching Service 136

Technologies of rule and processes of codification 137

Producing notions of responsibility 138
Ordering operational processes and procedures 141

Technologies and Practices of Efficiency 147

Classification Practices 147
Outcome Measurements 151
Cultivating employable minds 159
Management Perspectives 163

Concluding Remarks 165

Chapter Five: Contracting Family Support Services 168
Reflections on the re-making of professionalism, including the role of technology 230

Reflections on the Schumpeterian thoughts and notions of workfare 233

Reflections on thesis 236

Appendices 238

References 252
Introduction

The provision of human services remains an important feature of most Western liberal societies. Significant changes, however, continue to take place in terms of reworking notions of the welfare state amid growing globalising social and economic trends. In Australia, significant changes have taken place in the organisation of most human services. According to the Australian Public Service Commission, successive governments have sought to transform public sector practices with a view to sustaining a strong economy underpinned by balanced budgets through economic cycles. This requirement has seen the public sector operational principles shifting from those seeking to deliver fair, equitable services with an emphasis on due process to new arrangements based on competitive market ideas stressing market choice, greater government partnership with the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), consumer participation and accompanying notions of mutual obligation. At the same time, the public service is also currently called upon to ‘deliver services “fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously to the Australian public” whilst being sensitive to the diversity of the public’ (APSC 2003a: Chpt. 6: 1, 19 and Chpt 7: 1). These changes are playing a part in the pursuit of greater value for money spent in the production and provision of human services around the country.

It is against this background that questions arise about what services or programs should be produced. Under what terms should they be accessed? What organisational parameters should be regulating these new arrangements? It is with these sorts of concerns in mind
that this study sought to explore the influence of National Competition Policy (NCP) in reworking the way human services are provided.

This study argues that the introduction of Australia’s National Competition Policy (NCP) has ushered in a significant departure in the organisation of services and the treatment of unemployed people receiving employment assistance (Labour Market Programs - LMPs) and it is contributing to particular understandings of how unemployment is to be governed. The reform has also, to a lesser extent, reshaped the governance of homelessness, whereby greater effort has been focussed on fostering certain behaviours amongst homeless people with the intention of consolidating their access to the private housing rental markets. Simultaneously, efficiency concerns have sought to limit the availability of the public housing stock previously more readily accessible to some low income earners.

These shifts are partly facilitated through a range of mechanisms and techniques deployed under the NCP reform. Exploring the main threads of NCP, directly and indirectly, and in looking through the programmatic shifts arising in connection with this policy reform, offers some insights into the varied organisational arrangements and the terms of client treatment under these emerging systems.

Under this policy, competitive practices have become a key requirement in the reorganisation and procurement arrangements of Australia’s government-funded human services delivered through non-government organisations (NGOs) and those contracted
out to profit making organisations (APSC 2003a). The Competitive Tendering and Contracting (CTC) system used in the procurement of Australia’s Labour Market Programs (LMPs), and also the Preferred Service Provider (PSP) system characterising the procurement of the Western Australia’s state funded family support services are closely linked to the competition practices operating nationwide. These systems are a part of what is known as contestable markets strongly espoused in the 1993 NCP Report (Hilmer 1993) and allow the possibility of new service operators contesting and taking over service delivery run by a particular incumbent provider. Closely connected with this notion is also the concept of Competitive Neutrality – a mechanism through which government operations are progressively prevented from maintaining a competitive operational advantage over other potential business or service operators in the private and not-for-profit sectors. Hence the requirement removing legislative and fiscal advantages held by public entities (Australian Government 1999; DFA 2002b). Through such notions of contestability, it is also becoming increasingly possible to require service providers to deliver greater value for money by ensuring that governments assume a greater say over the way services are designed and delivered (service specifications) (Australian Government 2003; Financial Management Accountability 1997). That is under what terms are services to be delivered, and through what frameworks are they to be provided?

It is in this context that this research study explores the introduction of competition practices and the way these shape the organisation and delivery of services at Peel Training and Employment agency, a Job Network Service contracted by the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to deliver Labour Market
Programs, namely, Job Matching, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance programs. I also look at the way in which Western Australia’s Preferred Service Provider model is reshaping organisational arrangements and the treatment of clients in receipt of crisis and supported accommodation services at Swan Emergency Accommodation funded by the state’s Department of Community Development (DCD). The case studies’ field data discussed in this thesis was collected from 2000 to 2002.

Chapter One introduces the major conceptual framework used in making sense of NCP reform and the case studies - governmentality analysis - complementing it with insights generated by Pusey’s perspective on the ascendancy of neo-liberalism and subsequent decline of social democratic traditions in Australia. The chapter outlines the basic premises of the governmentality approach, starting with Foucault’s notion of political rationality. Tied with that, the study moves on to discuss governmentality’s concepts of technologies and mechanisms of rule. Tied to this is a discussion on the notion of alignments implicated in drawing closely an assemblage of distant actors such as NGOs engaged in pursuing governmental objectives. Finally, the work introduces a discussion on ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault 1988b) or techniques of self formation involved in fostering self-discipline and surveillance connected to governmental objectives.

In order to illuminate the role of National Competition Policy in reshaping the delivery of the human services described above, it is first necessary to provide a background on the broad formulation of this policy and those aspects of its formulation that have a bearing on the organisation of human services. Consequently, Chapter Two lays out the
development and broad framework of this policy, locating it in the context of the ascendancy of global neo-liberal and managerialist frameworks and methods. The work disentangles the official definition and assumptions connected with NCP. The chapter then locates the NCP reform as part of a project earmarked in the overhauling ‘foundations’ of Keynesian economics that supported the expansion of the post-war welfare state in Australia. I describe and flesh out the narrow logic and rationalities of neo-classical economics and public choice knowledge systems that give impetus to the practices of competition policy. The work highlights the manner in which neo-classical economics and public choice theories have played a part in justifying shifts away from collective approaches, preferring instead a strengthening of individual-oriented frameworks.

The thesis pays significant attention to the development of the NCP, spelling out the nature of knowledge, methods and techniques underpinning the constitution of this policy. Given the technical character of terms and concepts underpinning the workings of NCP reform, I have used examples in an effort to clarify the complex trail of economic and managerialist ideas underpinning a range of these formulations. Based on the same grounds, the section laying out the ‘foundations’ of NCP is preceded by the thesis conceptual framework, governmentality and Pusey.

The thesis draws special attention to National Competition Policy’s pronouncement that general community welfare is primarily enhanced when welfare provision is subject to competitive practices as understood through what the Hilmer Report (1993) presents as a
superior neo-classical economics knowledge underpinning competition. What is important to bear in mind is that it is this definitional assumption of competition that variously informs the formulation of the Competitive Tendering and Contracting for which Job Network employment assistance programs are subject, and to a lesser extent, the state’s moderated Preferred Service Provider models of service procurement explored in my second case study. The thesis points out that it is through this body of knowledge that new technologies of Competitive Neutrality are invented and set in play by reinforcing, among other things, the facilitation of contracting practices, and significantly regulating the public housing reforms at a broader level.

The research project locates key players involved in driving the NCP agenda. Starting with the then Prime Minister Keating commissioning the Hilmer Report (1993) for the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG), and the significant ongoing involvement of the Federal and State governments and Territories, I also bring into focus the prominent role of the National Competition Policy Council (NCC), an overseer and a key player in the ongoing authoring of the NCP. In the case of Western Australia, the study locates the Office of Premier and Cabinet, and the State Supply Commission (SSC). The implied influence of certain business players and policy communities is initially indicated.

In Chapter Two, I also pay attention to Western Australia’s attempt to promote competitive practices as a way of enhancing community welfare and accountability as provided through the McCarrey Report (1993a, b). Here, I highlight key government
technologies and rationalities aligned with the national mechanisms deployed through Hilmer (1993), and those being progressively elaborated and expanded by agencies such as the National Competition Council and other government institutions. In particular, I bring to the forefront two key technologies of rule, namely CTC and Competitive Neutrality (CN) – I explain their technical (definitional) meanings and their relevance to my case studies.

A detailed description of managerial approaches linked to the NCP enables a glimpse into a range of connected techniques engaged in facilitating the National Competition Policy reform. In this way, the study locates Australia’s public sector shifts that have taken place in response to notions of competition and the drive to achieve greater value for money.

Chapter Three briefly describes my search for a methodology, ultimately leading to a governmentality approach. I draw out the methodological working premises underpinning this analysis: the sorts of questions that governmentality seeks to answer; the problematisation of categorical policy truths, including the discursive and arbitrary character of policy justifications; the approach to notions of power, and the treatment of subjectivity. The chapter also locates Pusey’s complementary analysis mainly used to assist in locating the professional and welfarist approaches as counterdiscourses. The chapter then describes the research question and methods.

In Chapter Four I look at program organisation and treatment of unemployed people (Job Seekers) in receipt of employment assistance programs, namely, Job Matching, Job
Search Training and Intensive Assistance at Peel Training and Employment agency operating under the Competitive Tendering and Contracting system. The chapter describes the means by which the practices of a contracting regime attempt to draw a Job Network provider into working within particular objectives of governance. The study brings to light a broad range of mechanisms that make the reformed Job Network LMPs knowable and possible – the rationalities and technologies regulating the relationship between the provider and their clients, the disciplinary mechanisms, and the ordinary ways in which self-regulation is promoted. The thesis also delves into the employment assistance programmatic shifts involving highly developed codification practices, enabling and containing the scope of client treatment. Then, I explore and discuss the elaborate technologies and practices of efficiency connected with the Job Seekers Classification Instrument (JSCI), performance measurements and the reward system promoting renewal of service contracts for highly rated performers. The study goes on to describe the regulation and monitoring involving the Job Network provider’s day-to-day client operations through electronic information systems linking client progress records from Job Network local operational sites, all the way to Centrelink and the Department of Employment and Working Relations (DEWR). The dissertation also describes Job Network staff experiences, concerns and uncertainties around their perceptions of operating under this contracting system.

Chapter Five locates Swan Emergency Accommodation service in the context of shifts relating to Australia’s management of housing, and more specifically crisis accommodation supports over at least the last two decades. The dissertation identifies a
detailed account of shifting political rationalities constituting the management of homelessness in the country. It simultaneously identifies sources of authority informing recent government objectives connected with NCP and authorised in the facilitation of these shifts. The chapter also describes a fairly complex picture of the clientele group using Swan Emergency Accommodation services. It then documents some rather disturbing findings indicating that most people seeking crisis accommodation are least likely to access the private housing rental market. Prior to and after receiving support, this group tends to exhibit a pattern of over-reliance on public and community housing options rather than private rental. These findings are of interest in the context of this discussion to the extent that they are incompatible with the Rental Assistance (that is, market-oriented voucher system) strategy emphasised by the McCarrey Report (1993b) and central to public choice theoretical prescriptions justified on the criteria of efficiency, as a technique of choice when selecting safety net frameworks. I argue that under NCP, the drive to attain greater value for money (efficiency objectives), by disposing of a significant portion of public housing stock under the former Homeswest, seems to have been achieved at some cost to other competing governmental social objectives of affording quality housing options for some Australians at the bottom end of the social economic scale. Not least amongst this group are Aboriginal people, representing significant rates of service users of crisis accommodation support systems.

Detailed attention is drawn to the promotion of a range of techniques under the current system engaged in cultivating household management attributes aimed at encouraging the homeless population to work on themselves, building responsible and reliable tenancy
behaviours agreeable in the housing rental market. Unlike the provision of the Labour Market Programs where new managerial techniques dominate over the traditional welfarist professional approaches, under the Preferred Service Provider system, professional practices pertaining to casework remain largely in operation, although the parameters of practice are subject to particular managerialist disciplines. In this sense, the thesis maintains that welfarist and managerialist forms largely co-exist in the governance of homelessness. Nonetheless, the study implicates managerial shifts in the demise of collective strategies such as lobbying and systemic advocacy involving Swan Emergence Accommodation staff, as a valuable part of agency operations in addressing the issues of homelessness. I also maintain that ongoing professional development has gone into decline since the introduction of the state-based contractual practices.

The study concludes with reflections on National Competition Policy, wherein attention is drawn to the significance of understanding the ‘foundations’ upon which this policy rests – the mechanisms and techniques connected with the NCP agenda. Here, the arbitrary character of this policy formulation is emphasised. The chapter reflects on a range of study findings and their potential implications. In discussing these findings, the study appraises the value of governmentality approach in its potential capacity generating particular study revelations. Of significance are the codification and technologies regulating efficient operational conduct, emerging forms of self governance and a range of other concerns leading to question particular taken-for-granted aspects of contestable markets. The political rationalities and technologies of the self implicated in the two case studies are revisited in my final reflections in Chapter Six, questioning the forms of
governance involved in the cultivation of particular mentalities of rule amongst unemployed and homeless people in Australia. The final chapter also pays broad attention to the usefulness of governmentality techniques to this research study and more broadly, the understanding of social policy concerns.

I now turn my attention to the conceptual framework used in this thesis to make sense of NCP.
Chapter One

Conceptual Framework - Governmentality and Pusey

Background

My choice of the analytical frameworks described in this chapter is in keeping with my personal commitments. As a former field practitioner now has an academic interest in the continued shaping and reshaping of the welfare state, I note the various explanations and justifications of programmatic change. Establishing an analytical framework has been a challenging and long-winded journey. Attendance at conferences and publication pursuits between 2002 and 2005 offered me an opportunity to share and discuss the implications of my research case studies and their relationship to wider political shifts. The feedback received and my initial reading of the data, pointed to the importance of the constitutive and fluid properties of language alongside the potential rationalities involved in the NCP reform. Against this background, I concentrate on the work of governmentality theorists. I also draw, to a lesser extent, on the work of Michael Pusey, who, while coming from a different tradition, is particularly useful in illuminating the displacement of social democratic rationalities underpinning Keynesian regulatory system.

This chapter describes this conceptual framework. I start by describing the governmentality approach as initially established by Foucault (1991a, d; 1988a,b; 1984; 1982) and then move on to the work of Miller and Rose (1990). In the final part of the chapter I turn to Pusey’s (2003; 1993; 1991) insights on neo-liberal policy reforms.
Introducing Complementary Analytical Frameworks

In using a governmentality approach as a means of understanding NCP, this research departs from orthodox explanations that view policy primarily through the role of the state. Governmentality concerns itself with the objectives of rule, suggesting that the officials and subjects modify their (and other’s) behaviours in connection with those objectives. This approach offers a useful analytical lens for this thesis as it allows one to focus on both the epistemology of rule and the means whereby it is implemented. In this way, it helps to make sense of how welfare clients and welfare delivery organisations are situated and treated under NCP, while drawing out and untangling the rationalities and technologies stemming from the NCP agenda in connection with the human service practices under study. While National Competition Policy is authored at high national and state levels, it is important to give recognition to the dispersal of its sources of power – to explore the operation of power at the ‘coalface’ and sites of everyday experience. Through focussing on shifting rationalities of government and technologies of rule, the governmentality approach serves to elucidate the terms of client treatment and the new organisational arrangements through which clients are subject under National Competition Policy conditions.

My underlying argument is that the new market and managerialist modes rework the terms of client treatment and reshape professional practices. I argue that the older-standing professional and bureaucratic forms of practice, and the activist and social
democratic ideas characteristic of many NGOs, are either dislodged altogether, or made subservient to the new marketised welfare state configuration.

In this context, Pusey’s work (1991; 1993; 2003) provides a complementary critical lens through which competition policies may be understood. Pusey belongs to a broader critical tradition emphasising the displacement of post-war governing rationalities through the process of the global economic change (for example see Pollitt 1998; Battin 1991; Mendes 2003; Lavalette and Pratt; Capling, et al; Ife 2002; Solomon 1999; Overbeek; Didsbury 1985; Rusimbi 2003), as well as welfare analysts such as Bryson (1992) who discusses the displacement of traditions associated with social reformists such as Beveridge, Titmus and Marshall and so forth as having been broadly supported and reliant on the project of Keynesian economics (1992: 46).

In this chapter though I am interested in paying particular notice to Pusey particularly for the attention he gives in locating understandings of instrumental rationality underpinning neo-classical economics, contrasting it with the social democratic position which, he maintains, prevailed prior to the move to economic rationalism. Pusey is influenced by the elite theory and neo-Weberian notions of rationality. His analysis is of great value to my thesis in that he argues that under the new order what he calls ‘economic rationalism’ positions the market as the prime axiom through which political decisions are made. Crucially, he suggests that this has led to the subordination of social democratic values and practices as economic rationalism subjects both ‘society’ and ‘polity’ to the needs of the market.
Conceptualising governmentality

In the governmentality literature, government is not understood or explained as the ‘elected’ government or in relation to official practices as in the traditional literature (for example see, Mendes 2003; Fenna 1998; Weimer and Vining 2005; Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987; Gough 1979; Hill 2005). Instead, government comes to be seen as involving loosely connected agencies and authorities drawn together by particular objectives. Governmentality theorists also focus on the way people regulate their own personal conduct in connection with governmental objectives. This self-regulation ties the notion of government closely to the exercise of personal conduct. Another crucial part of this equation is an understanding of the subjection of populations to a variety of knowledge developed and generated through the disciplines such as demography, statistics, public health and psychology. (Foucault 1991a, b, c,d; Miller and Rose 1990; Rose 1996). Crucially, from a governmentality perspective, it is also argued that ‘liberalism’, as a way of ruling rather than a political philosophy, is the dominant form of governance in Western democratic societies.

Management of national economy - Foucault

Foucault explores the extensive growth of the ‘art of government’ in the period from the mid-sixteenth until the eighteenth century. He suggests that the study of the art of government during this period centred on questions of ‘how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom will the people accept being governed, how to
become the best possible governor’ (Foucault 1991a: 87). This contrasted with earlier notions in which the object of governance was maintaining the power of the prince.

Central to the emergence of this art of government was the ‘introduction of economy into political practice’ (Foucault, 1991a: 92). It follows that
to govern a state will therefore mean to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of an entire state, which means *exercising towards its inhabitants and the wealth and the behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive* as that of a head of a family over his household and his goods (Foucault 1991a: 92).

Foucault also stresses that the ‘political and social processes’ (1988a: 11) underpinning Western European societies arise out of ‘precise historical change’ (1988a: 11). In particular the development of the science of government enabled the management of populations, re-configuring the management of the economy as the possession of the prince to an independent sphere with its own laws.

Thus, for Foucault, the ‘arbitrar[y]’ (1988a: 11) existence of state institutions and their role, have often gone unnoticed as if these are given, and of a fixed character. In the context of governmentality, under the newer configuration – *reason of the state* meant that the state’s justification for existence is inseparable from its quest to achieve security and wellbeing. In Foucault’s words reason of state become:

*Understood not in the negative and pejorative sense we give to it today (as that which infringes on the principles of law, equity and humanity in the sole interest of the state), but in a full and positive sense: the state is governed according to rational principles which are intrinsic to it and which cannot be derived solely from natural or divine laws or the principles of wisdom and prudence; the state, like nature, has its own proper form of rationality, albeit of a different sort. Conversely, the art of government instead of seeking to found itself in*
transcendental rules, a cosmological model or a philosophical-moral ideal, must find the principles of its rationality in that which constitutes the specific reality of the state (Foucault 1991a: 97).

According to Foucault, it is the state’s own justification for existence that comes to represent a distinct form of ‘modern political rationality’ (1988c: 152). Population lies at the heart of this rationality: ‘the population now represents more the end of government than the power of the sovereign’ (1988c: 152). Further, ‘the population is the subject of needs, of aspirations, but it is also the object in the hands of the government, aware, vis-à-vis the government, of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it’ (Foucault 1991a: 100).

Foucault’s work on power underpins his approach to governmentality. He departs from the traditional approach that concerns itself with the ‘global kind of domination that one person exercises over others, or one group over another.’ (Foucault 1980c: 96). In moving away from regulated and juridico power frameworks, Foucault gives significance to the diverse relations of power that permeate, characterise and constitute ‘the social body’ (Foucault 1980c: 93), there he argues that such relations of power can only take shape through ‘production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of discourse’ (Foucault 1980c: 93). In this way, ‘methods of subjugation’ (Foucault 1980c: 93) come to take a more central focus in his analysis, allowing an exploration of power in ‘its fields of application…where it installs itself and produces real effects’ (Foucault 1980c: 96-97). Foucault’s analysis also suggests that the exercise of power occurs through ‘net-like’ arrangements, whereby ‘individuals are always the element of its [power] articulation’ (Foucault 1980c: 98). This means that, ‘individuals are the vehicle of power, not its point
of application’ (Foucault 1980c: 98). My two case studies will illuminate the manner in which subjects are becoming ‘materially constituted’, generating insights of what Foucault calls experiences of ‘subjection in its material instance’ (1980c: 97).

In describing the development of governmentality, Foucault (1991a: 101-3) pays attention to the part played by the disciplinary mechanisms made possible by the growth of social, economic and psychological disciplines. He suggests that modern European societies are ‘ruled by techniques of government, [that] turns on the theme of population and hence on the birth of political economy.’ (1991a: 101). He also proposes that the policing of the population (in the manner of polizeiwissenschaft) can be understood as a kind of ‘economic pastorate’. In this way, one sees ‘profound connectedness between the principles of political action and those of personal conduct’ (Foucault 1981, quoted in Gordon 1991:12).

Foucault’s concept of disciplinary mechanisms has several features relevant to this thesis. First, he argues that disciplinary mechanisms tends to emigrate, asserting that although ‘disciplinary establishments multiply, their mechanisms have a certain tendency to become de-institutionalised, to step outside closed fortresses and to circulate in a “free” state; massive and compact disciplines decompose into supple processes of control, which can be transferred and adapted’ (Foucault 1980c: 113). In addition, he refers to ‘normalisation’ of disciplines, arguing that strategies of ‘hierarchical surveillance, normalising sanctions, and examination’ involve ‘production (not repression) – producing, raising value, intensifying rather than constraining, forbidding, stopping’
(cited in Ewald 1991: 171). Significant here is Foucault’s emphasis that ‘discipline “manufactures” individuals; it is the specific technique of a power which take individuals at one and the same time as objects and the instruments by means of which is exercised’ (cited in Ewald 1991: 171).

So far I have concentrated on Foucault’s insights into the growth in governing techniques in Western societies since the eighteenth century and the basic element of his notion of ‘governmentality’. It is against this background that I turn to the work of Miller and Rose.

**Miller and Rose’s approach to governmentality**

In their work on advanced liberalism, Miller and Rose describe official endeavours ‘to transform the calculative procedures of economic actors’, and link this with attempts to promote forms of individual self-government that are in line with broader governmental objectives (1990: 1). Expanding on the usefulness of the governmentality approach, they comment on its distinct relevance in probing ‘the exercise of political rule’ (1990: 3) – a matter that lies at the heart of this thesis. Their analysis attends to ‘elements out of which particular rationalities are formed, and to the mechanisms and techniques through which they are rendered operable’ (1990: 11). They emphasise that ‘the rationalities and technologies do not stand in a one-to-one relationship; the relays and linkages between them are decisive conditions for the elaboration of each’ (Miller and Rose 1990: 11-12).
Miller and Rose put the very notion of policy under a microscope. The way they see it, "policy should itself be treated as something to be explained" (1990: 3), rather than taking its historical existence for granted. They thus depart from some of the common conventions and assumptions associated with mainstream policy traditions, where the policy dynamics involving 'social problems' are primarily understood through the frame of contesting political and philosophical discourses. It follows from this that Miller and Rose believe that the transformations, whereby issues such as unemployment, poverty and crime come to be known as problems, should themselves be interrogated (1990: 3).

Miller and Rose want to draw attention to 'the programmatic character of governmentality' (1990: 4), and, in this respect, are interested in the actual 'workings' of policy. Here they also draw attention to the unfinished nature of government and the constant need of policy to reinvent and improve itself. This is illustrated by the characteristic cycle of policy reforms – the re-working, re-evaluating, and revamping of failures and drawbacks in programs originally presented as improvements designed to achieve a better deal in terms of 'economic growth, productivity, low inflation, [and] full employment' (1990: 4).

Rose (1996) discusses advanced liberalism as a political rationality and points out that the philanthropic activities characteristic of the first part of the 19th century were associated with classical liberal rationality. This way of governing people's fortunes was 'supplemented and displaced by the truths produced and disseminated by the positive sciences of economics, statistics, sociology, medicine, biology, psychiatry, and
psychology’ (Osborne 1994, quoted in Rose 1996: 39). It was not until the late nineteenth century that another significant shift took place, this time with the expansion of the “social” (Rose 1996: 39). It aimed to simultaneously ‘humanise’ the harshness of the urban industrialised economy and to impact on labour conditions and economic arrangements, with the broader aim of promoting the economic and social wellbeing and security of the population. Rose argues that the period was characterised not so much by the proliferation of positive state interventions, as is commonly understood in the traditional policy literature, but by the ‘invention of various “rules for rule” that sought to transform the state into’ an entity that could ‘shape, guide, channel, direct, control… events and persons distant from it. Persons and activities were to be governed through society’ (1996: 40) and regulated through social norms In this respect, Rose points to the role of the social and economic disciplines in enabling the new forms of political rule to ‘install and empower a variety of “professionals”, investing them with authority to act as experts in the devices of social rule’ (1996: 38). This particular shift, according to him, reconceptualised the subject from one who was regulated by the ‘individualising moral normativity’ characteristic of the early 19th century into a person of ‘needs, attitudes and relationships, a subject who was to be embraced within, and governed through, a nexus of collective solidarities and dependencies’ (Rose 1996: 40-41). It is through this latter nexus that the development of the welfare state has come to be understood, including responses to the question of unemployment and homelessness, subjects of my case studies.
Crucially, Rose identifies a shift from the ‘social’ epoch to the period of advanced liberalism. The new political rationality challenges the legitimacy of the welfare state, accusing it of inefficiency, violating economic liberties and undermining morality. Advanced liberalism, Rose says, seeks to ‘de-governmentalize the state and de-statize practices of government, to detach the substantive authority of expertise from apparatuses of political rule, relocating experts within a market governed by rationalities, accountability and consumer demand’ (1996: 41). He suggests that with the advent of advanced liberalism, the governing of the economy, broadly speaking, starts to gradually be taken out of “society” (1996: 41). This is achieved through neo-classical market mechanisms, whereby citizens are ‘constructed as subject of choices and aspirations to self-actualization and self-fulfilment’ (1996: 41).

In the next section of this chapter, I examine Rose’s discussion of advanced liberalism in more detail.

**Rose’s characterisation of advanced liberalism**

Rose identifies the antecedents of advanced liberalism in post-war moves, including Hayek’s revamped free-market critique of the ‘interventionist state’ (1996: 50). This form of critique is guided by a logic that sees wealth and the securing of the nation to be enabled by thriving private enterprises, while the welfare state is generally considered “unproductive” (1996: 51). In this way, the ‘state’ is charged with over-extending itself. Rose also notes that the Keynesian interventionist state, previously seen to promote a cohesive and moral society, came to be faulted for failures in economic management.
More specifically, advanced liberalism argues that despite their intentions the older ‘rationalities, programmes and technologies of welfare’ (1996: 51) increase poverty and unemployment. Additionally, the welfare bureaucracies are accused of promoting their own interests. This criticism has also been heightened by a certain fragmentation of expertise in the field of welfare, coming about as a result of growing specialisations together with the growing pressure from the community and specific service ‘consumer’ groups (1996: 52).

Rose observes that the ideas surrounding advanced liberalism have been ‘crystallized’ into a consistent ‘mentality of government’ (1996: 53). So what constitutes this “new” mentality of government? The first point to note is that, as a mentality of rule, it shares many of the features of what has gone before, including the constant attempt to adjust to changing circumstances and rectify what comes to be seen as government failures. Marking a significant shift from rationalities of the post-war welfare state, however, it seeks to de-couple welfare from economic security and prospects, and to distance government from service provision (Rose 1996: 54). This thesis engages with these points through exploring NCP contracting-out practices, alongside the arrangements separating entities responsible for funding provision and program design from those engaged in service provision. In identifying the ‘purchaser–provider’ split as characteristic of welfare under advanced liberalism, Rose draws attention to the significance of this shift, whereby policy and program formulation is separated from service provision, with effort devoted to the very act of creating distance between these different functions. The corresponding dislodgement of welfare experts and the human
sciences from their key place has seen the growing influence of the accounting disciplines. In Rose’s words, this constitutes a new way of ‘responsibilizing experts in relation to claims upon them other than those of their own criteria of truth and competence’. In this quest, advanced liberalism:

invent[s] new…techniques of government that create a distance between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors, conceive[s] of these actors in new ways as subjects of responsibility, autonomy and choice, and seek[s] to act upon them through shaping and utilizing (1996: 55).

In this context, Rose draws on Power’s (1992, 1994) argument about the place of the new “audit” mechanisms, suggesting that they displace the trust that government formerly ‘once accorded to professional credentials’ (Rose 1996: 55). Emphasising the importance of this transformation, Rose contends:

In this process, the entities to be audited are transformed: they have to be “made auditable”, producing a new grid of visibilities for the conduct of organizations and those who inhabit them. Audit may make heavy demands, but it travels well across space and time, is capable of being propagated in a multitude of locales, channelling and organising activities and linking centres of calculation to sites of implementation according to new vectors. Despite the fact that its “epistemological profile” is, if anything, even lower than the knowledges that it displaces, and that there is nothing novel in the techniques of audit themselves, the mode of its operations – in terms of procedures rather than substantives, in terms of apparently stable and yet endlessly flexible criteria such as efficiency, appropriateness, effectiveness – renders it versatile and highly transferable technology for government at distance (Rose 1996: 55-56)

As discussed earlier, according to Rose another strong feature of advanced liberalism is the pursuit of the “de-governmentalisation of the state” and “de-statization of government” (Rose 1996: 56). In the wake of this, the knowledge associated with the social sciences and the Keynesian economies are dissolved, along with a ‘detaching of the centre from the various regulatory technologies’ (Rose 1996: 56). In their turn, the
technologies engaged in reworking ‘the social’ are preoccupied with ‘contracts, targets, indicators, performance measures, monitoring and evaluation, which are used to govern conduct while according them a certain autonomy of decisional power and responsibility for their actions’ (Rose 1996: 57).

Lastly, Rose holds that advanced liberalism brings about ‘a new specification of the subject of government’ (1996: 57). This sees the emergence of the ‘active’ citizen who promotes his or her potential and maximises the opportunities made possible through market frameworks. Here Rose highlights the emphasis on the ‘powers of the client as a customer’ (1996: 57), underlying advanced liberalism’s account of ‘freedom, liberty and autonomy’ (Rose 1996: 57).

So far, I have covered the main elements of advanced liberalism as described by Rose. For the purposes of my thesis, three concepts require more detailed elaboration, namely: rationalities and technologies of rule, the disciplinary technologies, and the discursive formation. The first two are dealt in the sections that follow, while the notion of discursive formations is elaborated under language.

**Rationalities and technologies of rule**

According to governmentality theorists, the activity of ruling is made possible through the deployment of a variety of mechanisms making the objects of rule knowable and possible. Miller and Rose (1990: 8) use the expression *technology* to mean the ‘actual mechanisms through which authorities of various sorts have sought to shape, normalize
and instrumentalize the conduct, thought, decisions, and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objective they consider desirable.’

Miller and Rose (1990: 13) emphasise the importance of ‘techniques of recording and calculation’. In more detail, they argue that this involves paying attention to:

- techniques of notation, computation and calculation; procedures of examination and assessment; the invention of devices such as surveys and presentational forms such as tables; the standardization of systems for training and inculcation of habits; the inauguration of professional specialisms and vocabularies; building design and architectural forms (1990: 8).

These arguments are particularly germane to this thesis given that in moving away from collective decision-making frameworks National Competition Policy has relied so heavily on computation and calculation modes favouring individualistic assessments.

While not a governmentality theorist, Muetzelfeldt’s (1992: 190) work is helpful in this context as he comes alongside Rose in depicting the importance of programmatic factors in shaping the style of the planning role that has emerged under neo-liberalism. In exploring the impact of marketisation and deregulation policy practices occurring during the Hawke-Keating era, he notes the emergence of a phenomenon he calls ‘meta-planning’. In essence, this ‘comprises the design of new, or the mobilisation of existing, incentive structures to produce “appropriate” conduct by the target group’ (1992: 195-6). Echoing a point made by governmentality theorists, Muetzelfeldt observes that while meta-planning claims to give choice to subjects, it actually calculates the parameters of this choice. He also observes that:
Meta-planning involves the centralisation of strategic control and the simultaneous devolution of tactical responsibility. Policy makers centralise themselves the strategic task of establishing systems of financial and/or non-financial incentives and devolve to their clients responsibility for making tactical decisions within those systems. It is precisely because it is only tactical responsibility that is devolved that the ‘free choice’ it provides is more apparent than real. Meta-planning opens up the means by which the state’s ends may be achieved, without relinquishing its attempts to produce those ends (1992: 196).

In the Introduction, I mentioned that prior to the market-driven policy changes, NGOs were able to deliver services under a submission-based funding model. This gave some measure of policy input in program designs, and provided some room for individual NGOs to assess local needs even though practices were still dependent on acceptable claims and economic rationing imperatives. The way in which NCP reduces such choices can be observed in service delivery across the board, and will be discussed later in relation to the two case studies researched for this thesis.

Miller and Rose (1990: 2) maintain that the ‘analysis of modern government needs to pay attention to the role accorded to indirect mechanisms for aligning economic, social and personal conduct with social-political objectives.’ They go on to observe that, ‘Political power is exercised today through a multitude of agencies and techniques, some of which are only loosely associated with the executive and bureaucracies of the formal organs of state’ (1990: 1-2).

In this respect Miller and Rose (1990: 1) also point out that governmentality ‘draws attention to the assemblage of loose and mobile networks that can bring persons, organizations and objectives into alignment.’ This notion of alignment can throw light on
the way in which the activities of NGOs are brought into correspondence with NCP and from there with the ruling objectives of government institutions. Thus, for example, NCP’s marketisation and privatisation strategies closely aligns the workings of NGOs with the federal government’s economic objectives and helps to streamline their economic, social and individual orientations to meet global economic imperatives.

The path to alignment does not proceed directly from central government to the non-government sector. Instead, and as will be outlined in Chapter Two, it is supported by incentives at state, local government and local service provider level. It is also reinforced by incentives to practice efficiency through pursuit of ‘better’ value for money, and through direct and indirect sanctions including the denial of potential contracts for the ‘recalcitrants’. I explore this point in Chapter Two and Chapter Four.

**Disciplinary technologies and self-regulation**

Governmentality theory draws a close connection between technologies of rule and the exercise of self-policing in modern liberal societies. Miller and Rose point out that governing is much more than simply ‘ordering activities and processes’ (1990: 18), whereby, the exercise of governing takes place through subjects. In turn, the ‘self-regulating capacities of subjects, [are] shaped and normalized through expertise’ (1990: 1). It is in this context, that following Foucault, Hutton argues that government helps shape the ‘structure of the mind’ (Hutton 1988: 125-6) and that modern processes of governance ‘require ever more explicit definitions of what is appropriate to human behaviour’ (Hutton 1988: 126). It is through these disciplinary underpinnings that
governmentality concerns its analysis with the examination of techniques (Dean 1995: 560) engaged in regulating conduct.

Dean’s (1995) contribution is useful in illuminating the notion of self-regulation. He argues that in order to understand notions of self-regulation as used in governmentality literature, it is important to bear in mind that in this context the notion of government is understood as one that brings the ‘regulation of conduct into focus’ (1995: 560). Hence, government comes to be seen as a ‘more or less calculated means of the direction of human conduct’ (Dean 1995: 560). It follows that in trying to make sense of the notion of self formation, recognition should be paid to its cultural and historical specificity connected through practices and techniques of the day. Foucault reminds that ‘the self or subject is not a substance but a form, one that is not necessarily identical with itself’ (Foucault 1988a quoted in Dean 1995: 362). Thus, there is a recognition of the constitutive character of the practices of government which:

- depend upon, operate through and create relays and linkages with what might be called “practices of self”. These practices are, if one likes, hybrid ones in that it is often not clear where the locus or agency for the direction of conduct lies, and which indeed suggests rather elastic boundaries in processes of self-formation (Dean 1995: 562).

In turn, as Dean points out, the dimension of self-formation draws attention to analysis to ‘the forms of self-relation, self-specification and self-shaping that are thrown into question and made possible and sometimes necessary by particular practices, techniques and exercises’ (Dean 1995: 564).
In the case of NCP, the technologies involved in shaping organisational, professional and client behaviour range from contracting practices such as Competitive Tendering and Contracting to the Preferred Service Provider systems, and a myriad of techniques regulating human service programs. Particular disciplinary expertise assists in the exercise of self-regulation of subjects. The case studies used in this thesis explores the nature of the workings of self-policing in connection with technologies of regulating the economy of unemployment and that of homelessness. Foucault argues, however, the relationship between knowledge and self-regulation should not be seen in a fixed way (1982: 18). Hence, in this analysis the thesis avoids deterministic generalisations and provides glimpses of new possibilities.

**Language**

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 10) remind the reader that language is central to the ‘calculations of struggles over power’. An awareness of the constitutive character of language is thus crucial to make sense of the operations and facilitation of National Competition Policy. This involves paying attention to the discursive features of policy formulation and its capacity to constitute particular logics, explanations and techniques. I start this discussion by looking at how governmentality theorists treat the question of language and how their views illuminate the workings of National Competition Policy.
Discursive character of policy

Miller and Rose (1990: 4) comment that ‘the conceptualisations, explanations and calculations that inhabit the governmental field require an attention to language.’ Foucault’s ‘Politics and the study of Discourse’ (1991b), suggests that any such analysis needs to look at the ‘episteme’ of a particular time through ‘changes which affect its objects, operations, concepts’ and ‘theoretical operations.’ (1991b: 55, 56). Attention, he says, needs to be paid to those changes resulting from ‘generalizations, ‘limitations’, ‘shifts’, and ‘exclusion or inclusion’. This type of analysis looks at ‘displacements of boundaries’ and gives weight to changes in hierarchy and ‘the nature of directing principle’ (Foucault 1991b: 56-7).

In more concrete terms Miller and Rose (1990: 5) pay particular attention to the ways in which policies come to be written, numerical values get used, and the uses for which such numbers are made to serve, and, in the process constitute how matters are understood and governed (1990: 5). In these respects they are concerned with the inscription of reality through techniques and methods, rather than with developing a ‘contemplative’ approach to language analysis (Miller and Rose 1990: 7). In this context, they are particularly keen to explore how the computational devices embedded in language render any particular phenomenon knowable, calculable, and administrable. To use their words:

Knowing an object in such a way that it can be governed is more than purely speculative activity: it requires the invention of procedures of notation, ways of collecting and presenting statistics, the transportation of these to centres where calculations and judgements can be made and so forth. It is of such procedures of inscription that the diverse domains of ‘governmentality’ are made up, that ‘objects’ such as the economy, the enterprise, the social field and the family are
rendered in a particular conceptual form and made amenable to intervention and regulation (Miller and Rose 1990: 5).

In these respects language can be seen to perform an important role in aligning networks and effecting indirect rule. For Miller and Rose this is facilitated through:

shared vocabularies, theories, explanations, that loose and flexible associations may be established between agents across time and space – Departments of state, pressure groups, academics, managers, teachers, employees, parents – whilst each remains, to a greater extent or lesser extent, constitutionally distinct and formally independent (1990: 10).

Numerous examples of such alignment between the National Competition Policy Council, government agencies, NGOs, and economic and accounting disciplines can be found within the context of the subject matter of this thesis. Thus, for example, Adelaide University and the Flinders University of South Australia were entrusted with the responsibility of designing the nationwide Job Network performance assessment methods, indicators and comparative service provider performance ratings and this impacted more or less directly on service provision (DEWRSB 2000: 1). Equally, the alliance between the Institute of Public Affairs, Western Australia (Nahan and Rutherford 1993) and the McCarrey Report (1993b) impacted on that of Homeswest. It is important to recognise that the languages are also highly contested. There are pressure groups that do not endorse the dominant political rationality agenda and, as best they can, oppose the calculations, formulations and procedures deployed to facilitate the current rule.
Pusey’s Approach

The quest for promotion of social policy concerns with its preoccupation for positive rights has tended to be pursued through social democratic traditions (George and Wilding 1976; Titmus 2000; Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Bryson 1992; Dean 1995; Pusey 1991). In this thesis Pusey’s (1991, 2003) work helps to capture the welfarist rationalities as part of this social democratic tradition. He asserts that the resurgence and dominance of neo-classical economics has transformed Australian policy. He argues that this transformation took place through the imposition of a narrow economic logic that displaced the social democratic tradition of the immediate post-war period. In the process, the ‘old’ form of bureaucracy, influenced by liberal social science disciplines, was marginalised, making room for newer managerial forms driven by the new elite trained in neo-classical economics. Pusey challenges the dominance of the market and its associated disciplines and disputes that it delivers better outcomes than the public sector.

Subjecting Society to Economic Goals

Pusey’s analysis is very different from that of governmentality theorists in that his treatment of power and ideology rests on more traditional philosophical assumptions. While there is a broad similarity in the shared importance they attach to the new economic rationalities, Pusey visualises ‘economy’ and ‘society’ as two different pre-existing spheres, with the former gradually taking over the latter, rather than spheres of governance constituted by discursive practice. Economic rationalism has relegated society to ‘a generic externality for the economy’ (2003: xiv), with the result that government now views it as a ‘stubbornly resisting sludge through which one must drive
the economy’ (2003: 183). In his observation about people internalising economic reform in their everyday survival lives, Pusey (2003) roughly parallels the governmentality theorists’ notion of self-regulation. He also clearly implicates capital accumulation in this development, asserting that:

Society itself, along with its broad middle, is externalised for big business as nothing more or less than an environment that is treated along with minerals and natural resources and the capital and labour markets, as one among many resources for production and profit-making in a competitive global economy (2003: 4).

Pusey characterises neo-classical economics as a clearly bounded and limited form of rationality, and criticises its pivotal assertion that ‘markets and prices are the only reliable means of setting value on anything, and, further, that markets and money can always, at least in principle deliver better outcomes than states and bureaucracies’ (2003: 14). He describes how neo-classical economics has pushed out other versions of economic thought including institutionalists and Keynesians, (2003: 14). Keen (2001) similarly argues that neo-classical economics has obscured alternative forms of economics including, Austrian economics, which, while closely related to neo-classical economics, is sceptical about the claims of market equilibrium and does not accord much credence to mathematical formulas in guiding economics as a discipline (Keen 2001: 300-13). Finally Pusey suggests that under a market system, ‘the ideal person shrinks to a socially autistic “choice receiver” (1993:13) that responds only with yes/no decisions that are extremely coordinated by prices and free markets!’

In sum, then, Pusey is concerned with the social and political transformations brought about by economic rationalism that ‘constrain’ social planning. To the extent that
planning exists, it is economic orientated meta-planning, directed towards enhancing the private sector meeting market ends, leading to the imposition of a narrow economic logic in areas previously influenced by the social, political and behavioural sciences (Pusey 1993: 2003). This observation is also underscored by Muetzelfeldt’s (1992) contention that current policies involve a type of meta-planning aimed at particular economic imperatives. In opposition to this trend, Pusey insists that national interests are best served by a knowledge emanating from a variety of disciplines (1993: 13).

In his work covering the experiences of middle class Australia Pusey (2003: 10) attempts to look beyond class, status, wealth and power as the sole drivers of modern capitalism to a focus on the factors that control and manage the new form of economic organisation. Using his words, ‘most people know that there never was a unified ruling class. It is the architecture, control and management of the new capitalism that matters’ (2003: 10). Reinforcing a point made in his earlier work, he maintains that the managerial elite includes economists trained in neo-classical economics, with this elite comprising the majority of senior executives in Canberra, especially in the Treasury and Prime Minister’s Office, and Finance. He describes close working connections between them and the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Corporation and Development, and points out that top government executives maintain very close linkages with Australia’s peak business bodies such as the Business Council of Australia.
Concluding Remarks

This chapter has described governmentality as the main conceptual framework used in the analysis of this research study, and to a small extent, the chapter has drawn on the work of Michael Pusey to achieve its analytical purpose. Underlying governmentality is a basic notion that under liberalism the concern for the economy is introduced in the art of governance. In this schema, the state finds justification for existence through its quest to achieve security and wellbeing, with the population being the subject and object of these aspirations. The chapter has also paid attention to the particular way in which the notion of government is understood under governmentality – through this conception, government is seen as that which involves loosely connected agencies and authorities drawn together by particular objectives. Significantly, I have explained that governmentalist theorists include government as also that which involves the self-regulation of one’s own conduct in connection with governmental objectives. Augmenting this understanding of government is the focus on the knowledge system generated by the dominant disciplines of the day essential in the regulation of the target population in keeping with objectives of rule.

It is these sorts of underpinnings that are largely drawn upon in this thesis to probe the exercise of political rule as seen in the context of National Competition Policy. More specifically, I have discussed the relevance Miller and Rose’s (1990) point that under the governmentality premise the analysis of policy becomes a subject for interrogation. This questioning of policy pays attention to the programmatic character of policy – it probes how policy works in practice, the manner in which policy practice engages itself in
perpetual reinvention as an apparent quest to improve itself. In this regard, the chapter has highlighted Miller and Rose’s explanation of what they describe as advanced liberalism which sees a new mentality of government that maintains a strong will to govern, while at the same time engaging in decoupling welfarist rationalities and dislodging welfarist experts from its rule. Instead, it installs new priests from economic and accounting disciplines to regulate the governance of the economy of which the human services are part. It is partly in this context that the work of Michael Pusey is drawn upon to broadly locate the welfarist logics and rationalities that were traditionally supported by social democratic discourses of the past.

The next chapter explores and describes the development of National Competition Policy.
Chapter Two

Development of Competition Policies and Related Managerialist Reforms

Introduction

Much has been written about the impact of neo-liberalism in re-configuring the welfare state over the last two and a half decades (Bryson 1992; Briskman and Muetzelfeldt 2003; Lavalette and Pratt 1997; Jamrozik 2001; Mendes 2003a; 2003b; Pierson and Castles 2000; Pierson 1998; Saunders 2000). Since the 1980s Australia has been pursuing various microeconomic reforms at both state and federal level (Capling, Considine and Crozier 1998; INDECS 1992; Kaptein 1993; Hilmer 1993; Pusey 1991; 2003). These reforms are implicated in promoting and facilitating particular conceptual conditions and social formations through which the reshaping of the welfare state came to take place. Despite the availability of literature on broad reform trends, research into the experiences of neo-liberal governance at points of service delivery remains sketchy. Investigation into Australia’s competition policies and related managerialist reforms reveals insights into the changes that have engulfed the social services over the last decade. The aim of this chapter is to provide a backdrop to the way in which NCP is structured and to offer a broad introductory understanding of how this structuring informs the ongoing reshaping of Australia’s welfare state.
This chapter begins with a description of the global economic change transforming diverse economies around the world. Interwoven with this description is a discussion on the ascendancy of neo-liberalism as the milieu in which National Competition Policy (NCP) is conceived. The work pays attention to the basic premises of the neo-classical critique of an interventionist state. Subsequently, the chapter draws close attention to the formulation of public choice theory as one particular way that individualistic calculations have played a part in strengthening the neo-liberal techniques of governance. In addition, the connection between the managerialist thinking as it relates to and is used in facilitating neo-liberalism is established. In outlining the neo-liberal trends, a clear link is made in terms of the implications this has for the welfare state. Following this background a discussion of Australia’s Federal and State policies relating to the NCP framework and its mechanisms, and an outline of the general developments involving NCP, are also provided. This discussion also includes associated NCP administrative reforms centred on corporatisation and commercialisation policies. More specifically, details are presented of notions of competitive tendering and contracting (CTC) and the principles of competitive neutrality (CN), highlighting the broad principles and calculations laid out in the Hilmer (1993) and McCarrey Reports (1993a, b). In connection with this, a constellation of distinct shifts in rationalities and managerial technologies of government since 1983, involving operations of the public sector, is also described. Finally, the way in which NCP directly and indirectly shapes the configuration of human services in relation to the labour market programs and the Crisis and Supported Accommodation programs are discussed.
Throughout the chapter the manner in which the current reform project is involved in building new administrative managerial tools is explored. These tools usurp the old bureaucratic and professional orientation that facilitated the post-war Keynesian and social reformist system.

**Global Economic Change, Neo-liberalism and the Welfare State**

It is impossible to discuss Australia’s National Competition Policy without making reference to global economic transformation and the ascendance and dominance of neo-liberalism. While countries undergoing this transformation may be characterised by different social, political and cultural landscapes, the occurring change is underpinned by certain common values associated with what a range of social policy writers commonly refer to as neo-liberalism (Pierson 1998; Pollitt 1993; Chachage and Mbilinyi 2003; Culpitt 1999; Mendes 2003; Pratt 1997; Lavalette and Pratt 1997). Australia is just one country, and perhaps a latecomer, undergoing economic change and embracing neo-liberalism. This section broadly sketches the global economic transformation over recent decades and provides a detailed account of this neo-liberal trend.

Over the last two decades, nations around the world have witnessed a significant transformation of their economic and political systems. The change has included the well-publicised reforms of the Reagan and Thatcher era, the economic transformation of the former republics of the Soviet Union (Solomon 1999; Overbeek 1993), and extensive structural adjustment programs (liberalisation policies) in developing countries, such as those implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America (Hyden 1993; Kiwara
Didsbury (1985), in his discussion of the new global economic environment, addresses a wide range of questions from general micro and macroeconomic reforms, debt management, development frameworks and formulations for productivity growth, while also providing a critique of conventional economic logic. Aina (1999) discusses a significant shift involving a negation of social policy in the development process in West and Central Africa. Wangwe, Semboja and Tibandebage (1998) explore the transitional policy challenges that faced the Tanzanian presidency between 1980 and 2000 in redefining the role of the public sector in the production and commercial realms in the new global economic configuration. Similarly, Mort-Braun (2003) details the contestation over resources involving Lesotho’s Highlands Water Project relating to a construction of five dams supported by the World Bank and aimed at transferring water to the Gauteng region of South Africa. Equally significant is the analysis provided by Stigliz (2002), a former Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for the World Bank (1997-2000) and a winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics 2001. He describes the role of the World Bank in reforming economies in developing countries, Russia and the former republics of the Soviet Union. He questions what he considers to be outmoded and biased straightjacket ‘shock therapy’ (2002: xi) prescriptions to which a range of countries have been subjected with devastating results and limited evidence of economic success. Nonetheless, Stiglitz (2002: 64-7, 242) believes in the continued need to integrate world economies and emphasises the importance of proper management of the globalization process. For example, he prefers the gradualist approach used in reforming the Chinese economy. Like Stiglitz, Jolly (2003: 26), in OECD Economies and the World
Today, cites ‘China’s progress during the economic reform era that began in 1978 as one of the great economic success stories of the post-war era’. He credits perceived improvements as a function of ‘liberalizing its [China’s] international trade and investment policies since the mid 1980s and [argues that the country] is now as open as some present WTO [World Trade Organisation] members’ (Jolly 2003: 26).

For Overbeek (1993), this international restructuring of global capitalism in the 1980s is part and parcel of the phenomenon of ‘neo-liberalism’ (Overbeek 1993: xi), leading him to use the two concepts neo-liberalism and ‘international economic restructuring’ interchangeably. From this perspective, this neo-liberal phenomenon is seen to be facilitated through ‘the coagulation of transnational money capital and globally operating productive capital’, involving ‘intricate mediations between [this] “logic”…and the historical reality of national political and social relations’ (Overbeek 1993: xi; Hollman 1993; Mommen 1993; Gill 1993). Capling, Considine and Crozier (1998) note the rise of a global economy marked by ‘uncontrollable market forces’ involving new transnational and international economic actors, ‘largely unregulated by political institutions’ (Capling et al 1998: 5). The combination of global liberalisation policies and the growth of technology have opened up even greater options for multinational companies to move their capital freely around the world in search of better profit margins. On this Capling et al (1993: 7) cite a revealing comment from the Financial Times.

Now billions of dollars of financial capital move freely across the world every single day in pursuit of short-term profit. One indicator of the dominance of financial flows across the world is that by the 1990s just five days worth of foreign exchange trading had become equal to a year’s export of goods and services around the world (27 March 1995)
There is substantial agreement that neo-liberalism aims to dismantle the social democratic and Keynesian agenda developed in the middle of the twentieth century (Stretton 1994; Lavalette and Pratt 1997; Pierson 1998; Ife 2002; Battin 1991). Overbeek and van der Pijl (1993: 14) suggest that the shift that occurred in the 1990s, associated with, but reaching beyond, the oil crisis of the 1970s, should be understood as a ‘fundamental crisis of “normality” affecting all aspects of the post-war order: social relations of production, the role of the state, and the international order’. In this sense newly sought arrangements required an overhaul of previous structures and discourses, making way for a new political and philosophical configuration, ushering in new program innovations constructed and reliant on the new discursive formations of this era (Overbeek and van der Pijl 1993: 14).

Neo-liberal ideas have increasingly taken on the appearance of common sense, at least in the circles of decision makers and program designers. Ideas once seen as revolutionary under the Reagan and the Thatcher eras have now become conventional norms. This point is well-put by Overbeek and van der Pijl; they maintain that neo-liberal ideas are:

Now part of normal everyday discourse, self evident, near impossible to contradict, or even doubt. History conceived of as a struggle of ideologies has come to an end…In short the end of history appears to have resolved any remaining internal contradictions within international capitalism (other than straightforward competition), and to represent the triumph of the ideological tendency articulating these orientations, neo-liberalism. Its victory means that its radical tenets have themselves become the new ‘normalcy’ (Overbeek and van der Pijl 1993: 1-2).

These reforms have gone beyond deconstructing the Keynesian welfare state (Capling et al 1998:4). They have sought to reverse the interventionist economic and development
frameworks that characterised many developing economies and the former socialist states in the Eastern bloc. A number of writers have addressed this topic. For example, Solomon (1999) discusses the abandonment of centralised state planning in the former Eastern bloc, the former Soviet Union, and the market liberalisation in China (1999). Hyden (1993) and Jilberto (1993) detail the Third World economic transformation and the global economic re-orientation of economies in the former Eastern Bloc. The most notable aspect of these reforms is the departure from centrally planned development and nation-building strategies to a new emphasis on reliance on market methods. This global economic transformation has involved western industrial countries, previously centrally planned economies and developing countries (Solomon 1999: 1; Jolly 2003). In this connection, Solomon (1999: 1) observes that a marked change has occurred, resulting in the blurring of those categorical distinctions formerly used to differentiate countries around the world.

In relation to Australia, Capling et al (1998) argue that the impact of the global market on Australia cannot be understood simply within the confines of the economic sphere. Rather, the change is radically transforming the country’s political institutions. Central to Capling et al’s (1998) argument is the observation that the transformation of recent decades has involved:

- a restructure of many of our most fundamental political institutions including the public service, the industrial relations and arbitration system, the welfare system, the institutions of national economic management, citizenship, and of course responsible government itself (Capling et al 1998: 4).
While the appropriate use of the term neo-liberalism remains debatable, arguably social policy literature, a key concern of this thesis, has broadly come to associate neo-liberalism with the transformation surrounding the welfare sector over the last two and a half decades (Lavalette 1997; Culpitt 1999; Pierson 1998; 1994; Ife 2002).

At this point it is appropriate to explore further this notion of neo-liberalism. Two points need to be made about this exploration. The first is that crucially, assumptions covered here are not contested by analysts such as Nahan and Rutherford (1993) Niskanen (1994) and Tullock (1976) writing under the rubric of neo-liberalism. The second is that the social policy tradition that influenced the rise of the post-war welfare states drew heavily from the orthodoxy of social democracy (Bryson 1992; George and Wilding 1976; Williams 1989; Carney and Hanks; Jones 1990; Lavalette 1997). And as Pierson argues (1998: 25), ‘Keynes …was an opponent of the belief that capitalism was a self-regulating economic system. Above all, it was the neo-classical belief in a self-regulating market mechanism securing full employment that Keynes sought to subvert, indeed to invert’. Thus, the Keynesian strategy had come to influence the shaping of a welfare state based on the ‘macro-management of the economy to ensure economic growth under conditions of full employment’ and led to an array of redistributive social policies intended to spread the benefits of economic growth and manage the impacts of economic activities in a variety of ways (Pierson 1998: 27).

It is this second point that strongly indicates the need to explore the ‘new’ neo-liberal assumptions since they provide important elements that inform the program of National
Competition Policy (Overbeek and van der Pijl 1993; Stretton 1994; Culpitt 1999). Further exploration of the assumptions of neo-liberalism provides firmer ground on which to follow the trail of policy shifts and debates connected with this study. Specifically, included in this is an exploration of the manner and form in which the assumptions of the post-war Keynesian welfare state are being overhauled, making way for forms of welfare conducive to advanced liberal states.

Basically, neo-liberalism works from a set of key assumptions about ‘economic man’, holding that all individuals make self-maximising choices based on rational thought and these are best expressed within a largely deregulated and competitive environment. Building on classical liberalism, this position relies on a body of knowledge generated under neo-classical economics, itself heavily dependent on abstract mathematical and accountancy-based formulas, to provide knowledge necessary in enabling objective policy-decision making. It maintains claims to value neutrality pursued through positivist methodological precision (Battin 1991: 296; Culpitt 1999; Pierson 1998). For example, Milton Friedman’s empiricist contribution to this body of knowledge maintains that any government’s effort to stimulate full employment is simply bound to create economic inflation (INDECS 1992: 12-13; Battin 1991: 296). Thus Friedman and others taking this position question the wisdom of interventionist strategies in pursuit of such a goal.

Culpitt (1999: 42) describes neo-liberalism as a ‘restless and dissatisfied ethos of recurrent critique of state reason and politics’, while Pratt (1997: 31) characterises it as a ‘synthesis of economic and political theories, and behavioural assumptions’ involving
humans and institutions holding a ‘coherent and consistent explanation of the way the world works and ought to work’ (Pratt 1997: 34). Premised on the assumed selfish nature of individuals, this leads to an atomistic conceptualisation of an individual within society, thus ‘depending not so much on the political community as on personal (economic) initiative’ (Battin 1991: 296-7). The neo-liberal emphasis on rationality and methodological individualism leads to the prescription that:

Departures from the ideal [non-intervention] can be quickly remedied if the old verities are reasserted and the ‘proper’ relationships re-established between government and economy, between state and civil society, and between individuals themselves (Pratt 1997: 34)

Some social policy writers have noted that while the neo-liberal critiques of state intervention have been built from Hayek and Friedman’s economic theorisation, it is essential to note that neo-liberalism has been strengthened by public choice theory (Pierson 1998; Mendes 2003a; 2003b; Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987. For a detailed outline of ‘public choice’, see Downs 1957; Niskanen 1994; 1973; Tullock 1976). In Pratt’s (1997: 44) view, ‘the real cutting edge of neo-liberalism is to be found not in its economic theory’ which in his view is not new. Instead, the power of neo-liberalism emanates from its argument about ‘government overload’, that is ‘public choice argument’, the argument that ‘the system cannot cope with excessive demands generated by the politics of Keynesian social democracy. As governments provide more, electorates demand more. In consequence, governments overreach themselves’ (Pratt 1997: 44).

Public choice is mainly concerned with a scrutiny of ‘collective or non-market forms of decision making drawing [its knowledge base] from economics and political science’ (Pierson 1998: 43), intended to give ‘enhanced empirical and logical rigour to the moral
and philosophical case against the welfare state’ (Pierson 1998: 43). From this position it is assumed by public choice theory that the exercise of collective choice beyond the minimum requirement suggested by theorists such as Smith and Hayek is bound to produce inferior outcomes when seen from efficiency criteria. In this connection, liberal democratic arrangements are seen to ‘encourage both governments and voters to be fiscally irresponsible …within the rules of the liberal democratic game it is then possible for voters to act rationally but through their collective action to produce sub-optimal or even positively harmful consequences’ (Pierson 1998: 43). Such harm is seen to result in higher inflation and in constraining the scope of private sector activities. It is in this connection that interest groups such as social policy advocacy groups and an unrestrained bureaucracy come to be accused of damaging the healthy functioning of the economy and general community economic wellbeing (Mendes: 2003a, 2003b; Niskanen 1994; Tullock 1976; Downs 1957; Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987).

The spread of public choice theory in relation to reworking the welfare state arrangements is noted across a range of literature (Fenna 1998; Pusey 1993; Culpitt 1999; Ife 2002). For example, Dunleavy and O’Leary (1987: 316) observe that although ‘there are relatively few areas where such non-recurrent interventions [the welfare state] are sufficient’, to reduce the burden of government overload, ‘some new-right prescriptions may be useful if implemented in a modest and selective fashion’ (1987: 316-7). Culpitt (1999: 61), while concerned about the influence of public choice theory, goes on to acknowledge that the ‘grand vision of public choice to create and maintain a collectivity of autonomous agents has commanded enormous respect’. Clarke (1998: 179) argues that often this preoccupation to transform the welfare state has tended to ‘displace real
political and policy choices into a series of managerial imperatives’; that is, into notions of “efficiency” and “effectiveness”, “performance” and “quality”. Mendes (2003a; 2003b) is also concerned about the influence of public choice theory; he warns of its impact in challenging the welfare state agenda in Australia. He argues particularly that this theory has generated particular forms of knowledge that are now used to attack and constrain the legitimacy of activities undertaken by peak welfare groups, that is, interest groups or pressure groups connected with the welfare sector.

Furthermore, Dunleavy and O’Leary (1987: 75) take the view that, generally speaking, public choice arguments are not the preserve of right-wing political positions. In fact, the public choice arguments have found favour amongst some pluralist scholars. Nonetheless, they note that the biggest following for the public choice stance is associated with ‘conservatism (in America) or market liberalism (in Europe)’ (Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987: 75). In this sense they observe that well-known public choice theorists such as Tullock, Buchanan and Niskanen largely subscribe to Friedman’s laissez faire version of economic theorisation, leading to a ‘strong correlation between using a public choice methodology and espousing new-right values’ (Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987: 75).

Thus, public choice, although concerned with social and non-market questions such as ‘the study of the state, constitutions, collective action, voting procedures, party behaviour, bureaucratic behaviour and manipulative behaviour’ (Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987: 76), still relies on neo-classical economics to study these areas of interest. It follows that in using a rather narrow neo-classical economic framework to make sense of these areas, public choice theory finds close resonance with neo-liberalism since the latter
is also concerned with narrowing the role of the state and, in the process, reconceptualising the relationship between the individual and society, hence the quest to seek reduction in state intervention. In other words, the preference for neo-classical economics, the mistrust of pluralist and or participatory democracy and the drive to reduce the scope of the welfare state are positions that resonate favourably across both public choice and neo-liberal perspectives.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that writers such as Pollitt (1993: 43) treat public choice theorists, monetarists, neo-classical economists and even Austrian economics as traditions that combine to form a neo-liberal orientation. Pollitt (1993: 43) argues that seen together as neo-liberals, these theoretical strands blame pluralism and corporatist politics as being responsible for contributing to the state overload. They also share a view that bureaucracies are primarily preoccupied with the need to promote their own individual self-interests (Pollitt 1993: 42-4).

Pusey (2003: 14) maintains that neo-classical economics, used as strategic method of individualism, has pushed out other versions of economic thought including ‘Keynesians, institutionalists, [and] most economic historians’. Keen (2001) supports this position, arguing that the dominance of neo-classical economics has obscured alternative forms of economics including, importantly, the Austrian economics. While closely related to neo-classical economics, the proponents of the Austrian school dismiss the claims of market equilibrium and do not accord much credence to mathematical formulas in guiding economics as a discipline. This version of economics dismisses the taken-for-granted
notions of market equilibrium, instead treating it as a mere ‘intellectual abstraction’. The Austrian school argues that disequilibrium is a common feature of capitalism. This leads to economic formulations guided by questions of uncertainty in analysing the operations of a capitalist economy. From this perspective, such disequilibrium is taken as a strength constituting the capitalist system in that the ‘disaggregated nature of capitalist society makes it more adaptable to uncertainty than other centralised systems’ (Keen 2001: 301). Moreover, it is through this state of disequilibrium that the entrepreneurial spirit prospers through innovations and risk taking. Other competing forms of economics pushed to the margins include Post-Keynesianism, which reinforces the question of uncertainty (Keen 2001: 300-13) and Sraffian economics known for its ‘detailed and careful analysis of the mechanics of production in the history of economics. Not…any simple abstractions’ characteristic of ‘the neoclassicals factors of production, or even Marx’s industry sectors’ (Keen 2001: 307).

Similarly, Jessop (2002: 121) cites further examples suggesting that the Ricardian account of economics puts more weight on notions of comparative advantage and related prices, tending to read the notion of competition as that which delivers the lowest cost of production based on comparative access to factors such as labour, capital, raw material and so forth. This understanding of competitiveness is framed around fixed notions of efficiency and economic conditions. In addition, he observes that the Listian position provides another competing economic discourse which dismisses notions of cheap labour and raw materials with selective state protection, support and economic regulation of new developing industries that are likely to generate significant economic growth. Jessop
further points out that when seen from a Schumpeterian perspective, competitiveness ‘depends on developing the individual and collective capacities to engage in permanent innovation – whether through sourcing, technologies, products, organization or marketing’ (2002: 121).

He concludes that:

The idea of competitiveness is conceptually ambiguous and politically controversial. There are many ways to define and measure it; and current policy debate indicate the political issues at stake...competitiveness is a discursively constructed notion with obvious strategic implications both economically and politically (Jessop 2002: 121).

A number of social scientists and economists discuss the narrowness of the methods of neo-liberalism in great detail. For example, Threadgold (1990) explores the narrowness of neo-classical economics leading to a promotion of instrumental rationality at the expense of other forms of knowledge, including professional discourses. Keen (2001: 259-264) discusses neo-classical economics’ bad use of mathematics to justify its version of individualism. He highlights the systematic omission of particular variables such as the time factor in its analysis. In addition, he argues that neo-classical economics also suffers from internal contradictions through its in-built assumption that it can mathematically ‘aggregate individual utility to derive a community preference map that has the same characteristics as the individual map’ (Keen 2001: 260). Similarly, Hewitson (1999) provides a detailed account of a post-structural feminist critique of neo-classical economics’ reliance on the discursive construction of a world premised on exclusive binary terms, thus reducing a woman to that which can only be understood in relation to a
man (Hewitson 1999: 19). This implies an elevation of the dominant masculine understandings (perceptions) of how the world ought to operate.

Another interesting argument is advanced by Henderson (1985), who argues against the narrow calculations of neo-liberalism that lead her to estimate that, for example, about a half of a nation’s total economy is captured by official accounts; the other half remains unaccounted for. This non-monetised economy includes unpaid labour, costs associated with degradation and destruction of the environment, parenting and home duties, care for the elderly, subsistence agriculture and so forth. Henderson (1985: 325) argues that ‘industrial societies now labour under excessively money denominated methodological biases’. She questions any notion that ‘statistical data quantified in money-coefficients’ can serve as ‘major policy tools and analyses’, and points out that notions of efficiency and ‘technical’ tools exclude consideration of the broad impacts on social, ecological and global future dimensions. In essence, neo-liberal models ignore the complexity of world trade, technological advancements, the inadequate information available to consumers and all the hidden distortions that make the claims of free markets difficult to sustain (Henderson 1985: 323-26).

A question may still be asked about how this narrowness in accounting further links with the pursuit of social policy questions such as those relating to housing or labour market programs, which are subjects of this study. Here the concern is over the manner in which neo-liberalism understands and elevates ‘efficiency per se rather than the efficient delivery of services which the polity decides it wants’ (Battin 1991: 301). Battin argues
that in this sense economic rationalism sets parameters for how the notion of efficiency comes to be defined, asserting that a better efficiency criteria requires that attention is paid to ‘many areas of life - economic, social, political, ethical, and aesthetic’ (Battin 1991: 301). The production of techniques of efficiency facilitated through NCP is given greater attention in the case study discussions.

The pursuit of social policy is also significantly impacted through the broad means of a transformed economy. According to Pierson (1998: 59), the shift to flexible forms of production (that is, post-Fordist) ‘has undermined the pursuit of Keynesian policies at a national level’, instead promoting self-financing and residual forms of welfare reliant on volunteerism and occupational benefits (Pierson 1998: 59; Pratt 1997: 29).

In line with this analysis, older political values have come to be seen as being cast off as new forms of political culture emerge (Capling et al 1998; Rose 1996). More specifically, for some social policy analysts, ‘the political language of citizenship with its notion of reciprocal rights and obligations is being subverted and displaced by the language of consumerism and the vocabulary of greed’ (Capling et al 1998: 4). Under these circumstances, post-war social democratic discourses of social rights and citizenship are seen to lose their potency (Lavalette and Pratt 1997: 43; Culpitt 1999: 14; Rose 1996). For Pierson (1998: 59), under the workings of neo-liberalism, social policy initiatives come to take a form of Schumpeterian workfare state, intent on promoting innovation and technological gains, with reduced regard for redistributive welfare. The second case study in this thesis demonstrates that while under neo-liberal governance notions of social
rights become tenuous, the dominant neo-liberal discourses are themselves by no means immutable and totally settled. Rather, they co-exist with the now subordinate social policy discourses of a post-war era. Moreover, the argument about the Schumpeterian shift deserves some attention.

Schumpeter held the view that economic change is always propelled by transformation in the methods of production. Central to this is the idea of innovation as the cornerstone of economic change. Innovation entails distinct shifts in the methods of production, including new ways of organising production activities and processes, new products, new technologies and new markets (Heerje 2006; 1988: 71-72; Rosenberg 1986: 197-8). Schumpeter’s position underpinned by Austrian economics departs from the notions of equilibrium that characterise neo-classical economics (see previous discussion in relation to Keen’s differentiation of various economic discourses). Instead, Schumpeter took a broader view of economic change; situating it within a historical process of transformation, most specifically, for him, economic change can only be explained by non-economic factors. In this sense, it is ‘part of a larger social and historical frame of reference…a complex vision of the economic process’ (Rosenberg 1986:197). The point emphasised is by Jessop who notes that this perspective, ‘rejects the key assumption of neo-classical economics that there is a clearly delineated, socially disembedded sphere of economic relations with a tendency towards general equilibrium’ (1993: 5). Schumpeter also dismissed neo-classical notions of rationality and consumer sovereignty (the claim of consumer choice influenced by some preference) (Rosenberg 1986: 5), thus modern Schumpeterians insist that ‘economic rationality and dynamics cannot be adequately
analysed in terms of pure exchange relations in perfect markets’ (Jessop 2002: 5). Rosenberg 1986: 203) notes that ‘at a deeper level, much of what Schumpeter had to say about neo-classical economics applies to modern economics as well.’ His remark indicates an acknowledgement of the ascendancy and consolidation of orthodox economic thinking within ‘mainstream’ economics, a point stressed throughout the literature reviewed in this chapter.

In this context it is thus noteworthy, that some analysts have characterised a contemporary shift from a Keynesian welfare national states to a Schumpeterian ‘workfare’ national state (Jessop’s 2002; Torfing 1999; Lodemel 2005; 2002; Grover 1999). Arguing from this perspective, Jessop suggests that the post-war Keynesian welfare system was broadly aligned and served as a regulatory mechanism under the Fordist economic system. He notes that it was a ‘historically specific political regime that corresponds with a historical specific stage of capital accumulation in a particular economic and political space within the world economy’ (Jessop 2002: 2). He elaborates the distinctive features underpinning this system included the primacy accorded to the interests of a nation state, prevalence of closed national economic systems, promotion of the reproductive welfare function used in furthering political and social rights, albeit one embedded through patriarchal forms (Jessop 2002: 72). He maintains that under the competition state, promoting productive conditions takes a different form, emphasizing extra-economic innovative practices encompassing diverse forms of production, social organisation, and increased application of new technologies, collaborative initiatives, networking and flexibility in the workforce. He maintains that this supply-driven state,
underpinning the post-Fordist era, ‘involves commitment to…innovation and flexibility in the structural form of regulation’ (2002: 58). In addition, he observes that under this regulatory regime, we see greater uptake of global norms, standards, benchmarks connected with global markets, and engaged in mediating particular forms of integration of the capitalist global economy. Moreover, the competition embedding this process takes a virtual form, characterised by virtual audits. It is this meaning of competition that becomes introduced in the social realm that constitutes innovation as this becomes extended to the public sector (Jessop 2002: 115-6).

**New Managerial Techniques**

Before looking at how the program of NCP has been put together, it is important to briefly discuss the subject of New Public Management. This practice makes use of new technologies in transforming the management of human services, placing a premium on quantifiable measures relating to service objectives and outcomes (Hill 2005: 267-8; Clarke 1998: 179; Jones 2003: 1).

According to Hill (2005: 269), the new public management works to undermine the level of professional autonomy that has come to be enjoyed by various professions such as medicine, teaching and social work, in its bid to regulate the outcomes of the organisation. It works in a top-down fashion, attempting to institute changes necessary to achieve efficient and effective management objectives.
Duff and Larsen (2003: 1) observe that traditionally, professions have staked their claim on the basis that they are using their particular professional knowledge for the benefit of their clients. Accompanying this question of autonomy was the belief that professionals have a taken-for-granted right to exercise certain levels of discretion in judgements they make in relation to their clients and some of the programs they deliver. As Jones (2003: 1) notes, ‘the defence of professionalism assumes two postures; one concerns the inevitability of discretion; and the other its desirability.’ He maintains that this argument has potency when the fact that practitioners work and mediate across a complex set of interrelated and competing objectives with diverse population groups is taken into account. This requires them ‘to draw upon sophisticated processes of communication and negotiation…regardless of whether or not such action attracts any formal recognition’ (Baldwin cited in Jones, 2003: 1).

Duff and Larsen (2003: 1) argue that the professional status was defended on a basis of trust in its disciplinary knowledge, which, were seen as something that ‘cannot be codified fully’. The shift involving top-down managerial attempts to classify and control the use of professional knowledge, while simultaneously encouraging client evaluations, has served to weaken this element of trust. Duff and Larsen observe that critics interpret the attempts of professions to retain their autonomy as a matter of self interests, and maintain that it is important to take account of the changing market structures of the human services within the public sector and across a range of government funded profit and not-for profit human service new market structures.
The growth of managerial techniques has been greatly aided by the availability of new technologies promising to deliver lower costs and greater productivity in managing human services (Loader 1998: 222; Brown 2003). In these new arrangements, computerised client databases have emerged as a key tool whereby practitioners have managed to access and transfer a range of information for practice and program management and inter-agency purposes (Brown 2003: 1-6). Having discussed these key managerialist strategies, I now turn my attention to the way in which the NCP framework has been formulated.

**Mechanisms of National Competition Policy**

**Putting the pieces in place – NCP calculations**

The Industry Commission (1995: 1-2) noted that while Federal and state governments were each pursuing a microeconomic reform agenda in the 1980s, these were largely undertaken independently before 1991. In a bid to bring the federal and state agenda together to harness competition policy more effectively, in 1991 the federal Government commissioned an independent inquiry into National Competition Policy. The Prime Ministerial brief issued by Hawke required ‘an urgent examination of all that could be done to widen the ambit of the Trade Practices Act to bring the excluded areas of economic enterprise within the scope of the national framework of competition policy and law’ (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2001: 2-3). As a result the inquiry was mandated to specifically look at the relevance of competition in respect to the following areas:
- Government and Trading Enterprises (GTEs)
- Marketing Authorities
- Unincorporated bodies
- Government Procurement by Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2001: 1).

This inquiry culminated in the 1993 Hilmer Report (Industry Commission 1995: 1-2). Put simply, Hilmer’s recommendations were formulated around the aim of removing what was perceived to be a privileged position previously enjoyed by government trading enterprises. The proposed changes were designed to ensure these businesses were left to face the same market pressures as those confronting the private sector. The new provisions facilitated private companies’ access to public owned infrastructure as a means of enabling more market players in service provision. Thus, for example, a new corporate player could be allowed to tap into an electricity power grid or use railway or telephone infrastructure developed by public owned companies.

The recommendations of the Hilmer Report (1993) comprise six key policy reforms:

- Extending the reach of the Trade Practices Act 1974 (TPA) to unincorporated businesses and State and Territory government businesses so that the competitive conduct rules (contained in Part IV of the Act) apply to all business activity in Australia;
- Provision to allow third party access to nationally significant infrastructure;
- Introduction of competitive neutrality so that government businesses do not enjoy unfair advantages when competing with private businesses;
- Restructuring of public sector monopoly businesses to increase competition; review of all laws which restrict competition; and
- Extending prices surveillance arrangements to State and Territory government businesses to deal with those circumstances where all other competition policy reforms prove inadequate (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2001: 4).
At the 1995 Council of Australian Government (COAG) meeting, the Commonwealth and State Governments adopted this broad framework for the implementation of competition policy (Industry Commission 1995: 1-2). It is currently encapsulated in the following three key Commonwealth/State government agreements: the Conduct Code Agreement; the Competition Principles Agreement; and the Agreement to Implement the National Competition Policy and Related Reforms (the latter generally known as the Implementation Agreement). Among other things, the last agreement set conditions for a reward system in the form of financial transfers from the Commonwealth in favour of those States and Territories that promoted National Competition Policy reform (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2001: 7; NCC 2002a: Section 1.1-1.2).

There are various components to the NCP supported through legislative and non-legislative means. A major part of competition involves the dismantling of the monopolistic market power of government business enterprises so that they are subject to similar market conditions as a private company. Another major feature commits government business activities to competitive neutrality, that is, to subject government entities to the same market forces as the private sector. In this way, education, welfare, health and labour market programs become subject to quasi-market conditions and frameworks. Depending on what is deemed the most competitive way, a service may be sold off, contracted out or out-resourced (Industry Commission 1995: 5).

The role of National Competition Council (NCC) has relevance here. The Council was specifically formed by COAG in 1995 to provide oversight relating to the NCP reform.
Its role includes the assessment of how the various levels of government are progressing with NCP reform. The council is also responsible for recommending how any financial benefits accrued through competition should be distributed. It undertakes reviews and gives advice pertaining ‘to restrictive or anti-competitive legislation, the structural reform of public monopolies, prices oversight, and competitive neutrality’ (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2001: 11), and is mandated to carry out community education relating to NCP. The Council prides itself on being independent, a position reinforced in its being constituted as a statutory body. The five NCC councillors are drawn from business backgrounds (Industry Commission 1995: 11). From the perspective of this thesis, it would seem that the culture and intellectual know-how associated with the private sector may have been deemed of greater value than social technologies associated with social sciences (Pusey 1993; Rose 1996) in the re-working of the interventionist government mechanism that dominated the post-war era.

National Competition Policy is built around rewards and sanctions. As already indicated, this allows the Commonwealth to distribute funds to those States seen to keep pace with competition reform. Failure to implement relevant reform means that such dividends do not come about. In line with this, the NCC has a duty to recommend to the Treasurer a reduction or suspension of NCP payments to any state or territory deemed not to have made a contribution (NCC 2002a: section 1.4-1.6). In keeping with this system, Murray confirms a range of gains and losses made by States and Territories in relation to this compliance regime (2003: 20-25).
Australia’s Department of the Parliamentary Library (2001) documentation argues that competition policy is not entirely new. As far back as 1906 the *Australian Industries Preservation Act* was enacted to counter monopolistic practices across states and territories, while a more recent version of competition policy can be found in the 1965 *Trade Practices Act (1971, 1974 as amended)*. Other 1970s and 1980s reforms associated with competition policy include tariff cuts, abolishing currency exchange rates and the ‘elimination of exchange controls’ (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2001: 1). These were accompanied by major microeconomic reform initiatives involving the ‘corporatisation of business enterprise and deregulation in the transport and telecommunication sectors’ (Department of the Parliamentary Library 2001: 1). On the basis of these trends, the Department of the Parliamentary Library text (ibid) claims that the advancement of NCP is a natural progression of a ‘broad public policy direction’.

Notwithstanding the elements of competition historically embedded in Australian public policy, it is clear that the neo-liberal reforms embarked upon since the 1980s do contain devised new elements markedly different from those of the Keynesian ‘reign’. These reforms set out to entrench neo-classical economic methods as the main prism through which public policy was to be understood and delivered. In the Hawke-Keating era this was also accompanied by particular social protection measures and social wage provisions. These have been discussed by various authors. For example, Jamrozik (1994) discusses the introduction of occupational benefits in the 1980s and INDECS (1992) discusses the indexation measures and ‘safety net’ for low income earners, and superannuation. Similarly, Cox (1995) discusses superannuation and childcare benefits.
In this thesis I take the view that the pursuit of NCP under the current Federal Coalition Government occurs simultaneously with the erosion of the social wage, industrial deregulation and increased user pays measures in higher education. This view is supported by McMahon, et al (2000: 33-36) in their work reflecting on the reconstruction of the social wage under the Howard Government. Pusey (2003) narrates the experience of middle class Australia under an economic rationalist regime; and Kinnear (2003: 116) discusses punitive mutual obligation breaching practices targeting income support recipients; while Fincher and Saunders (2001) highlight the widening gap in the standards of living associated with shifting government policies. This trend consolidates the importance of the market frameworks and values more than at any other time following World War II.

From at least the 1990s on, these developments have set the context within which state governments must operate. Before turning specifically to Western Australia, it is useful to reflect somewhat further on the Hilmer Report (1993) and the scope of its discursive policy framework.

**The Hilmer framework**

In essence, National Competition Policy as formulated in the Hilmer Report and related documents is in tune with the technical formulations of neo-classical economics (Hilmer 1993). Competition and competitive frameworks assume primacy, and other societal considerations must be understood and interpreted through this lens. Hence, within the frame of NCP it is not possible to talk of matters such as efficiency, quality, community
and individual welfare or participation, unless these understandings are filtered through the lens of competition. It can be seen that Hilmer’s orientation is neo-liberal in that it assumes individual interest should largely, if not wholly, determine how individuals and societies reach optimal decisions (Hewitson 1999; Pollitt 1993; Threadgold and Cranny-Francis 1990). Here, the common good is reached through each individual pursuing his or her own interests.

Under the Hilmer (1993) policy framework, delivery of community welfare services becomes analogous with the delivery of business services, and thus needs to operate under the rubric of ‘contestable markets’ (Hilmer 1993: 2-3). In effect, this means that if a family support program does not perform to the satisfaction of the government agency contracting out the service it stands to lose its contracted business to other potential operators. The fear of another contractor taking over the program in question is assumed to keep service providers and their workers on their toes.

Alongside this, the Hilmer Report proposes that having more competitors in a given business is not always necessarily the best means of promoting efficiency. Instead, there may be times when the number of possible players is reduced to promote ‘economies of scale and scope encompassing production, marketing and technology’ (Hilmer 1993: 2-3). This acknowledges that in a country with a relatively small population like Australia, competition policy has to consider questions of the investment cost required to build and operate a particular infrastructure (for example, electricity or gas). This also entails exploring a way to maximise innovation and other technological advancements. In this
context, it can be argued that not only the neo-classical economics, but also the Schumpeterian concept of competition appear to influence the framing of the Hilmer Report. However, as my Labour Market Program Case Study will show, it seems the Schumpeterian features connected with NCP are being read in a particular way, in keeping with notions of methodological individualism.

In so far as people come into the matrix of NCP, they do so on the understanding that enhanced competition between firms will promote ‘different mixes of benefits to consumers’ (Hilmer 1993: 2-3). These benefits are seen in terms of consumer preferences relating to factors such as service quality and timeliness. The committee further claimed that price is, in fact, a very small part of what competition is about (Hilmer 1993). Broadly speaking, reconceptualising the relationship between individuals, society and the state into one centred around the notion of consumers signifies a shift away from a capitalist welfare state, ‘in which the state intervenes within the processes of economic reproduction and distribution to reallocate life chances between individuals and/or classes’ (Pierson 1998: 7).

In its discussion of community welfare, the Hilmer Report assumes the primacy of economic criteria. It thus discusses the effect of competition on ‘economic efficiency and other social goals’ (Hilmer 1993: 4) and assumes that economic growth is the major route to the realisation of greater wellbeing. While competition is also considered to be strongly consistent with empowering consumers, the report does admit that in some cases
it may not deliver the desired social objectives. In such instances other allocative means should be sought (Hilmer 1993: 5). In this respect, the report acknowledges that, in some cases, competition could be restricted in favour of a public monopoly of government pricing directions as a way of pursuing particular non-economic objectives. Instances where community service obligations may be indicated include public utilities such as water, electricity and ports (Hilmer 1993: 5). Unfortunately, Hilmer’s views on these issues have been neglected within the contemporary culture of competition. This has become so pervasive that the belief that questions of equity, community service obligations and the like ought to be addressed by imitating market mechanisms has increasingly gained momentum. A document titled Progress Report: Implementing National Competition Policy in Western Australia (1998) confirms and details the way in which notions of ‘Competitive Neutrality’ (Competition Policy Unit 1998: 21) are being used to reform a range of services in keeping with NCP requirements. Seen from this perspective, to cite one instance, it is disturbing that local governments are now obligated to subject their community services to competition criteria such as user-pays, cost recovery and increased preference for contracting out, irrespective of the rationale for which those provisions were set up (see clause 3 and 7 of the Competition Principles Agreement. NCC u.d. http://www.ncc.gov.au/sector.asp?ID=16). For example, Home and Community Care Service, HACC, for the elderly and a range of recreational services have become subject to user-pays and marketisation methods.
Constructing authoritative calculations – The McCarrey Report

The McCarrey Report (1993a; 1993b), (Report of the Independent Commission to Review Public Sector Finance) is to Western Australia what the Hilmer Report is to Australia. The McCarrey review took place in 1993. A central tenet of this report is its assertion that ‘the sheltered position of [government] agencies has resulted in inefficient structures and practices…such protective practices have worked against the broader community interest in that operating costs (and taxes and charges) have been maintained at unnecessarily high levels’ (McCarrey Report 1993a: 3).

The McCarrey Report moves a step further in that it also addresses managerial issues in the context of public sector finances. The following discussion highlights key aspects of the McCarrey Report’s mechanisms for creating a competitive environment aimed at reducing state expenditure. Set in the context of public sector reform, the language of the report is as similar to that of the Hilmer Report in its emphasis on competition as its emphasis on key competition mechanisms involving corporatisation, commercialisation and privatisation demonstrates. The notions of Competitive Neutrality and Competitive Tendering and Contracting (CTC) play a key role in the report.

The McCarrey Report (1993a; 1993b) subjects the Western Australian government and the public sector more generally to critical scrutiny. It asserts that ‘the engine that drives efficiency is free and open competition’ and that, as a result of competition reform Western Australia’s economy will be more resilient and productive in the new global environment (McCarrey 1993b: 3-4). The civil service and public utilities are criticised
for not being ‘subject to the same market discipline to determine price and quality’ as is assumed to be the case with the private sector (McCarrey 1993a: 17). The report argues that there is an excessive cost of service provision that has hitherto remained hidden. It claims that public choices are distorted since the ‘judgements as to the amount and quality of services provided are made by Ministers and public servants reflect imperfect political assessments of community needs rather than direct decisions of consumers’ (ibid). In addition, the report asserts that the monopolistic position enjoyed by government trading enterprises such as the former agency the State Energy Commission of Western Australia – SECWA, and the Water Authority, leads to a situation where customers are denied choice (McCarrey 1993a: 17).

The McCarrey Report (1993a: 176) adopts a technical tone or vocabulary deliberately distancing itself from the matters of policy and the political operations of government. McCarrey claims ‘it is not for the Commission to address matters of government policy. Decisions on future policy settings are for elected governments’ (McCarrey Report 1993a: 176). This claim to be apolitical is, though, misleading since the ideological codes of the Report are evident in the methods it prescribes for reforming the public sector. In recommending managerial methods to reduce the government’s coordination and mediation function, the Report clearly adopts an identifiable policy position.

The Report pays the prevailing government structure special attention, criticising the system for having an excessive number of statutory authorities enjoying a greater power than corresponding government departments. Of the 189 agencies examined, 131 were
statutory authorities. Unlike departments, statutory bodies are not subject to both ministerial and parliamentary accountability processes. Observing the degree of independence enjoyed by statutory bodies, the report argues that:

the statutory authority is a more rigid administrative form. Its responsibilities can be varied only by Act of Parliament...in these circumstances, non elected members of authorities are in a position to frustrate policies of elected governments or pursue their own policy agenda, notwithstanding that the government is held accountable for the outworking of policy decisions (McCarrey 1993a: 179-80).

More broadly, the McCarrey Report argues that there was a consistent lack of quality management systems across government agencies and an inability to distinguish between specific ‘resource needs and usage’ (McCarrey 1993a: 183). Public agencies are faulted for not encompassing acceptable performance measurements and failing to produce adequately documented accountability resource use measures (McCarrey 1993a: 183-84). In all these respects the Report’s emphasis on outputs, performance concerns and timelines is evident, as illustrated in the following two quotes:

No budgetary working papers seen [in the course of the review] demonstrated a ‘real resource capacity’ or ‘best performance’ approach to evaluating resource requirements. Even when the measure of work is straightforward, the work is generally not measured. In those cases where work is less tangible, little attempt was made to define project objectives, set calendar time frames or estimate the amount of human resource required for shorter interval milestones. This lack of even the most fundamental project control and resource planning activity was most evident throughout many policy development areas reviewed (McCarrey 1993a: 184).

Instead of starting with the questions: “what work is the agency required to do and what outcomes are required?” and “what are the short-interval objectives within this process and how much resource is required?”, agencies start with an approved level of expenditure and ‘backfill’ to decide what work will be done.
Although probably a somewhat unfair criticism, agencies appear to develop strategies that consume available funds rather than justifying the funds required for agreed, defined, measured and controlled objectives as is required of private sector managers (McCarrey 1993a: 184).

As well as asserting that competition will bring about enhanced levels of efficiency and effectiveness, McCarrey also maintains that government costs will fall through this process without adversely impacting on quality of services. Allied with this, he suggests that governments across the board will become aware ‘of the greater efficiency and economy of private sector practices resulting from specialisation’ (McCarrey 1993a: 1-2). In line with this, the Report urges a re-orientation of responsibility and accountability. It faults the public sector for ‘excessive layers of management and lines of control’ (ibid). The answer is seen to lay in reallocation of resources to the private sector and other areas of emerging needs. This, in turn, means challenging the ‘reluctance on the part of government agencies and sectional interests to abandon the old to make way for the new’ (McCarrey 1993a: 3).

As in the Hilmer Report, corporatisation and commercialisation are key features of the managerial reform process proposed under McCarrey. For the most part, this was aimed at Government Trading Enterprises (GTEs), but also had a direct bearing on the reorganisation of former statutory organisations such as Homeswest, where it aimed to instil market principles in the structure of the organisation and its treatment of customers.
Homeswest and the new accounting calculations

The former Homeswest (reconstituted into a Ministry of Housing and Works) was one of the fifty government agencies reviewed by the McCarrey team. The responsibility for its review was put in the hands of ‘business people with long experience in the land subdivision and housing industry’ (McCarrey: 1993b: 63).

The Report notes that as of 1993 there were two major rental housing types administered by Homeswest; those that were assessed at full market cost and those in which a subsidised rent attracted only 22.5 per cent of the occupant’s income. In June 1992 those receiving a rent concession represented 81 per cent of rental households (McCarrey 1993b: 68). Officially, this translated into an annual subsidy of $2,200 per property per year. The McCarrey Report, however, argues that the actual subsidy was likely to be much bigger given that Homeswest rent was below market value (McCarrey 1993b: 68).

Following from this, one of the main recommendations of the Report was the need to re-orientate Homewest’s welfare function. It is unclear how this was to be done, aside from the stipulation that the change should occur after an appraisal of eligibility criteria of potential occupants. The Housing Authority was also asked to strengthen its management function in respect to its property management section and move towards contracting out its property management role to the private sector (McCarrey 1993b: 71, 73). Against these recommendations, the report does, in fact, recognise certain important aspects of Homeswest’s functions. It recognises that people accessing Homeswest housing were likely to be ‘disadvantaged groups and groups with special needs, people having difficulty in the private rental market, and borrowers experiencing financial difficulty’
(McCarrey 1993b: 63). In addition, the Report acknowledges that there are other productive roles played by Homeswest such as the facilitation of home ownership for first home buyers and the maintenance of substantial productive land holdings (McCarrey 1993b: 63).

The McCarrey Report reserved its comments about Aboriginal people and home ownership for a chapter dealing with Aboriginal affairs across government. Observations were made about the disproportionately high level of Aboriginal people occupying rental accommodation. This was stated to be 83 per cent, with a sizable 57 per cent ‘at the lower end of the scale’ (McCarrey 1993b: 271). A mere 17 per cent owned or were buying a home (McCarrey 1993b: 271). The recommendations made for Aboriginal affairs, of which housing is a small part are said to be in line with those of the 1992 COAG (McCarrey 1993b: 283). The team made it clear at the time of reporting, however, that although COAG was aware of the need to ‘achieve a greater coordination for improved service delivery to Aboriginal people…it did not provide the detail through which greater coordination could be achieved’ (McCarrey, 1993b: 273). In its turn, the McCarrey Report, having acknowledged the level of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people, did not make clear how this could be redressed by market principles.

It is important to note the actors who contributed to the McCarrey agenda. The main players were associated with accounting and private enterprise, including representatives from Arthur & Anderson, Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu, Ernst & Young, KPMG Peat Marwick, Macquarie Bank, Price Waterhouse, Alcoa’s Executive Director, the Chamber
of Commerce and Industry (Western Australia), the Institute of Public Affairs and property and real estate enterprises. In addition, a few government representatives were drawn from the office of Public Sector Management, State Treasury and Premier and Cabinet (McCarrey, 1993b: iv-ix).

The recommendations made by the McCarrey review in respect of Homeswest are reflected in even greater detail in a publication produced by the Institute of Public Affairs in March 1993. This publication, titled Reform and Recovery – An Agenda for the New Australian Government, starts by saying that the Institute’s objective is to ‘encourage understanding and appreciation of the free society and free enterprise’ (Nahan and Rutherford 1993: preface). To this end it applies ‘classical economic and political analysis to Australian society and institutions, particularly when it appears that freedom or economic wellbeing are threatened’ (Nahan and Rutherford 1993: preface). The text then calls for a separation of Homewest’s welfare function from its commercial activities, saying that the pendulum has swung in favour of the welfare function. The Institute also deplored the hidden cross-subsidisation occurring in favour of the welfare function. From its point of view:

All tenants are receiving a ‘hidden’ subsidy of $25 per week….If we go further and ask what return might be earned on an asset worth (at a rough guess) $2,275 million, then a larger figure is suggested. At present that asset appears to be earning little or nothing. In effect, then, all of the asset’s earnings potential is being sacrificed to serve a welfare function. On that way of reckoning the matter, many Homewest renters will be receiving a subsidy worth perhaps $100 per week (Nahan and Rutherford 1993: 220).
More broadly, the Institute is preoccupied with the general impact of social protection policies and Keynesian economics. In relation to Homeswest, Nahan and Rutherford (1993: 217) argue that the housing authority started in 1945 with the intention to ‘provide cheap but adequate housing for young families’ but that due to policy change in the late 1960s, the ‘welfare clientele’ eventually rose to 83 per cent of Homeswest tenants. For the Institute of Public Affairs this is unacceptable due to diminishing financial returns. In its view, this raises questions about accountability since it blames sectional influence for the entrenchment of welfarism. It sees the answer in the new frameworks that separate ‘the welfare and the commercial functions, so that both can be made to perform more efficiently’ (Nahan and Rutherford 1993: 219).

In summary, the prescriptions of competition policy are all too familiar: reduce government involvement in the public sphere, lessen the role of welfare bureaucracies, enable customers to make individual choices through the market system and refashion welfare services to follow market principles. The emphasis is on the individual choices of consumers and is designed to achieve a radical shift away from collective practices. Related to this point, think tanks such as the Institute of Public Affairs assist in reshaping the calculative dealings of government agencies and other actors, and have a direct impact on the management of housing policy. The constitutive nature of the language in play and the mechanisms of inscription employed by these agents of reform are worthy of further exploration - a task that is tackled throughout this thesis.
Having outlined Hilmer’s competition framework and the accounting calculations contained in the McCarrey Report, the thesis discusses two key aspects of NCP namely: competitive neutrality, and competitive tendering and contracting (CTC). Understanding these principles is critical since they are decisive points of reference shaping the entire reform process and the specific reforms embedded within it. They also represent the managerial modalities through which competition takes shape.

**Competitive Neutrality**

National Competition Policy requires that all parties apply competitive neutrality principles to ‘all significant government owned businesses (including local government businesses) where appropriate’ (NCC 2002a: Section 1.1). In essence, competitive neutrality is a mechanism whereby private and public sector players are effectively placed on the same footing and compete with each other ‘equally’. In the words of the National Competition Council, competitive neutrality entails:

- placing significant government business activity on the same footing – for taxes, interest costs and regulation – as their actual or potential private competitors, to the extent that the benefits to be realised from implementation outweigh the costs. It encourages government to corporatise their significant government business enterprises and ensure the prices charged by other significant government business reflect full cost attribution (NCC 2002a: 2.14).
The National Competition Council states that competitive neutrality is a useful decision-making tool. The Council argues that this principle:

helps governments to make better informed decisions about the future of their entities. Full attribution of costs often leads governments to assess afresh whether they wish to provide a good or service directly through a government business, to allow competitive bidding for the provision of the good or service, or to vacate the area of production (NCC 2002a: 2.14-2.15).

The argument here is essentially that, stripped of their artificial advantages, government will need to make decisions about resource allocation ‘on the basis of merit’ rather than tradition or preference (NCC 2002a: Section 2.14-2.15). In addition, the National Competition Council asserts that competitive neutrality leads to enhanced performance, reduces taxation and costs for service users and, in general, enhances community economic welfare (NCC 2002a: Section 2.14-2.15). For this reason, the Commonwealth Competitive Neutrality Guidelines for Managers (1999) extends application of competitive neutrality to services categorised under the purchase/provider split. The guidelines emphasise that where a government arm makes an ‘in-house’ (Commonwealth of Australia 1998: 2) tender bid, their operations would need to be provided on commercial basis even if the customers are not charged for services (Commonwealth of Australia 1998: 1). Here, the Commonwealth Competitive Neutrality Policy Statement stresses that this mechanism ‘is intended to remove resource allocation distortions…. [these distortions occur] because prices charged by significant government businesses need not fully reflect resource costs. Consequently, this can distort decisions on production and consumption’ (The Treasury, Australian Government 1999: 4) including policy decisions involving what goods and services should be produced by the public
sector, and thus enabling the private sector competitors to make appropriate investment
decisions on an equal footing.

There are other applications of competitive neutrality relevant to the concerns of this
thesis. These include the indirect extension of competitive neutrality to organisations not
formally intended under NCP. For example, in November 2000, COAG endorsed the
principle whereby when ‘a government business (for instance, a university) is not subject
to the executive control of a government, a “best endeavours” approach could be
adopted’ (NCC 2002a: Section 2.17, 2.20). This would also require governments to, at a
minimum, provide a transparent statement of competitive neutrality obligations to the
organisation concerned. While there is no requirement for government to employ a
competitive process in providing Community Service Obligations (CSOs), the fine print
requires parties to use market formulas in determining the target criteria and the level of
provisions. Thus the quest to use market techniques in meeting even community service
obligations, which are there to address market failures in the first place, resonates with
Rose’s observation that:

the powers once accorded to positive knowledges of human conduct are to be
transferred to the calculative regimes of accounting and financial management. And the enclosures of expertise are to be penetrated through a range of new
techniques for exercising critical scrutiny over authority. These certainly rely
upon a claim to truth, but it is one that has a different character from that of the
social and human sciences (Rose 1996: 54).

It is through similar justifications that local governments are encouraged to extend
competitive neutrality to their recreational and welfare facilities, with the National
Competition Council calling for greater transparency in relation to any hidden subsidies
associated with such local government activities. Such subsidies, the Council believes, should be subject to regular reviews (NCC 2002a: Section 2.17, 2.20).

Western Australia prides itself on the progress it has made in relation to advancing the notion of competitive neutrality. In its 1998 Progress Report to the National Competition Council, the West Australian Government made note of its move to legislate in favour of a commercialised status for the State’s Port Authorities, thus bringing this utility in line with organisations such as Western Power, Alinta Gas and the Water Corporation. At the time similar legislation was being prepared for Land Corp, and the following agencies had competitive neutrality reviews underway to ensure their operations were placed on an equal footing with the private sector: Gold Corporation, Insurance Commission of WA, Homeswest, Lotteries Commission, Totalisator Agency Board, Rottnest Island Authority, and Bunbury and Busselton Water Boards. Westrail and the former MetroBus escaped competitive neutrality reviews as measures had already been undertaken to privatise the Westrail freight business and to contract out MetroBus and ferry services (Competition Policy Unit, WA Treasury, 1998: 2, 7).

Furthermore, although local governments are not signatories to the NCP COAG arrangements, by 1998, 97 of Western Australia’s local government businesses had been reviewed under the notion of competitive neutrality. These businesses stretched from waste collection and disposal services to regional airports and social services, including local government-funded ‘recreation centres, aged care centres, child care centres and golf courses’ (Competition Policy Unit, WA Treasury, 1998: 20). In addition, 43 out of
54 Western Australian major local authorities had made significant moves to meet the requirements of competitive neutrality (Competition Policy Unit, WA Treasury, 1998: 20).

Even though local government programs such as community aged care services were not mentioned as a priority by the National Competition Council, they had nonetheless become subject to NCP in an indirect way, namely through the requirement that they adopt a commercial culture, impose user pay methods and cost recovery initiatives, and reduce their subsidies (Competition Policy Unit 1998: 21). The influence of these strategies has had a far-reaching effect on community services and some of these will receive more attention in the two case studies undertaken in Chapters Five and Six.

**Competitive Tendering and Contracting (CTC)**

Competitive Tendering and Contracting (CTC) is central to National Competition Policy at all levels. It centrally determines which stakeholders are to be involved in service delivery and how such services are to be provided. Moreover, it is the mechanism whereby government employment and training services, the subject of the first case study, are now delivered. In a modified form, it underpins the service contracting system relevant to the second case study.

Competitive tendering and contracting is defined in a 1993 Western Australian Premier’s Circular to Ministers as the process whereby the discipline of competition is used to underpin delivery of public funded services (Court 1993: Premier’s Circular to Ministers,
No 46/93). Through this process, services’ specifications are outlined and put out to tender:

Comparisons are drawn between bids for the work from current in-house providers, the private sector, and in some cases from other public sector agencies, and a contract signed with the successful tenderer. Over time and under these arrangements, public services will be provided at competitive prices by the most efficient and effective suppliers (Court 1993: Premier’s Circular to Ministers, No 46/93).

Under National Competition Policy government departments are required to introduce CTC in the procurement of services as prescribed through a range of authorities, including the 2004 Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (Australian Government 2004a), the 2004 Australian Government Competitive Neutrality Guidelines for Managers, (Australian Government 2004b), the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997, and so forth. The term ‘procurement’ has become common under the current forms of securing services to a particular provider. Procurement in these and other such documents is defined as a process whereby government secures the services of an external party or an internal public service delivery arm to deliver services in line with certain prescriptions. For instance, government ‘procures’ services from Centrelink to provide assessment, administration and local monitoring of programs for the unemployed. Over recent years the Howard government has moved to streamline its procurement framework across its agencies in line with the spirit of CTC. Currently, Commonwealth procurement is broadly guided through the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines and Best Practice Guidance (revised 2000). The guidelines are of a general nature, referring in broad terms to the importance of ‘professionalism, transparency, probity and accountability while maximising efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility’ (Department of Finance and Administration 2000a: 2). Underlying all this, primacy is
given to the need to obtain ‘value for money’ (DFA 2000a: 2,4,9), a principle mandated under section 44 of the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997.

The guidelines are clear about how ‘value for money’ is to be understood and pursued. Value is optimised when procurement is deemed efficient and effective. This does not necessarily equate to the cheapest price. Rather, it is predicated on ‘whole-of-life’ considerations characterising the nature of the market. Thus, value for money may be enhanced by the procurement method, the market maturity, market performance, price considerations and other monetary expenses likely to be incurred in the procurement process (DFA 2000a: 3,4; 2000b: 2).

To promote government success in obtaining ‘value for money’, procurement arrangements are to be ‘incorporated into corporate governance, supported by contestability and competitive neutrality requirements’ (DFA 2000a: 4). In relation to the case studies discussed in this thesis, this means that the procurement of Job Network Service provision under CTC and that of crisis accommodation support under the Preferred Service Provider model are made to come into line with the principles of contestable markets through the threat of losing business to other players. At the same time, competitive neutrality means their service delivery is now not only open to government and traditional non-government service providers, but also to private profit making companies. For example, in the delivery of labour market programs under Job Network, profit-making entities are allowed to compete against non-government
operations and government service delivery arms. The impact on recipients of these services will be taken up in Chapters Four to Six.

The procurement system implemented through CTC and other hybridised contracting versions stands to influence decisions concerning the reallocation of large amounts of state resources. At present, Western Australia’s 2000/2001 Report on Who Buys What puts the State’s annual expenditure on goods and services at $5.11 billion. Purchases through Contract Management Services, that is, those purchased through the CTC method, totalled $481 million. In contrast, the Department of Community Development purchased services worth $54,506,195. The figure for 1997/98 stood at $47,545,299. By 2001, the value of this category of services was just below $500,000,000 (State Supply Commission 2001: 5,9; 1999). As of 2004, the value of ‘Social, personal and selected community services contracted by this department amounted to $69,553,747 representing 29 per cent of departmental overall expenditure on goods and services delivered’ (State Supply Commission, 2004: 10). From this it can be argued that if this procurement trend continues, more services may be increasingly subjected to definitions of procurement requirements in pursuit of ‘value for money’, as understood under the efficiency criteria.

In line with their obligations under COAG’s agreements, successive Western Australian governments have required public agencies under their authority to embrace CTC as a means of pursuing value for money in the operations funded by the government. In this context, Premiers in this State habitually issue policy circulars requiring government agencies to put into practice the CTC (Gallop 2004; Court 1999; 1994; 1993a; 1993b). It
follows that the sources of authority outlined below set the framework through which state government agencies come to understand the practices of ‘procurement’. At the time of collecting data for the second case study, the following circulars were in place and provided increased authority in connection with contracting out reforms: Circular to Ministers No. 46/94 – Contracting out of Services, Circular to Ministers No. 46/96 - Competitive Tendering and Contracting: Union Involvement, and Circular to Ministers No. 7/99 – Implementation of major change (Government of Western Australia, 2000c: section: Key Policy Statements; Court 1999; 1994; 1993). A more concrete analysis regarding the relevance of various sources of authority is tackled in detail in the case studies in Chapters Four and Five.

**Shifts in Public Sector Practices**

Before the formal development of NCP, the philosophies of competition and the managerial organisational and coordination forms had already gained considerable ground in Australia. The Hawke-Keating’s national macroeconomic reforms of the 1980s led to deregulation of the financial sector, tariff reduction and the privatisation of once highly prized national companies such as Qantas and The Commonwealth Bank. Similarly, the former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett’s market reforms were well established (Capling et al 1998; Halligan 1996; INDECS 1992; Commonwealth of Australia 1999a; Hilmer 1993; for elaboration of managerial practices, see Newman and Clarke 1997; Valentine1999; APSC 2003a, b).
Managerialism is cited as one key means through which the neo-liberal agenda has been articulated and imparted (Newman and Clarke 1997; Lavalette and Pratt 1997: 235, 241). Organisational and coordination forms and patterns used by proponents of new managerialism show a simultaneous trend towards a centralisation and decentralisation of state power (Lavalette and Pratt 1997; Pollitt 1993), a similar point made by Muetzelfeldt (1992) in Chapter One about meta-planning occurring at a central level and the ensuing calculated choices embedded into programs delivered on the ground. Thus far, the thesis has identified neo-classical economics and public choice formulations as key drivers engaged in facilitating enhanced competition. On the other hand, Pollitt (1993: 15) notes that managerialism is influenced by separate origins from that of public choice theory and of neo-classical economics. He links managerial practices to Taylorism, arguing that as a neo-Taylor orientation, managerialism seeks to entrench the division between program planning and carrying out planned programs. While the traditional Taylor model aimed to separate the work planners from that of manual workers, the new managerialism seeks to apply this approach to the ‘non-manual workforce’ (Pollitt 1993: 16). Similarly, van Krieken, Smith, Habibis, McDonald, Haralambos and Holborn (2000: 289: 291) link managerialism and Taylorism in the way in which they aim for a ‘decomposition of the labour process into discrete calculable units’ (van Krieken et al 2000: 290). With this need to compartmentalise tasks and further separate planning from the doing of designed programs, managerialism is inclined to give more authority to managerial parties while simultaneously curtailing the levels of autonomy for professional staff (Pollitt 1993: 130).
This study treats managerialist practices as broadly consistent with this ‘new pattern of political and administrative reform [managerialism]’ (Culpitt 1999: 5). This link is further supported by Pollitt (1993: 130) who observes that ‘adherents of generic managerialism, whether of neo-liberal persuasion or not…[defend] the “right to manage.”’ A further link is noted by Mooney (1997: 241) who notes that by accommodating decision-making assumptions espoused in public choice thinking managerialism came to be seen as the ‘vehicle through which greater efficiency, effectiveness and economy could be achieved’.

This point is affirmed in the Notes on Public Sector Reform and Performance Management – Australia, which observes that ‘with the introduction of managerialism ideas, a new stage of public service reform emerged in the 1980s’ (www.bcauditor.com/papers/PSReforms).

Furthermore, Pollitt (1993: 46-9) points out that managerialism is differentiated from preceding understandings of administration by its emphasis on results, a drive for improved performance and better outcomes. In this quest, it preoccupies itself with the management of human and program related resources and, in the process, challenges previous bureaucratic methods centred on program activities, procedures and regulations (Pollitt 1993: 46-9).

In Australia, at the Commonwealth level, a major managerial shift involving the operations of the public sector took effect from 1983. This was preceded by the White Paper known as Reforming the Australian Public Service, released in 1983, resulting in the Public Services Reform Act 1984 (APSC 2004: 87), making provisions for ‘a more

The Australian Public Service Commission (2003b chapt 8: 1) clearly describes this change as being aimed at reversing the public sector role from one formerly conceived in terms of ‘provid[ing] citizens with services that were fair, equitable, correctly and lawfully delivered’ (Service Commission 2003b chpt 8: 1) to one where ‘results-based management reforms…saw increasing adoption of private sector methods in the public sector and a new emphasis on citizens as customers’ (APSC 2003, chpt 8: 1).

It is in this context that the Western Australian McCarrey Report (1993a, b) called for a strengthening of performance control mechanisms linking service (program) inputs, sanctioned activities, unit costing and internal charges for each activity, including overhead costs used in supporting these services (McCarrey 1993a: 150-163). From his analysis, ‘activities of [government] agencies expand to meet the agencies’ own perceptions of their functions unless restrained by clear guidelines’ (McCarrey 1993a: 182), hence re-orientating operations to focus on getting results.
In the 1994 Commonwealth *Public Service Reform, Volume 2: Conference Proceedings* the quest is noted to have entailed a new emphasis on strategic planning, evaluation, prioritisation, benchmarking, and accountability (Commonwealth of Australia 1994). Also evident in these proceedings is the variation in the participants’ perceptions concerning the usefulness of the managerial logics of the pursuit of value for money (Commonwealth of Australia 1994). The widespread adoption of the premises of performance culture and accountability are also revealed by the research undertaken by Halligan (1996). This project involved interviewing 23 out of the nation’s 24 Departmental Secretaries. The report, *Australian Public Service: The View from the Top* (Halligan 1996), suggests that the managerial trends of the 1990s were a progression of reforms developed a decade before, and that since that time they had become embedded in public service structures and approaches. In this report the interviewed Australian Departmental Secretaries particularly identified devolution of management powers and responsibilities, pursuit of a greater return from government funding, and the introduction of corporatisation, commercialisation and outsourcing methods as being key shifts associated with performance and efficiency concerns (Halligan 1996: 6).

Miller and Rose’s (1990) argument that policy appraisal is a key feature of governmentality rings true in respect of these managerialist reforms. Although by 1994 notions of flexible management were already being consolidated (APSC 2003b, chpt 3: 3), in 1996, yet again, a discussion paper titled *Towards Best Practice Australia Public Service* canvassed ways of promoting a more responsive and professional quality service.
This appraisal produced its own diagnosis, finding the Australian Public Service to be ‘outdated, rigid and [characterised by] cumbersome regulations, systemic inflexibility and a culture which does not sufficiently promote or recognise innovation’ (Australian Public Service Commission 2003, chpt 4). Linking this appraisal more clearly in the context of reason of the state, the Howard Government reaffirmed that a reform of the Australian Public Service ‘is a key element of our government’s micro-economic reform agenda’ (Australian Public Service Commission 2004: 130). In this way, this agenda also sees these managerial shifts as a way of ensuring that Australian taxpayers can be guaranteed efficient and effective use of their resources.

The consolidation of these reforms found legislative expression in a number of mandated frameworks such as the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997, Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997, and the Auditor General Act 1997. More specifically, the provisions of the Financial Management Act present a meeting of minds in the orders of discourse embedding NCP, managerialism and theoretical assumptions alluded to in the discussion of neo-liberalism. In this Act, the re-orientation of the Australian Public Service Commission captures the quest for competition and managerial drive aimed at attaining results. As officially summarised, the Financial Management Act serves to:

- put the Commonwealth public sector on a more business-like footing
- foster a more competitive environment
- shift the focus from complying with rules to managing for results
- plan, budget and report on an accruals, outcomes and output basis (APSC 2003b chpt 6: 1).
In addition, the Act ‘provide[s] the framework for the proper use and management of public money, public property and other Commonwealth resources’ (APSC 2003b: chpt 6: 5).

Along similar lines, in 1998, with the aim of disciplining the conduct of public sector agencies in their program costing and pricing practices, the Western Australian Government produced a major document entitled *Costing and Pricing Government Outputs* (1998). In this document the Government made it clear that it was shifting its approach from activity or program costing to ‘costing outputs and to provid[ing] more information on the treatment of costing and pricing…in the context of output based management and competitive tendering and contracting (CTC)’ (Government of Western Australia 1998: i). The document contained guidelines on how this was to be achieved, the most relevant to this thesis being specific requirements for ‘quantification of transition cost’, ‘competitive neutral pricing’ and the projected ‘savings from contracts under CTC’ (Government of Western Australia 1998: i).

Having looked at the emergence of National Competition Policy and the various managerialist reforms accompanying the development of this program, the chapter now broadly sketches the impacts of competition practices in re-organising the delivery of welfare services involving Australia’s labour market programs for unemployed people and the delivery of crisis and supported accommodation services in Western Australia.
The Impact of Competition Policy on Non-Government Organisations

The extension of the contracting system to NGOs is best understood in the context of the spread of competition policy and managerial methods in Australia’s public sector. In this context the alignments between central and local government are shaped by mutual interests concerning funding and delivery of a range of social service programs. It is through the procurement, specifications and monitoring of the services contracted out to NGOs that competition and managerial discourses circulate and invest themselves at points of service delivery. In the words of Western Australia’s Auditor General (2000), programs delivered by the community sector have become subject to increased requirements for ‘efficiency, effectiveness and accountability’ (Auditor General 2000: 15), leading to the development of a contract system based either on ‘market-type mechanisms’, or ““non-competitive” service agreements’ (Auditor General 2000: 15). The move away from the previous grant system to a contract-based system aims to ensure that NGOs maintain focus on contracted outputs.

In the discussion that follows, a broad overview of the Competitive Tendering and Contracting system adopted by the Federal Government in the procurement of labour market support programs from Job Network agencies is provided. The discussion then turns to the Preferred Service Provider (PSP) model employed by the Department of Community Development, the funding organisation for the second case study.
i) Competitive Tendering and Contracting of Labour Market Programs

According to the former Department for Employment, Working Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB) the contracts processed in 1999 for the Job Matching, Job Search Training and the Intensive Assistance Program constituted ‘the largest human services tender [since the commencement of the competitive tendering and contracting system] with expected contracted expenditure of $3 billion over three years’ (Commonwealth of Australia 1998-2000: 1). This tender involved 200 non-government, government and commercial providers.

The change to labour market programs marked by these developments represents a far-reaching reform involving a reworking of organisational arrangements, the mode of service delivery and a reconceptualisation of the way in which the problem of ‘unemployment’ is understood. These changes are underpinned by assumptions about the need to separate activities of policy planners and actors involved in designing federal Labour Market Programs from those parties providing services on the ground (Centrelink 1998).

The developments associated with this shift provide an important background to the contracting of Job Network services. Following various transitional steps in 1999 the then Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) was eventually replaced by the Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB). By 2002 the latter was reformed into the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. At the time of collecting the case study field data, DEWRSB was
still in place. In order to maintain research authenticity, in a number of instances, this former department remains a key point of reference ensuring data is treated in the context of the period in which it was collected. Generally speaking, it is necessary to broadly understand the current structural arrangements, drawing together key actors connected with regulating the conduct of the unemployed population who are using Labour Market Programs. These elements help to put this service procurement arrangement (that is, contracting out) into perspective:

- The new framework provided for DEETYA and later DEWRSB, invested these departments with key responsibilities for policy and program formation relating to delivery of labour market programs (Centrelink 1998: 3-4). This Policy function is largely concentrated in the head office in Canberra (DEETYA 1996; DEWR 2004f; DEWRSB 2001b);

- Centrelink is a government labour market and training service provider as well as the primary income support delivery arm of what used to be the Department of Social Security. It serves as the initial primary point of contact for most unemployed people seeking assistance (Centrelink 1998);

- National Employment – a corporatised Commonwealth Employment Service that was made to compete with NGOs and the profit making private sector in delivery of Labour Market Programs. This government service delivery agency is no longer in existence (DEETYA 1996; Centrelink 1998; Eardley 2002); and

- Job Networks – Community-based government-funded labour market program, replacing the former Skillshare agencies. Centrelink enforces and monitors
contractual obligations with these non-government and private agencies in the
delivery of programs funded under the Job Network scheme.

Since Centrelink is a significant actor implicated in regulating the Job Networks’
operational conduct and that of Job Networks’ unemployed clients, locating the position
of this actor serves as a good background to the case study chapter.

At the time of undertaking this study, the management of Centrelink became completely
separated from that of DEWRSB. As stated in official documentation, ‘many of the key
design features of Centrelink in themselves represent a major structural reform to the
Australian Public Service’ (Centrelink 1998: 3). In keeping with the new patterns of
administration in 1997 Centrelink had become subject to the Financial Management and
Accountability Act, while at the same time it was also put under a Board of Management,
a number of whom are drawn from the private sector (Centrelink 1998: 3). The Board is
invested with executive powers, a strategic devolution of the power to manage that
supports Pollitt’s (1993) view about the managerialist drive aimed to give managers the
right to manage in keeping with the rationalities of advanced liberalism. It follows that
Centrelink mainly acts as an agent of DEWRSB, carrying out business on behalf of the
latter according to the contractual agreements made with DEWRSB. In the Centrelink
Annual Report 1997/98 the ‘cultural shift to…purchaser/provider financial arrangements’
(Centrelink 1998: 3) is regarded as a significant and complete departure from previous
arrangements.
Through this new system, Centrelink ‘derives its funding through strategic partnership agreements with client agencies [Commonwealth department vested with policy formation and program development] who purchase Centrelink services’ (Centrelink 1998: 3). This agency concentrates on client assessments and decides who should be slotted into the Job Matching Program, Job Search Training, and Intensive Assistance designed by DEWRSB and then DEWR. Further, it is DEWR rather than Centrelink that determines eligibility guidelines and sets the level of support for clients. In essence, then, as a party contracted and funded by DEWR, Centrelink is under an obligation to meet its responsibilities set out at DEWRSB’s policy and program level. In this respect, it monitors the functions of Job Network providers and is the ultimate administrator of labour market related activity tests linked to income support benefits. In the figure provided next page, a sketch of roles and responsibilities assists to locate the working arrangement involving the key governmental actors in the provision of labour market programs.

For their part, the Job Networks are now subject to the competitive tendering and contracting regime, and thus to the framework of contestable markets discussed earlier. That is, the networks need to compete one with another, operating under the threat that their business faces possible challenge from other networks. Under the current regime, the Job Networks are largely unable to engage in discretionary decisions involving the form or manner in which their clients could benefit from available services. As a result, there is reinforced codification, service specification and strict prescribed outcome-based interventions – predetermined in the then DEWRSB’s Canberra office and sanctioned
through Centrelink’s administrative system. A detailed account of this is discussed in the first case study.

A schematic representation on the roles of involved parties is illustrated under figure 1

**Schematic representation of roles of key stakeholders**

**DEWSRB**
Responsible for program design, specifications, price determination and purchasing services from Centrelink, and Job networks

**CENTRELINK**
Responsible for assessing level of need and classifies clients into specific service categories i.e. Flex 1, 2, or 3.

Carries its ‘provider’ function in line with contractual agreements with DEWRSB. In some respect Centrelink also competes with Job Networks in delivering jobseekers services

**JOB NETWORKS**
A term used in reference to a network of organisations contracted to deliver labour market programs on behalf of DEWRSB. They compete for funding under Flex 1, 2 and 3. Job networks are under contractual obligations to report to Centrelink any activity test breaches made by a jobseeker.
These changes are accompanied by neo-liberal discourse about welfare dependency, which emphasises self-reliance and active welfare (Saunders 2000). In the recent welfare reform package, McClure (2000: 1-2) contends that the welfare system should provide ‘opportunity for people to increase self reliance and capacity building, rather than merely providing a passive safety net’, that the unemployed should ‘support themselves and contribute to society through increased social and economic framework of Mutual Obligation’ (McClure 2000: 1-2). In line with this kind of thinking, eligible ‘jobseekers’ may have their income benefits discontinued and their access to labour market and training programs stopped where a breach of the new activity test is deemed to have occurred. Moreover, the new framework puts Job Networks under a legal obligation to inform Centrelink of any suspected activity breach by their customers (Centrelink 1998: 9).

It is under the constellation of these new organisational arrangements that the first case study, the Peel Training and Employment Agency, is located as a contracted party funded to deliver a Job Matching Program, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance.

**Contracting of Family Support Services under the Department of Community Development**

During the 1997/1998 financial year, the Western Australian Department of Community Development (DCD) (at the time, the Department for Family and Children Services) re-organised its funding and service framework and adopted a ‘funder-purchaser-provider model’ in line with the national competition policy framework. Under the new scheme,
the purchaser has a greater role in policy formation, program design and codifying specification than the funding organisation would have had under the previous system. It is in this environment that the Department developed a new procurement strategy for services delivered by non-government organisations. It engaged in market testing and buying these services through a ‘preferred-service provider’ model approved by the State Supply Commission. In its 1997/98 annual report, the Department stated that it aimed to use this strategy for a six-year period, and in October 1999 it reiterated its preference for a Preferred Service Provider Model (PSP) except when purchasing new and replacement family support services (DFCS 1999: Foreword).

As clearly indicated in the Auditor General’s Report (2000), the preferred-service-provider system remained a contracting market model, even though it is a modified form of the fully-blown competitive tendering and contracting system such as that used in procuring Labour Market Programs. In 1995, the Western Australian government developed a broad funding framework for service funding with a specific view to procuring services from non-government organisations. The model was said to be ‘a direct result of the findings of the McCarrey Report’ (DFCS 1999: 4). In a nutshell, the Department of Community Development adopted a two-pronged approach: primarily, a Preferred Service Provider system for buying existing services and an open competitive system involving both new and replacement services. In keeping with McCarrey’s (1993a, b) call for efficient and accountable resource use, the Department required non-government organisations to go through a specific process (Request for Proposal Process) when tendering for services. Any failure to attain the prescribed outcomes specified
during this process threatens the contracts of the tendering organisations concerned, especially its preferred provider status and other contractual arrangements entered into through the open competitive system (DFCS 1999).

As previously indicated, the quest for efficient systems had been paralleled by managerial reforms, often seeking a separation of key functions such as funding, policy and program development, and service delivery. As a result of this overall restructuring, by 1998 the functions of the Department of Community Development came to comprise: funding management, specification and purchase of services, and service delivery as separate functional areas (DFCS 1998: 10, 13). This was said to provide clearer information about cost effectiveness, to facilitate better state-wide comparisons of cost and outcomes, and to enhance accountability in terms of customer services (DFCS 1998: 10, 13).

These strategies have a direct bearing on the second case study, Swan Accommodation Support Services, and these are discussed in Chapter Five. In that chapter attention is also given to the further development of the Department of Community Development contracting practices in relation to crisis and supported accommodation.
Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter starts by elaborating the study’s methodological approach, which by and large is already grounded in the work discussed in my first chapter that outlines the use of governmentality as a productive tool for this thesis. I highlight the key methodological features, including the sorts of questions and the kind of study that can be undertaken when governmentality is used in examining and exploring a research question. A detailed account covers the case study research protocol and procedures. These are accompanied by detailed descriptions of research methods, such as sampling, data collection, analysis and ethical considerations.

The promotion of social policy concerns, for example, the conceptualisation of homelessness and unemployment, have tended to be located within a social democratic tradition (for example, see: Bryson 1992; Titmuss 2000; Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Jamrozik 2001; George and Wilding 1976; McMahon et al 2000; Williams 1987), and emphasizing notions of positive rights. Augmenting that has been the pursuit of certain social policies through practices of identity politics, evidenced by ‘a feminist critique of the welfare state’ and that of the ‘race relations policies’ (Williams 1987). As Dean points out:

I think it is fair to say it has been common to analyse social policies principally in terms of the ideologies or policy frameworks they are held to realize and the role they accord the state and the market in the allocation of resources (Dean 1995: 569).
While recognising the value in such an approach, a governmentality approach is used in this study particularly as ‘one of the distinctive features of the recent work on government….emphasis[ing]…the practices and techniques by which government occurs’ (Dean 1995: 569). This approach maintains a sceptical stance towards notions of truth, progress and values (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 9-11). That is to say, the social democratic quest for positive rights and the ensuing optimism in solving social problems such as unemployment and homelessness stand to be problematised through a Foucauldian approach. Of great methodological significance is Foucault’s main preoccupation with the following questions:

(1) What are the relations we have to truth through scientific knowledge, to those ‘truth games’ which are so important in civilization and in which we are both subject and object? (2) What are the relationships we have with others through those strange strategies and power relationships? And (3) What are the relationships between truth, power, and self?’ (Foucault 1988a: 15).

In this sense, a governmentality approach implies a methodology that embraces an understanding of government as an activity of governing that ‘can concern one’s relation to oneself, interpersonal relations that involve some form of control or guidance and relations within social institutions and communities’ (Tremain 2005: 8). This implies a different focus on the objects, subjects and methods of study from those commonly employed in making sense of social policy. Specifically, governmentality problematises taken-for-granted categorical truth claims, preferring to engage with the ‘history of the
present’ (Kendall and Wickham 1999: 5). Significantly, and of direct relevance to my thesis, governmentality focuses on problematising the way that policy science ‘produces truth rather than exempting it from scrutiny’ (Kendall and Wickham 1999: 5). So here, the Foucauldian approach transcend concerns of whether ‘knowledge or language provides an adequate representation of reality’, instead it highlights how ‘knowledge actively orders [discursive] reality…within which the knower is located’ (Gordon 1980: 210). Supporting this position, Higgins (2000) argues that in this way, knowledge can be understood as the ‘will to truth’ (Foucault cited in Higgins 2000: 17) fostered through attempts to order and rank such arbitrary knowledge. It is against this background that the development and practices of National Competition Policy are problematised as ‘something to be explained’ (Miller and Rose 1990: 3) rather than taking its historical existence for granted. The questioning of truth produced by NCP practices, therefore, especially through the discursive ordering of reality has a direct bearing on the methods of analysis, as explained later.

Chapter One discussed governmentality’s distinct approach to the question of subjectivity, which emphasises the understanding of a human subject through the study of the body, particularly ‘the effects of power on it’ (Foucault 1980: 58-9). As Foucault puts it:

I’m not one of those who try to elicit the effects of power at the level of ideology. Indeed I wonder whether, before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn’t be more materialistic to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it. Because what troubles me with these analyses which prioritise ideology is that there is always a presupposed human subject on the lines provided by the classical philosophy, endowed with consciousness which power is thought to seize upon (Foucault 1980c: 58).
It follows that in adopting the premise of individuals as the vehicle of power (Foucault 1980c: 58-9), governmentality theory concerns itself ‘not to reformulate the global systematic theory which holds everything in place, but to analyse the specificity of the mechanics of power, to locate the connections and extensions to build little by little a strategic knowledge (savoir)’ (Gordon 1980: 145). Linked to this understanding is the view that power operates through the body by means of a normalisation strategy. The techniques of government are seen as engaged in the regulatory normalisation processes (Tremain 2005: 4-5). In this way, the normalising strategy serves to ‘identify subjects and to make them identify themselves in order to make them governable’ (Tremain 2005: 6). Thus a methodology based on governmentality theory is particularly effective in a study that focuses on the locations where subjects are ‘materially constituted’ (Foucault 1980c: 97) via NCP contracting practices at the point of service delivery. The exploration of contracting practices through use of case studies at the points of service delivery is best suited in achieving this aim.

As noted in Chapter Two, I have used Pusey’s (1991, 1993, 2003) approach to provide a complementary analytical lens through which the current competition policies may be understood. In methodological terms, it is worth remembering that Foucault sees liberalism itself working as a form of critical reality. In this sense, the ‘counterdemands’ and ‘counterdiscourses’ (Tremain 2005: 12) are linked with liberalism’s reflective character. Pusey’s line of argument employed in my thesis implicates neo-liberalism in subjecting social and political rationalities to needs of the market. In drawing from Pusey’s social democratic position, it is important that this is not seen as foreign from
liberalism, as Tremain (2005) observes, liberalism is neither static nor homogenous. As she put it:

While not a libertarian, Foucault was, nevertheless, intrigued by liberalism...[especially] its capacity to continually refashion itself in a practice of autocritique. In fact, Foucault viewed liberalism as a form of critical reflection on government practice itself. Liberalism he asserted, can be found simultaneously, but in different forms, as both the regulative scheme of governmental practice and the theme of a (sometimes) “radical” opposition...liberalism constitutes a tool for the criticism of reality, that is, for the criticism of (1) a previous governmentality that one tries to shed; (2) a current governmentality that attempts to reform and rationalize; and (3) a governmentality that one opposes and tries to limit (Tremain 2005: 12).

It is with these methodological understandings in mind that the methods of analysis will pay due regard to the non-homogenous character of rational practices differentiating ‘instrumental’ from ‘professional’ or ‘welfarist’ rationalities’. This differentiation is inseparable from attempts to understand the ways in which competitive practices promoting value for money engage in ranking and systematising knowledge regulating program delivery.

**Research topic**

This thesis explores the influence of National Competition Policy (NCP) in reshaping human service delivery, with reference to federal-funded labour market programs and the state-administered family support crisis accommodation program.

**Objectives**

In exploring the influence of NCP in reshaping human services, two case studies involving service delivery agencies are used to assist in making sense of the influence of
this policy, one of which is funded to deliver labour market programs and another
providing crisis accommodation support services. To this end, these case studies are used
to look at how National Competition Policy (NCP) mediates service delivery at a micro
level. Specifically, it will explore the following questions:

- How does NCP affect treatment of clients?
- Who gets what service?
- In what terms are services being accessed and delivered?
- What is it like working under the NCP framework?

I now turn my attention to the case study approach, describing more specifically what
such a study entails. An account of the research protocol addressing procedures and
methods used in this study is also provided.

A Case Study

As indicated above, two case studies are used to illuminate the practices of National
Competition Policy. It is useful, therefore to provide a broad understanding of what is
meant by a case study. Stake argues, ‘the case study is not a methodological choice, but a
choice of object to be studied’ (Stake 2000: 372), and ‘we could study it in many ways’
(Stake 2000: 236). More specifically, a case study sets out to capture contextual
conditions which are an important feature of any such study (Yin 2003:13; Stake 2000;
1994). It is interested in the ‘manifest interaction of significant factors characteristic of
this phenomenon [and therefore]….the researcher is able to capture various nuances,
patterns, and more latent elements that other research approaches might overlook’ (Berg 2004: 251).

A case study approach allows a researcher to conduct a study in an open and flexible way in the context of a ‘natural setting’ (Sarantakos 1998: 193). Such context may include factors such as historical background, physical setting, economic, political and legal contexts, and informants positioning (Stake 1994: 238). In addition, Yin (2003: 13) points out that this contextual approach ‘retain[s] holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life cycles, organisational and managerial processes’ (Yin 2003: 2). Similarly, Berg points out that case studies ‘focus on holistic description and explanation’ (2004: 207). Here, the notion of holism allows openness to complexities, tuning into the ‘situational and influenced by happenings of many kinds’ (Yin 2003: 2). These points are significant for my case studies, which seek to capture the individual, organisational and situational interplays connected with the NCP reform.

This thesis specifically uses what Stake describes as an instrumental case study, in which:

A particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue…the case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else. The case still is looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinised, its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps the researcher to pursue the external interest...Here the choice of the case is made to advance understanding of that other interest (Stake 2000: 437).

My two case studies, Peel Training and Employment, and the Swan Emergency Accommodation are chosen to illustrate further understandings of and contextual insights into how National Competition Policy is reshaping human services as experienced at
points of service delivery. That is, in exploring contracting practices as these are experienced day to day at sites of program delivery, this study approach translates into a strategy suited to ‘grasp subjection in its material instance as the constitution of subjects’ (Foucault 1980c: 97).

**Sampling and nomination procedures**

When choosing a case study intended to play a supportive role, the emphasis is placed on ensuring that such a case is carefully chosen in respect to its relevance to the particular phenomena under study (Stake 1994: 243; Yin 2003: 32). Stake notes that ‘nothing is more important than making a proper selection of cases’, adding that a selection of such cases ‘is a sampling problem’ (Stake 1994: 243). Here, notions of contracting and tendering practices involving human services are broadly situated in the context of NCP mechanisms out of which the case studies for this project have been selected. In this way, the research identifies two cases from this ‘bounded system’ (Merriam 1998: 47) of NCP. In choosing these case studies, I was also influenced by an interest examine at one case concerned with the provision of federally-funded services and another receiving program funds administered through state government, although those funds are still jointly provided by the State and the federal authorities. Prior to selecting the cases, I was aware that some variation applied in how authorities sought to implement contracting practices. Through field experience, I had become aware that while some programs had been subjected to the full mechanisms of Competitive Tendering and Contracting, others had been subjected to what was seen as moderated versions of contracting such as the Preferred Service Provider system.
Peel Training and Employment Job Network was chosen from a list of over 200 such contracted Job Network providers around the country. On its part, Swan Emergency Accommodation was nominated out of over 300 non-government providers whose family support programs fitted under the state contracting practices in keeping with official definitions evident in the Department of Community Development, the Auditor Generals texts, and definitions adopted by the State Supply Commission, the state compliance overseer of contracting practices. A detailed account of the close connection between the National Competition Policy, the Competitive Tendering and Contracting practices, and the contracting practices established under the Preferred Service Provider model has already been described in Chapter Two.

Case study sampling decisions call also for participants and the events to be studied. According to Stake (1994: 244), following a determination of which case to study, more sampling decisions are required ‘about persons, places and events’ to be studied, including a selection of a period of study Merriam (1998: 47). Stake (1994: 244) suggests that ‘training and intuition tell us to seek a good sample.’ Prior field experience had alerted me to the key Job Network programs namely Flex 1, 2 and 3 (later renamed as Job Matching, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance), as the main employment assistance programs subjected to Competitive Tendering and Contracting. The contracting practices specific to this study cover the contract period 2000 – 2002.
In theoretical terms, this study used a purposeful sampling technique, a strategy coming under non-probabilistic stratified sampling (Hannigmann in Merriam 1988:47-48; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Sarantakos 1998). This method does not attempt to employ a representative sample of all elements of the population. Rather, it ‘seeks out groups, settings, and individuals for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 370), a point also supported by Hannigmann (in Merriam 1998: 48). Once programs of interest had been identified and specific literature studied, from January 2001 to October 2001, I formally approached four Job Networks and one family support program. The invitation requests for agency participation had been preceded by telephone inquiry explaining about my research.

It is also important to note that the process of nominating the two agencies was done on a practical basis. Of the three other Job Network agencies that had been approached, two of these expressed interest in the subject under study, but showed reluctance to participate. A third Job Network agency was keen to participate, but informed me that they had given back one of their contracts to DEWRSB due to agency concerns that the contract was not commercially viable. Broadly speaking, a number of people in the employment assistance area at the time informally communicated with me that participation in a study on contracting practices may present some vulnerability for a contracted organisation. This background led me to invest more time in securing entry through existing networks. In the case of the state-administered family support crisis accommodation program, Swan Emergency Accommodation was the only organisation approached and readily accepted.
For sampling purposes, it should be noted that study participants using the Intensive Assistance program, were also beneficiaries of all program supports available under the Job Search Training and the Job Matching programs. Similarly, those admitted under the Job Search Training had full access to support available under the Job Matching. Clients eligible for the Job Matching support provisions, however, were unable to access additional assistance rendered either under Job Search Training or the Intensive Assistance programs.

The involvement of Peel Training and Employment, and Swan Emergency Accommodation was formalised through written invitation letters (see Appendices 1 and 2). In addition, both agencies were further requested to clarify the nature of the authorisation regarding data use in relation to publication purposes (see Appendices 3, 4), and notification of agency approvals were sent to the researcher (see Appendices 5 and 6). These agencies had also clearly indicated to the researcher that whilst allowing the use of their data, they would not release statistical data and any additional specific information where they felt any such information could jeopardise their competitive edge in an environment of contestable markets that encourages program take-over by ‘rival’ human service agencies. In addition, each participating agency nominated one senior executive to act as a point of contact for the researcher whilst arranging to access study participants during the data collection phase. The final decision for staff participation was left in the hands of individual staff.
Prior to commencing formal data collection activities, I visited each agency twice, during which time I was introduced to a range of agency staff so that firstly, I was familiar with the setting, and secondly, I had the opportunity to engage with staff and invite their individual participation.

**Data Collection Methods**

*Structured and in-depth interviews*

Case study interviews were conducted in 2002. An interview guide comprising of structured and open-ended questions was used. The latter format allowed for flexibility in probing participant responses (see the interview schedule, Appendices 7 and 8). All interviews were taped and the researcher also took notes during interviews. Overall, 25 participants were interviewed at the two case study sites, Peel Training and Employment (14) and Swan Emergency Accommodation (11). A maximum of one and a half hours was allocated for each interview.

The 14 participants at Peel included seven clients and seven staff. Of these seven clients one was specifically drawn from Job Matching program, two from Job Search Training, and four from the Intensive Assistance program. Two of the staff were in senior managerial positions and five were workers involved in the everyday contact with clients.

It is necessary to point out that in these interviews three staff were interviewed together. The decision for this arrangement was influenced by the agency’s stated concern to ration
worker’s time. Yin (2003) reminds us that with case studies, a researcher ‘collect[s] data from people and institutions in their everyday situations’, thus:

You must learn to integrate real-world events with the needs of the data collection plan. In this sense you do not have the control over the data collection environment…you must cater to the interviewee’s schedule and availability, not your own....[After all], you are intruding into the world of the subject being studied (Yin 2003: 72).

In interviewing three staff at the same time, the researcher ensured every participant commented on each key aspect of the interview questions. Although these three staff sometimes took very varied positions on issues under discussion, it is still important to acknowledge that interaction of participants can inject a different factor in thinking through some of the issues. According to Madriz (2000: 835-6), the interaction can enhance spontaneity, open up more probing of views expressed through the interaction process, and lends itself best to ‘capture important sociological process - collective human interaction’ (Madriz 2000: 836). At the same time, however, Madriz observes that interactive group settings can also narrow the range of views and behaviours amongst participants.

Of the eleven participants interviewed at Swan Emergency Accommodation, eight were members of staff and management. Participants also included three homeless residents residing at Swan Emergency Accommodation. Initially, the research set out to access more residents in receipt of crisis accommodation supports. The researcher did not push further this possibility as it had become clear that service users although illuminating on the day to day experiences of service usage, were not able to shed additional light on specific influences of contracting practices under the Preferred Service Provider
arrangements in shaping the parameters of service delivery. This led to the decision to concentrate on staff responses regarding their experiences of working under the contracting system. With the benefit of a hindsight, it is still important to highlight that participants using crisis accommodation support could have been asked questions not just on their experiences of services under the contracting practices, but also questions framed to capture the influence of the changes relating to the notion of Competitive Neutrality – the justifications that led to the reworking of the former Homeswest welfare function. In this context, questions could have been framed around the experience of homelessness in connection with individual attempts to navigate through the Department of Housing and Works, the private rental market and crisis accommodation. This, I believe, holds potential to further elucidate the practices of National Competition Policy reform in the regulation of the homeless people and human service delivery.

Observation

Observation plays another role in gathering information in this study. According to Merriam (1998: 88), observation enables the researcher to pick up information, which ‘has become routine to the participant themselves’.

Thus, although observation was not used as one of the primary data collection tools in this study, it was seen in the context of what Berg (2004: 207) calls an ‘opportunity to gain familiarity with the setting’. My observation included sitting-in through two full days observing Job Search Training sessions at Peel Employment and Training. This also meant some of the participants had seen me around the centre and may have therefore felt
more comfortable to participate in my study. At Swan Emergency Accommodation Service I was also invited to sit in at one staff shift hand-over meeting. This was another useful way to hear the various teams summing up specific client-related events and concerns of the day for follow up by the incoming staff shift. Note taking was also taken during these observations.

In addition, during 2001, I attended a national consultation meeting in Perth where Canberra-based DEWRSB tendering and contracting staff met with some state-based Job Network provider executives to brief them about the structure of the following round of the Job Network competitive tendering and contracting of labour market programs. Attendance at this consultation was useful in terms of further building my understanding on the way that the government had developed the terms of Job Network contractual arrangements and the detailed specifications of programs intended for delivery.

**Official Texts**

In keeping with governmentality insights, this study has also drawn heavily from the official NCP and contractual service-related procurement literature as a rich source of data offering a broad framework within which the means and ends of policy are made known. Chapter Two has already described in detail the governmentality framework and its preoccupations with questions of means and ends. This includes sources of authority (official accounts) that formally authorise and produce programs and set parameters within which these program operations are intended to function. In this sense,
government texts are used in this study as another primary as well as secondary source of study data.

Methods of Data Analysis

Firstly, interviews were transcribed within 24 – 36 hours of being conducted. Secondly, in thinking about the process of data analysis involving this study, it is best not seen in a linear way, rather the ongoing attention to reviewing collected data was also instrumental in further refining interview probes. Yin (2003: 61) points out that when carrying out case studies, a researcher ‘must understand the theoretical or policy issues because analytic judgements have to be made throughout the data collection phase. Without a firm grasp of issues, [a researcher] could miss important clues’. To this extent, initial themes generated from my initial literature review on the development of NCP were useful in providing some broad directions. Ryan and Bernard (2000: 781) point to a range of literature that proposes that researchers commence with general themes indicated through their literature review. In addition, they point out that an investigator needs to rely on professional, experiential, and their own value and theoretical understandings to guide the analysis that simultaneously occurs during the data collection phase.

I developed a working codebook which served as a tool and a mental map in processing my transcribed data. Stake (2000: 781) defines a codebook as ‘simply an organised list of codes…[involving] a detailed description of each code, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and examples of real text for each theme’ comprising of either words or numbers. Guiding my coding drafts were three levels of analysis partially already embedded in my
data collection tools, namely: individual, programmatic and organisational processes and procedures that were being explored in the way in which the terms of client treatment, organisation operational process and the design of programs were being reshaped by the NCP reform.

Initially I used Nud*ist, N6, to simplify the coding process involving my first case study data (Job Network). Some researchers recommend Nud*ist as a helpful tool in coding and categorising responses (Ryan and Bernard 2000; Yin 2003; Ely, et al 1997). Nonetheless the contextualisation of this coded data was undertaken manually because this program, while sensitive to recurring words and themes, I found that it is the researcher’s own insights that are necessary in assigning particular contextual elements to the processing of this data. In this sense, Nud*ist, N6, did not offer clarification of whether a phrase, word or comment was used in the negative or affirmative. Instead, the categorisation simplification was more meaningful in facilitating a grouping of responses occurring with similar patterns of words. I further decided to manually categorise the rest of my case study’s data. This proved time consuming since I repeatedly went through responses and marked the margins of my transcripts with thematic codes. The process simultaneously offered the opportunity to reflect more intently on the study responses.

Overall, the ongoing refinement of these categories and analytic forms developed ‘as the research [went] along’ (Ryan and Bernard 2000: 781). The complex and non-linear nature of this process is also reinforced in Ely, et al (1997) who point out that:

We sit down with our earliest log entries or interview transcript and begin to code them in whatever ways makes sense to us as a starting point. As we proceed, we
begin to note similarities and differences, to notice a variety of relationships and patterns within and among codes. In time we will make some kinds of more general or abstract groupings of them – perhaps structured into an outline or web or clusters – and also perhaps into thematic or other generalised statements (Ely, et al 1997: 167).

The pattern of words, themes and even particular isolated experiences was also carefully examined alongside assumptions underpinning governmentality and the complementary Pusey perspective in making sense of the influence of NCP in reshaping the delivery of human services in Australia. More specifically, through word and thematic analysis, the researcher facilitated an analysis of shifting patterns in the treatment of clients, patterns of organisation of services, shifting internal program management systems and the way in which professional practice was being governed and contested. In practice, this analytical process using governmentality and drawing from Pusey entailed what Ryan and Bernard (2000: 770) call a ‘systematic elicitation to identify lists of items that belong in a cultural domain and to assess the relationships among these items’. Here, a cultural domain refers to a language ‘agreed on by all native speakers of a language…. [or] represent highly specialised knowledge’ (2000: 770).

**Ethical Considerations and Research Limitations**

Researchers are subject to ethical obligations to their study participants, their institutions and to the society in which they operate. This obligation includes recognition of ‘rights, privacy, and the welfare of people and communities that form the focus of their studies’ (Berg 2004: 43). In this context, ethical considerations have come to be associated with notions of doing no harm, voluntary and informed consent, maintaining confidentiality in the process using collected research data and justifying a positive contribution to
knowledge (Berg 2004; de Vaus 1995; Alston and Bowles 2003). These factors were given significant attention in this research undertaking as also demonstrated through attached appendices. Moreover, in detailing the ethical considerations, this thesis also maintains that ethical research practice is a complex phenomenon involving a lot of thinking through dilemmas about ‘how to represent responsibility’ (Fine, Weis, Wessen and Wong 2000: 108).

The invitation to agencies to participate (see Appendices 1 and 2) described the nature of the research project, the reasons why the selected agencies were seen as suited to this study, a brief on the key questions that the research intended to address, and the researcher’s hope that the project held some potential in contributing to future knowledge on service delivery.

The significance of providing this kind of briefing is emphasised by a number of writers (see Yin 2003; de Vaus 1995). Both agencies informed the researcher that the study requested would be considered through their agencies’ management committees in keeping with their internal accountability processes. Once approval was granted and upon receipt of written confirmation of the agencies’ willingness to participate (see Appendices 2 and 3), further clarification was sought in relation to the use of data for publication purposes (as per Appendices 5, 6 and 7).

As noted earlier, however, both agencies made it verbally clear and implied in writing that they would limit the researcher’s access to some internal statistical information in
order to maintain their competitive advantage in this contracting regime. The researcher accepted this limitation as necessary since she took account of ‘doing no harm’ as one important principle needing to be brought to bear. Importantly, the researcher believed that access to staff interviews, agency reports, some program documents and, in one case, comprehensive Quality Assurance documentations detailing operational procedures and processes, were likely to provide sufficient reasonable working data to assist in addressing the research question.

In recruiting the client study participants at the selected agencies, firstly, program coordinators and facilitators announced to potential participants about the invitation to participate and briefly explained the intention of my study. At Peel Training and Employment, I was also invited to one of the Job Search Training sessions to announce my interest before a group of program participants, some of whom came to see me after their sessions and made appointments for interviews. At Job Network jobseekers are regularly coming in and out of the Job Network premises, enabling self-introduction and easier interaction. I was also encouraged to introduce myself to clients in the foyer and reception.

At Swan Emergency Accommodation, access and appointments with clients were done through staff. Because of the way in which clients access the service I had fewer encounters than that afforded at Job Network. Upon commencement of client interviews at Swan, it was also clear that the sample population presented with complex high-support needs. One client was not present at his premises although arrangements had
been made through agency staff regarding our scheduled meetings. After he failed to turn up to two scheduled appointments, I felt I had an ethical obligation not to press ahead in including this potential participant in my study.

I have noted that the response of the three interviewed service users gave no convincing indications about their knowledge on the influence of contracting practices in relation to the services they received. Part of this may be explained by the voluntary nature of client participation that embeds the Preferred Service Providers at the time of conducting my research. As I explain in detail in my second case study, crisis accommodation service users can choose to simply use accommodation facilities, and do not have to accept the use of a range of other accommodation support services offered by a crisis accommodation agency. That is not to suggest that NCP has not influenced questions of housing access and general service delivery in the area of crisis accommodation. Rather, with the benefit of hindsight, questions aimed for clients using crisis accommodation support at the time of collecting my interview data may need to have been framed very differently. It is the researcher’s view, partially reinforced through study findings involving staff, that certain interview questions could have been framed with a view to getting a feel of how clients experienced and navigated through the Department of Housing and Works, the crisis accommodation supports and the private rental market. This would have allowed for further teasing out the influence of Competitive Neutrality – a justification for reducing the public housing stock, a point discussed in some detail in Chapter Two. It should also not be assumed that because some of the questions asked then in relation to client experiences at Swan Emergency Accommodation yielded less
information, that those questions are not relevant. Since the terms of contracting these programs continue to evolve, at best a researcher may need to remain open to a range of possibilities.

In keeping with expectations of informed consent, all participants were provided with a copy of a consent form prior to commencing an interview. The researcher used the first few minutes to explain the nature, purpose and possible future benefits of the research being conducted. Participants were also individually informed beforehand that participation was voluntary and could withdraw from this process at any time in the course of this study. Each participant was asked to read through the consent form first and then ask any questions. It was also explained to them that if they had any additional questions, these could also be asked at the end of the interview. Through this process, I came across some participants who were already well informed about what the study intended to do (through information initially provided to the agencies), while there were also participants who had fairly limited information, in which case I took the opportunity to expand further about the nature of my study. Consent forms also contained my telephone number and that of my supervisor (see Appendix 8 for copy of the consent form).

That said, as de Vaus (1995: 334) points out, ‘while the issue of informed consent seems entirely reasonable and desirable it is not straightforward.’ He argues that just the mere act of giving participants more information does not automatically lead to better informed subjects. He observes that too much information can lead to confusion or even discourage
participation. de Vaus also suggests that despite the ethical necessity of formalised consent, such formalisation can ‘lead to a loss of rapport, it can also make some people more suspicious about the research’ (1995: 334). Fine, et al (2000: 113) also argue that in some cases it is plausible that some participants ‘simply signed the [consent] form as just another procedural matter’. In this context, in trying to communicate the nature and purpose of my study on NCP, I adopted an approach that de Vaus (1995: 334) sees as a need to stick to ‘basic information and to offer to answer further questions’. In answering questions, I still remained open to those participants who, at the end of the interview, wanted to discuss the subject of tendering and contracting beyond the formal interview scope.

Importantly, as a researcher, I can also see a greater significance in Fine et al’s (2000: 113) point that the notion of informed consent for the most part acts as a further reminder to researchers of our accountability and position. In this thesis, that accountability has significantly meant contextualising participant responses and engaging with analysis describing client accounts as well as organisational and broader governmental rationalities. In at least two cases, I have also highlighted some strong concerns from the service delivery sector, where participants openly indicated their wish to have their particular concerns communicated openly. As a researcher, I have also subtly brought my own understanding of National Competition Policy to bear in the analysis of my case studies.
The thesis also makes effort to maintain participant anonymity through use of pseudonyms. To this extent, however, such anonymity can still be problematised in that the case studies involve two community agencies whose identities are known. As Berg (2004: 65) observes, study locations and participant characteristics can bring up challenging dilemmas, requiring care in discussing ‘subjects and the setting as well’. For me, this entailed checking with at least two participants about information they had communicated about how they felt since the information might have left some clues to their identities. Nonetheless, these were experienced professional people who took the view that communicated information was likely to do more good than harm.
Chapter Four

Contracting Labour Market Programs - Job Matching, Job Search, and Intensive Assistance

Introduction

The chapter explores the ways in which neo-liberal and managerial rationalities are drawn upon in the reformed Labour Market Programs. It locates the National Competition Policy’s Competitive Tendering and Contracting framework used in procuring Job Network services as the main technology of rule through which the reworked terms of service provision are spelled out. It argues that through this method, the provider organisation is closely drawn into operational arrangements connected with the government objectives. The chapter explores how unemployment is constituted and made knowable through neo-liberal authorities and knowledge systems. In so doing, it draws attention to the everyday experience of the Peel Training and Employment agency, highlighting the way that this Job Network provider is subject to the specific rationalities and managerial specifications. As part of this, it also looks at the treatment of unemployed people under the reformed employment assistance system, and thus engages with the question of the ordinary ways in which power seems to operate.

My examination of the data suggests that managerial techniques flourish in these reformed employment assistance operations and play a significant part in ordering and systematising operational knowledge in particular hierarchical orders.
The chapter describes the way in which Job Network practices are implicated in the cultivation of employable minds among the users of Job Network programs. It thus problematises practices and techniques of self-formation, highlighting contradictory subject positions in the responses of some of the interviewed participants. It draws special attention to the activities of Peel Training and Employment as a particular distant actor involved in the governance of the unemployed population. Staff responses on practices of mutual obligation provide additional insights into the prevailing forms of subjectification and self-formation.

**Data Collection**

As reported in the methodology chapter, the interview data for this case study was collected from 14 study participants from the Peel Training and Employment centre at the Mandurah office, including management and frontline staff, and clients from the Job Matching, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance programs. Of the 14 participants involved, two were managers, five were frontline staff and seven were unemployed service users. Of the latter, five were males and two females. One client was drawn from Job Matching program, two from Job Search Training, and four from the Intensive Assistance program. All of these job seekers were also accessing Job Matching Services. In the same way, all Intensive Assistance clients were also fully utilising Job Search Training programs.
**Background**

Peel Training and Employment is located along Tuart Avenue in Mandurah about 74 kms from Perth. Mandurah is the major city for the Peel region. The Peel region covers a 5,500 square kilometres, an zone situated between 35 to 145 kilometres away from the Perth city centre (Peel Development Commission 2005: 10). According to the Peel Development Commission, in 2002 the population for this region stood at 87,791. This distribution includes the City of Mandurah comprising of 66.7 per cent; Serpentine-Jarrahdale 14.2 per cent; Murray 13.5 per cent; Waroona 4.05 per cent and Boddington 1.56 per cent (Peel Development Commission 2005: 1; 2003: 1). Significantly, the Peel region enjoys the highest regional population growth in the state estimated at 135.7 per cent during the period 2001 and 2003.

The major economic activities for this region are mining, especially bauxite and mineral sands, agriculture, timber production, fishing, manufacturing, construction activities and tourism (Peel Development Commission 2005: 1; 2003: 1).

Despite this, the Peel region is a depressed area with estimated unemployment rates estimated at 7.8% compared to the regional average of 6 per cent (Peel development Commission 2005: 1; 2003: 1).
**Shifts in the Employment Assistance Programs Across Welfare States**

A brief review of contemporary shifts in employment support programs for unemployed people across welfare states is illuminating and offers a useful global context to changes taking place in Australia. According to Jessop, under the previous Keynesian welfare state systems, the welfare regime was integral in providing structural support to largely closed economies, reliant on stimulating consumer demand through state regulation and promotion of collective forms of consumption patterns (Jessop 2002: 2), such as healthcare provisions, education, and so forth. In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, there was a growing shift to what some policy writers have termed a Schumpeterian Workfare State aimed at enhancing product process, new forms of organisation and innovative practices intended to shape competitive human service market structures.

As far as the shifts in Labour Market Programs are concerned, some writers have come to characterise this under the term ‘workfare’, (Jessop’s 2002; Lodemel 2005; Lodemel and Stafford 2002; Torfing 1999; Grover 1999). While this concept as yet bears no agreed definition (Lodemel and Stafford 2002: 6), there are a number of features that have come to be associated with workfare programs for the unemployed. Lodemel and Stafford have explored the notion of workfare across six European countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, Norway and France). They maintain that these programs are underpinned by compulsion; are focused at getting work; and they are accompanied by the lowest possible level of social security benefits. In this sense, ‘the introduction of work and compulsion tied to the receipt of aid represents a fundamental change in the
balance between rights and obligations in the provision of assistance’ (2002: 6) across Europe, unlike the US where these practices have been entrenched since the 1970s (2002: 7).

Grover (1999: 73-4) prefers to locate the shift towards workfare as a neo-liberal turn entailing a rejection of commitment to full employment; and instead claiming labour market flexibility as the primary mechanism for employment generation. In this kind of situation, social security (income support system) is problematised and comes to be seen as a rigid system, requiring radical reform. Grover goes on to make a clear distinction between traditional claims associated with notions of welfare dependency such as those posed by Mead (Grover 1999: 76), which he argues, simply reduces the notion of workfare to one of enforced active job search in return for welfare benefits. For Grover, workfare is in practice aimed at creating jobs by quite consciously engineering a strategy intended to depress wage levels by ensuring increased labour supply. And in the process, those threatened with the loss of their welfare incomes, have little or no option but to secure some of those jobs. For this reason, he argues that the workfare shift should be called ‘market workfare’ as in his words jobseekers are ‘coerced’ into filling those vacancies (Grover 1999: 77).

Torfing (1999: 1, 5) provides another distinct perspective by examining the way in which the notion of workfare has been applied in Denmark. He argues that the construction of workfare in that country has been disarticulated away from a neo-liberal framework which characterise such programs in the UK and the US. Instead, effort has been made to
rearticulate this notion in keeping with Denmark’s social democratic and universalist inclinations. Whilst clearly a shift has taken place emphasising activation practices, the change has refrained from measures intended to drive down levels of benefits and or minimum wage. Moreover, Danish workfare programs have avoided simply focusing on job search activities, instead training and education are given a stronger emphasis – with education comprising 50 per cent of activation outcomes with high-quality employer based programs within the private sector also proving effective in meeting participant training and job-matching opportunities. The programs have tended to promote notions of empowerment amongst participants, instead of merely relying on sanctions. Underpinning these operations is the requirement to involve participants in the planning process, whereby client participation rights in influencing the planning process is mandated through the *Law on Active Social Policy*, which also provides they be offered a range of activation options. Torfing goes on to characterise this shift as an offensive neo-statist strategy, and Schumpeterian, while differentiating it from an Anglo-Saxon model which in his view is clearly neo-liberal (Torfing 1999: 6, 17-8). Having looked at some of these shifts in welfare states, it is now useful to briefly look at the Australian experience.

Australia’s employment assistance programs can be traced back to 1945, when employment assistance took a more institutionalised turn with the formation of the Commonwealth Employment Services (CES) under the *Re-establishment and Employment Act 1945*. In its early days, CES aimed to promote an efficient job matching process in Australia (Dockery 1998: 12). Clearly, this period marked assistance practices that seems in keeping with what Jessop (2002) has characterised as the Keynesian
welfare regulatory practices. Dockery observes that the early 1990s saw a marked shift in this tradition with a move away from traditional cyclical employment preoccupations. The revamped LMPs established in 1994 under *Working Nation* programs bore witness to the new rationalities and technologies intended to meet the concerns of this period (Dockery 1998: 12). Stromback, Dockery and Ying suggest that:

> Its [Working Nation] most important feature was the Job Compact which was to provide a job placement to everybody who had been unemployed for 18 months or more. As such, it implied significant expansion of labour market programs and a shift in assistance towards the longer term unemployed (Stromback, et al 1998: 2).

Another major shift was exemplified by the abolition of the Commonwealth Employment Services in 1996, a move that saw community organisations taking over increased levels of contracted job matching and case management activities previously undertaken in the public sector. This shift in responsibility occurred at the same time as the overall federal employment assistance programs became subject to cutbacks (Dockery 1999: 12-3), with LMPs budget slashed by $575 million in 1996-97 followed by further cutbacks amounting to $956 million in 1997-98 (Junanker and Kapuscinski 1997: 4). It is partly against this broad background that the operations of Peel Training and Employment need to be understood.

**Peel Training and Employment Inc.**

The agency was set up in February 1984 as a Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS), offering counselling services, career development, employment support services, advocacy, and a drop-in-centre. It was re-named Mandurah Community Support
Group towards the end of 1991. The change coincided with a new mandate to diversify its services in response to community needs beyond those of young people. It also linked with a new re-alignment in provision of the federal government funded Skillshare LMPs for the Peel District, and the state-funded Retail Training Skills and Precise Training (Peel Employment and Training 1999/2000; Interviews with Senior Staff).

In 1998, Peel Training and Employment became a Job Network provider in line with the reorganisation of community-based government-funded LMPs alongside most other former Skillshare training and employment assistance providers (Annual Report, 1999/2000). This change marked a shift from grant-based funding to a competitive tendering and contracting system. It also saw the implementation of the three key programs, which are the subject of this study, namely:

- Job Matching (initially known as Flex 1 with Flex standing for Flexible Labour Exchange Services);
- Job Search Training (initially known as Flex 2); and
- Intensive Assistance (initially known as Flex 3)

(Centrelink 1997; Dockery 1999).

The 1999/2000 Annual Report of Peel Training and Employment notes that funding changes under the then new Job Network system caused uncertainty for the agency. In response to this, the agency joined a national consortium of JOB Futures, a nation-wide community-based not-for-profit provider network bringing together Job Network consortium members based on a commitment not simply ‘to the effective delivery of
employment and training services, but to a wider agenda of strengthening local communities through job generation, economic development and community development’ (Job Futures http://www.jobfutures.com.au/aboutus/). In this quest, members of Job Futures are expected to retain their strong local identity and are distinguished by their links with their communities’ (Job Futures http://www.jobfutures.com.au/aboutus/). In addition, the consortium says it aims to enhance client life choices while minimising coercion. They also maintain that their practice is intended to respond holistically, rather than merely focus on training while disregarding client personal support needs, advice and counselling.

In 1999/2000 Peel Training and Employment was awarded a Job Network contract for Job Matching and Job Search Training programs through Job Futures. The consortium also won a tender for Intensive Assistance in Mandurah, and a New Enterprise Incentive Scheme in Mandurah and Bunbury. At the time of collecting field data (March 2001 – February 2003), the agency had expanded its operational catchment area from Mandurah to as far as Golden Bay, Lake Clifton, Waroona, Boddington and Dwellingup; extending from there to touch the base of Jarrahdale and Serpentine. In addition, the agency was also funded to deliver LMPs in the South West region of Western Australia (Peel Training and Employment, 1999/2000 Annual Report).

During the life of this study project, Peel Training and Employment was also running a number of programs (in addition to Job Matching, Job Search, and Intensive Assistance) catering for the needs of the unemployed people and the business community in its
regional area. These included a range of industry-specific training courses involving skills development in hospitality, retail and welding; an apprenticeship support scheme, Work for the Dole, and respite support for people with disabilities. A senior staff member noted that the agency also used programs such as Work for the Dole as a valuable pool of ‘volunteers’ useful in supporting the elderly and disabled people in the locality. The agency has maintained a key role as a training provider in the Peel region. In keeping with this, it has benefited from traineeships funding from the State Government’s Department of Training.

Peel Training and Employment also prides itself in playing a significant role in reducing isolation among unemployed people by linking them with employers who would otherwise be disadvantaged by geographical distance from regional centres where most job placements, training and employee hire services are located.

**Program Description**

It is worth restating that at both federal and local levels, DEWR and Centrelink play important roles in regulating the Job Network programs offered by Peel Training and Employment. DEWR sets the overall framework encompassing service specifications and corresponding contractual financial rewards. On its part, Centrelink determines the level of support for all eligible participants through its Jobseekers Classification Instrument (JSCI), in keeping with its own contractual responsibilities previously required by DEWRSB (Centrelink 1998), and now DEWR.
**Job Search Training**

This training program is said ‘to improve the jobseekers job search skills, help motivate them to look for work and expand their job search networks leading to an employment outcome’ (Peel Training and Employment 1999: Flex 2 Project Procedures PP-F2-0001). People access the service following a Centrelink referral. If they present at a Job Network in the first instance, they are sent back to Centrelink for eligibility determination, after which they can then come back to attend the Job Network concerned if they are deemed eligible.

Job Search Training clients enjoy all of the benefits accorded through Job Matching services. Unlike participants who are purely Job Matching, however, people assigned to this program are eligible to attend job search training sessions, which are implemented over a period of three weeks. The training covers a variety of topics such as preparing a resume, vacancy applications, canvassing employers for possible work, job application techniques, interview skills and presentation skills. The program also offers opportunity for work experience (Peel Training and Employment 2000: Form CL-F2-0001, CL-F2-0002).

**Intensive Assistance**

The Intensive Assistance Program aims to assist the most disadvantaged job seekers. It is an intensive support program designed for the long-term unemployed or those considered to be at risk of long-term unemployment. Clients are assigned to case managers responsible for coordinating individual support plans involving the establishment of
approved goals and provision of information on training and educational programs. Agreed plans are put into an activity agreement which is signed by a participant, thus binding him or her to the identified plan of action designed to enhance his or her opportunity for securing a job placement (Commonwealth Government, Information for Job Seekers - Intensive Assistance (u.d)).

In line with the notions of active participation, requirements to inform participants about the terms and conditions under which services are delivered have become important. Consequently, Job Network clients are informed upon admission about how the Intensive Assistance program works and what is expected of them (Peel Training and Employment 1999). They are made aware of the nature of available case management assistance, what is expected of them, and what they can expect from the agency providing services. Within these parameters, clients are informed of their rights, responsibilities and obligations as defined under the reformed LMPs. As indicated in the agency’s Quality Assurance manual (1999: 3), case managers are required to “inform Intensive Assistance job seekers that not attending job interviews, failure to respond to communications or take reasonable steps within the terms of activity agreements will result in notification of a possible breach action to Centrelink”.

Drawing these obligations to the attention of participants has become a significant feature in the provision of LMPs under the Job Network system. There is further emphasis on customer focus. In line with this logic, information is provided to clients in the early phase of their contact with a Job Network about appeal options internal or external to
challenge both the Job Network provider and Centrelink (see requirements outlined in the Peel Training and Employment 1999). This kind of emphasis on consumer rights is a common feature of neo-liberal rationalities (Pollitt 1993).

**Job Matching Service**

The Job Matching program aims primarily to match clients with potential employment vacancies coming to the attention of Peel Training and Employment. This program takes a two-pronged approach, one part involving job seekers, and another, employers. It matches eligible job seekers to potential job placements. Participants are drawn from job matching data, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance programs, and participants from other labour market programs.

The contractual funding agreement requires that all competing Job Network providers place the Job Network-generated vacancies in DEWR’s online information system pool for access by each provider. This is also meant to ensure competitive candidates are secured to fill available vacancies. According to Peel Training and Employment, the government logic is that businesses acquire the best employees no matter how the vacancy was generated (Peel Training and Employment 2000: Form W1-F1-0006).

The Quality Assurance file also states that when a client has been able to complete 15 hours of work, the Job Network must submit an online payment claim to Centrelink. A second payment claim is submitted if the participant is still holding a job at 13 weeks. Following this process, the responsible job Network officer lodges an online request to Centrelink for income support reduction for the client in question. The rate of clients
Exiting the income support system is now used as indicator that the Job Network is doing its part to achieve results for the client and meeting the federal government’s aim to efficiently manage expenditure. Where a Job Matching client has had their social security benefit reduced by at least 70 per cent, the provider organisation concerned is able to claim a bonus payment from the funding authority, DEWR (Peel Training and Employment 2000: Form W1-F1-0002).

From 1998, funding arrangements shifted from being program-based to funding unit cost. In this way, the employment assistance provider organisations receive their contractual fees dependent on the progress of individual client intervention (DEWRSB 2001a).

It is against this background that I turn to the findings of this case study.

**Technologies of Rule and Processes of Codification**

The Competitive Tendering and Contracting (CTC) framework used in procuring Job Network services can be seen as a key ‘technology of rule’ deployed under NCP. It operates through a number of connected concepts tied with the idea of free market. As Dockery (1998: 8) points out, ‘competition, or “contestability” of Job Network programs, can be fostered through competitive tendering and contracting out.’ The requirement that outcomes are specified in the contract ensures that systems concentrate on results rather than process and ‘can serve to increase accountability’ (Dockery 1998: 8). This move signifies the government interest to focus the Job Network role around job placement and job matching (Hunter, Gray, and Chapman 2000: ix). It is also in line with the overall
procurement requirements established under the Commonwealth *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, whereby government entities are able to maximise desired returns from public resources (APSC 2003a, b, 2004).

More specifically, the competitive tendering and contracting arrangements ties Peel Training and Employment to a highly prescribed and codified framework of service delivery. In the following section describe the means by which these prescriptions take place: through producing of notions of responsibility, regulating client conduct, and systematising service operations and procedures in particular orders.

**Producing notions of responsibility**

DEWR has produced particular notions of client responsibility which define the terms under which employment assistance is to be delivered. The requirements placed on clients are stated in a Commonwealth flier given to unemployed people titled *Job Network: Connecting the Right Person to the Right Job*, where unemployed people are told:

You must:

- Keep your appointment with Centrelink or let them know if you can’t make it and arrange another time;
- Keep all your appointments with the job Network member or arrange other times if you can’t keep them;
- Develop and sign the Activity Agreement negotiated with your Job Network Member;
- Do the activities you have agreed to in your activity agreement; and accept any offer of suitable work (Commonwealth Government jobseeker flier u.d).
This set of responsibilities is reproduced in the Peel Training and Employment Quality Assurance manual (Quality Assurance, Form IA5). It stipulates the following:

When you take part in Intensive Assistance, there are a number of things you must do.

- You must work out an Intensive Assistance Activity Agreement with your Intensive Assistance Case Manager to help you get back to work
- You must do the things you agreed to in your Intensive Assistance Activity Agreement
- You and your Intensive Assistance Case Manager must work together to make sure that Intensive Assistance Activity Agreement will help you to get into work
- You must accept any offer of a suitably paid work
- You must turn up to jobs and referral interviews arranged for you by your Intensive Assistance Case Manager or Centrelink, (if you cannot, contact the organisation you are to have an interview with before the appointment and arrange another time)

(Peel Training and Employment 2000: Form IA5).

These notions of responsibility are integrated in the working agreements mutually binding a job seeker and Peel Training and Employment. Thus, the job seeker and their Job Network are drawn into signing a “Job Seekers’ Declaration”, which is then lodged with DEWR affirming that both parties intend to work within the formulated framework [DEETYA, u.d. Documented adopted as Peel Employment and Training 1999: Form IA3 (b)]. The prescribed terms of this Job Seeker Declaration include these provisions:

Job seeker declaration

I acknowledge that the terms of this Agreement have been negotiated between the Job Network member and myself. I agree to carry out the activities that are listed on the attached schedules. I also understand that:

a) I must demonstrate that I am willing to do everything I can to get a job and to undertake suitable paid work;

b) I must accept a suitable job offer that becomes available even if I am doing training;
c) If I do not accept a suitable job offer, my participation in Intensive Assistance may be cancelled;
d) I may be required to enter into a new or revised agreement;
e) I can ask the Job Network member for this agreement to be changed any time;
f) I must contact, attend or provide information to the Job Network member when I am asked about my progress under, or compliance with, this Agreement

g) I must tell the Job Network member when I cannot attend a job interview or do an activity.

These requirements regulate the conduct of the parties involved, including the way in which staff must ‘manage’ clients. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, these sets of responsibilities put in place particular expectations on both staff and clients. The agreements and terms in which clients are required to work closely with their case managers set limit to what can be considered together with what can be done. These understandings though, are not absolute or uncontested. Hence, in this study some clients questioned government strictures. One client who was attending a Job Search Training Program contested the plan of intervention, which he believed did not take account of his previous skills and experience:

I don’t agree…because they don’t take into account a person’s situation. Look at my situation for example; I’ve got TAFE qualifications Certificate Two, Three, Four and a Diploma in IT. I couldn’t get any exemption from Centrelink from doing this course [that is Job Search Training]. The only other way is doing 20 hours of part time or voluntary work. So it doesn’t take into consideration what you have done in the past. There is no premise for prior learning. This is done to anyone unemployed for three months…I’m interested in this not just now, but in fact I’ve written before to my Member of Parliament and the Ombudsman because of the sort of obligation that doesn’t make sense (Client 1).

Under current employment assistance arrangements, suitable work is expressed as ‘any job you are able to perform…it can be outside your preferred occupation, or at a lower level of pay than you may have previously earned.’ (Job futures: The National
Employment Network, Form 1A5). *Unsuitable* work is now limited to be a situation whereby a person lacks the skills to undertake a particular job, the job is unsafe, at least 90 minutes of travel to the place of work is involved, or where a job fails to meet existing award standards or enterprise agreement. There is also no compulsion to join the armed forces.

Illustrating the previous point about resistance, one of the clients in this study questioned what he saw as narrow definitional parameters regarding the notion of ‘suitable work’:

> Okay, I think people should take other jobs within reason. It depends on circumstances. If it is going to affect the quality of your life, you shouldn’t take that job. There is a real emotional and psychological impact. People shouldn’t be forced to accept any menial jobs that come up. For them [Centrelink], there’s no shades of grey.  
> (Client 1)

**Ordering operational processes and procedures**

Under the competitive tendering and contracting system, Peel Training and Employment has developed highly codified systems regulating a range of organisational and client organisational processes.

Peel Training and Employment Quality Assurance Manual contain detailed step by step instructions on processes and procedures necessary to meet the expectations of the funding body. At an organisational level, all staff are required to pay attention to the Internal Quality Audit and its related standards and procedures. They are also prompted to remember that ‘Peel Training and Employment Inc. shall also be reviewed by an
external body at scheduled intervals as required to remain quality assured’ (Peel Training and Employment 1999: Form CP008). This particular internal quality standard mandates the agency manager to appoint a well trained internal auditor, whose quality development and maintenance role is specifically prescribed under the Internal Audit Checklist (Peel Training and Employment 1999: CF0013). The requirement to manage agency operations through ‘process control’ (Peel Training and Employment 1999: CP007) has generated a plethora of codified documentation on how individual programs are to be carried out, managed, how clients should be treated and the requirement to spell out client compliance expectations in the course of using employment assistance programs at the agency.

All of the Job Network programs covered in this case study were subject to detailed codification. The program operations are individually articulated, step by step outlining operational and support processes involving the treatment of individual clients – from the point of entry to termination of service use. For example, Form W1-F2-0001 details the processes involved in dealing with *Job Search Training* client referrals. This includes confirming a client’s Centrelink eligibility status; a standard letter to a client confirming service availability, and a subsequent telephone call arranging for an interview or commencement of an activity (or sending letter if no response is forthcoming). During their particular interviews with the Job Network, clients need to sign activity agreements and commence a three-week Job Search Training program. On completion of these processes, Form W1-F2-0001 draws staff attention to the means of filing payment claims using Integrated Employment System (IES) online system. Under this audit item, Peel
Training and Employment highlights its contractual obligation to contact Centrelink with reports of ‘possible breach’ for those unemployed people who fail to turn up to a Job Search Training session as mandated by DEWR. Precise instructions are also given describing ways of recording the details of each specific client contact and the necessary assistance steps using the IES system linking Job Networks and relevant government authorities (Peel Training and Employment 1999: Form W1-F2-0001 are further detailed in Form W1-F2-0001).

The Quality Assurance Manual identifies the skills to be learnt under its Job Search Skills Plan. These include resume preparation, preparing job application, obtaining references, cold canvassing, developing job application and interview techniques, presentation skills, teaching job seekers to ‘market’ themselves.

The procedures for dealing with notification of vacancies from employers are also subject to detailed instruction (Peel Training and Employment 2000: Form W1-F1-0004). The staff member is required to introduce him or herself to employers and then check if the employer has previously used Peel Training and Employment. If it is established that the employer making contact is new, staff are expected to check how the employer learnt about the service. The responsible officer then proceeds to explain about the agency role in connection with the employers’ needs. Vacancy details are obtained from the employer who is given contact details of relevant staff who will deal with matters relating to vacancy referral; a vacancy file record is processed; where an employer requires a higher level of service, a service fee is negotiated and agreed upon. Details of the vacancy are
then uploaded to the IES system as required by DEWR. Following this process, any Job Network may then be able to inform their respective clients about the vacancy since they are accessible throughout the IES Job Network system.

To monitor the process and outcomes of the organisation key performance indicators are established. In line with quality assurance instruction ‘KPIs Flex 2 Checklist, CL-F2-0002’, the agency must regularly monitor the following: rates of job seekers placed in a job, successful employment placements exceeding 13 weeks, average reduction in the clients’ percentage of income support received from Centrelink, and the duration of client support counted from the point of referral to the completion or termination of support.

The staff coordinating the Job Matching programs are required to maintain up-to-date statistical and agency tracking systems using manual and electronic softwares; keep update reports for agency management purposes; forward fortnightly payment claim records to head office (their national consortium); conduct monthly electronic IES review reports to ensure accuracy of client data shared with DEWR; and report any statistical errors to head office (Peel Training and Employment 2000: Form W1-F1-0010).

Requirements such as these are in line with documents such as the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (2004, 2002) and the Australian Competitive Neutrality Guidelines for Managers (2004) described in Chapter Two. Hence they form part of the broader arena of public sector reform and DEWR’s (2004f: 1) declaration that its tendering process abides by the Commonwealth Competitive Neutrality Policy. DEWR
observes that with non-government organisations increasingly expected to deliver public services, it has an obligation to:

Ensure that contracts are developed and managed wisely to achieve maximum benefit from government expenditure. Effective contracting can improve a department’s accountability in a particular activity by clarifying responsibilities, and specifying and monitoring performance standards and processes (2004f: 1)

The manner in which the organisational requirements are set out in the relevant documents indicates the bureaucratic assumption that processes can be fully articulated before a client has had an opportunity to interact with the staff member, illustrating Pollitt’s (1993: 14) observation that managerialism is predicated on the assumption that ‘anything can, and should, be managed’. This contrasts, at least in part, with the traditional welfare insistence that in the first instance, a client’s subjective experiences, needs and realities must form part of the considerations influencing the process and goals of support (Payne 1997; O’Connor, et al. 2003; Pincus and Minahan 1973). Underlying this point, Pusey (2003: xiv) argues that under economic rationalism, subjective needs are not given attention, since it only attends to needs that fit an external objective criteria. In the words of King this perspective:

is in line with the ‘time and motion’ spirit of Taylorism – a concentration on the immediate, concrete, controllable things which go on within one’s organisation and an avoidance of entanglement with wider value questions of the fairness, equity or social usefulness of the product. It is also consonant with the neo-liberal scepticism concerning concepts of justice or any collective values (King cited in Pollitt 1993: 60).

Crucially, these new codification practices facilitate what John Harris (2003: 4) describes as a ‘pre-emption’ of professionalism. This is pursued through enhancing financial controls, extending the operations of the private sector and an increasing focus on targets
and outcomes rather than process and values. These moves trigger new professional expectations amongst staff working in human services devoted to the development of a business orientation and skills in the art of gate-keeping and resource rationing. John Harris quotes one social worker in Britain, ‘well, if you want to become a counsellor, don’t come into social service. If you want to be an assessor and purchaser of services and a care manager, which is more managerial, monitoring, reviewing type of role then those are the type of skills that are going to be needed…so in a way you are becoming a different kind of an animal’ (Harris 2003: 5). As important, decisions reached are required to remain attentive to financial imperatives, with; frontline staff uploading prescribed statistical information on computerised systems, thus integrating measurement targets into everyday tasks in order to meet funder’s requirements. John Harris argues that these sorts of practices undermine professional ‘discretion, subjecting social workers’ to standardised recording and information processing procedures, enhancing managerial control through on-line recording, and ‘bypassing the need for retrospective accounts in parochial-professional supervision sessions’ (John Harris 2003: 6). As Hill observes this type of strategy, ‘seems to preserve the autonomy of those “hands-on” managers at the top whilst ensuring the efficiency of response by lower-level workers to their demands” (Hill 2005:269).

In drawing attention to the use of computer-based information to regulate conduct since the Second World War, Bogard (1996: 2) talks of the ‘computerisation-surveillance-bureaucracy nexus’ (Bogard 1996: 2). While he believes it is now common knowledge that ‘power resides in the control of this information’, he suggests that we need to pay
particular attention to its use as ‘a means of ordering and systematising’ (Bogard 1996: 16). He adds that in the pursuit of ‘efficiency, integration, coordination [and] planning’ through the use of such technologies, Western societies consolidate their instrumental-rational features (Bogard 1996: 17, 187), a point also noted in Threagold (1990).

**Technologies and Practices of Efficiency**

The accent on efficiency is such a central feature of the Job Network’s Competitive Tendering and Contracting regime that it demands special attention. I discuss it here with reference to two of the key technologies of Job Network Programs. First, the assessment tool known as the Job Seekers Classification Instrument – JSCI; second outcome measurement technologies.

**Classification Practices**

In 1998, DEWRSB introduced the Job Seekers Classification Instrument (JSCI) as a ‘streaming tool between Job Network services and funding level for intensive support’ (DEWR 2007: 1). Its main function was to classify clients in order to determine a particular funding level (DEWRSB u.d: 1). Since Centrelink carries out the client classification functions prior to allocating job seekers to Job Networks, the JSCI ensures that a classification determination is made beforehand about the cost, level and kind of service an individual should receive from a Job Network provider. Under the JSCI this classification involves a broad range of social and economic variables including age, educational attainment, vocational qualifications, duration of unemployment, recency of
work experience, family status, geographical location, Aboriginality, transport, and access to a telephone (DEWRSB u.d. Job Seekers Classification Instrument 1998, Att. A). Under the JSCI, unemployed people are variously assigned to Job Matching, Job Search Training, and the Intensive Assistance programs. Once Centrelink has determined what level of support suits an individual job seeker, the contracted Job Network providing employment assistance is bound to work within its parameters.

All the staff interviewed at Peel Training and Employment complained about the client classification system conducted through Centrelink. The following quote is indicative, illustrating the participant’s belief that the Centrelink staff are not adequately equipped to administer the JSCI:

Person fills the JSCI, [but the] officer doesn’t have time to talk to person. The computer allocates at a certain level, which is not appropriate. My argument is government should be providing funding at initial referral point especially because our outcomes are based on commencement, and this person is being mucked around. (Senior Staff)

More generally, staff queried the level of skills and training of Centrelink’s interviewing officers and thought they did not have the training to determine what level of proper support should be rendered to recipients of LMPs. At a basic level, it was pointed out by three staff that Centrelink fails to appreciate that job seekers with literacy problems should not simply be asked to fill out a form. As one staff elaborated, ‘Centrelink tends to base judgement on how a person answers a question – there’s no interpretation – that’s wrong.’ All staff identified key factors they felt Centrelink frequently overlooked, despite the JSCI claiming to be comprehensive if an assessment is fully carried out appropriately. These factors included medical history, mental health, homelessness, and previous experiences of abuse, with staff making comments such as:
A client of mine, victim of domestic violence, Hep C, cancer – I saw this person, we didn’t get this info. In fact, he should have gone to Community Service Program or Commonwealth Rehab Program. I can only conclude that the person [at Centrelink] interviewing him either didn’t have skills or their tool [JSCI] was limited (Service Delivery Staff 2).

People doing interviewing should be Level Three. Must have experience and skills. We pick those needs up so quickly – but for them [Centrelink] they slip through easily (Service Delivery Staff 1).

In another instance I had a pregnant woman referred - not just one. Should these late pregnant women be referred to us? A parenting program would be a better option especially for our group because they often are lacking in parenting skills. (Service Delivery Staff 2).

Under the JSCI, Centrelink staff need to undertake a ‘Secondary Classification Process’ for complex cases requiring a particular measure of ‘professional or specialist judgement’ because of personal factors (DEWRSB u.d: JSCI 1998: Att A, Pt 2). Here, staff are required to pay attention to ‘behavioural triggers’, ‘self disclosure’, ‘visa status and country of origin’ (DEWRSB u.d: JSCI 1998: Att A, Pt 2). While such JSCI checklist pointers are useful in capturing the level of assistance needed for a job seeker, in practice appropriate classification outcomes are only possible if Centrelink staff are willing and able to draw out complex elements connected with the situation of a job seeker.

Four of the staff interviewed felt that clients can easily miss out on being allocated adequate resources under the JSCI screening process, underscoring the point that the validity of the JSCI is limited if not underpinned by the requisite knowledge base. As noted earlier in the program description, clients classified assigned under Job Matching attract the least amount of funding for the Job Network, while clients under Intensive Assistance receive the highest funding, with the Job Search Training being somewhere in
the middle. It is particularly in this context that criticisms such as these have force. Thus, one staff member commented that:

Another client 40 years of age he answered all questions [in the JSCI form]. He’s going through a child abuse case accused of interfering with a child. [Of course the] JSCI assessment didn’t say are you attending court? When I asked him if he had barriers preventing him from getting a job, then he expressed to me about his case and harassment experienced every time he has to leave his house. So [Centrelink] interviewer could have said IA [Intensive Assistance] is not appropriate – rather go to CSP [Community Support Program] - so they are stabilised there. And that’s how it should happen. (Service Delivery Staff 2)

At the time of conducting this study, if a Job Network agency perceived a referral to be inappropriately classified, and asked Centrelink for another assessment, they had to pay Centrelink for the expense. One senior staff member made this comment on this practice: ‘we still do it for clients [pay Centrelink $500], but it costs us money. We don’t like the alternative, which is ‘parking’ - that’s not something we’ll do here.’ Another senior staff member notes that since referrals are costly, a client is only referred back to Centrelink if the agency was convinced this would change future client intervention outcomes.

Ethically and professionally, it can be argued that all clients should be made aware of the purpose of any process to which they are subject. In my interviews I found that with the exception of one participant, none of the job seekers knew that their initial Centrelink assessments had been used to determine the nature and levels of service, they were to receive later at the Job Network site.

As Pollitt (1993: 57) notes that in the UK: ‘a buffer is created between those who set the conditions (increasingly, since the mid 1970s, the evermore powerful Treasury) and those
who suffer criticism because they are publicly, [seen] to be implementing the cuts.’ In a similar way, DEWR is distanced from those outwardly administering the new classification frameworks. Supporting this point, Harris (2003: 7) observes that while ‘central governments dictate priorities at the local level; they are protected from criticism despite their role in micro-managing operational activities.’

**Outcome Measurements**

This section explores the way in which Job Network performance indicators, driven by efficiency considerations, can be seen to favour employment outcomes while neglecting education and rehabilitation concerns. My discussion is based on the assumption that outcome measurements are part of those ‘activities of ruling’ developed to ‘shape’ and ‘instrumentalise conduct’ (Miller and Rose 1990: 8).

In 1999, DEWRSB introduced its means for measuring the performance of Job Network operations, with Flinders University and Adelaide Centre for Economic Studies providing expertise in the development of these methods. Under the new specifications Job Network providers delivering Job Matching are required to record rates of job placement as a proportion of the overall client numbers the agency had been asked to service. Particular attention is given to those with full time and periods of employment exceeding six months, special equity groups such as people with a disability, Indigenous people, and clients from Non-English Speaking Background (DEWRSB 2001a, b). In the case of the Job Search Training scheme, successful outcomes are linked to the attainment of job placements within at least three months and a demonstrated reduction of jobseekers’
‘reliance on the Government income support (DEWRSB 2001a, b). For the Intensive Assistance program, outcomes are assessed in relation to the proportion of clients achieving employment lasting at least 13 successive weeks and hence leading to a reduction in reliance on income support benefits. Like Job Search Training and Job Matching programs, obtaining employment for special target equity groups contributes to the Job Network’s performance rating (DEWRSB 2001a, b).

Under the system existing at the time of the interviews, caseworkers exercised some limited level of discretion in the use of funds to meet client needs in relation to such things as training, union tickets required on construction sites, and the procurement of specific tools of trade and so forth. The staff interviewed in this study liked this aspect of the Job Network funding framework, feeling that it went some way towards recognising individual needs. Having noted the benefit of this arrangement, however, all those interviewed raised a range of concerns related to the way in which program performance was measured and with limited resources at their disposal.

In the following interview extracts three staff engaged in direct client service delivery comment on the shortfall in the resources considered necessary to produce better employment prospects for their clients. The staff were interviewed together.

The [limited] amount of money requires that we make a choice about what needs we will address (Service Delivery Staff 2).

But on the question of whether the money is enough - no. We need more for personal development. It needs to be two-pronged, for example, licence and tools. We now have to make a choice between rehabilitation and those sorts of things. At the moment it seems to be prohibited to use the money for educational
purposes. Education does not count in terms of contractual outcomes (Service Delivery Staff 1).

We have unmet needs – education is one. I resent making the choice. For example a fork-lift ticket – we can pay for that. An employer can say a person can get a job if they get a ticket (Service Delivery Staff 3).

Our people are 2nd and 3rd generation unemployed, so personal development is very important. Conflict resolution is very important for them - lack of skills in this area is a barrier to maintaining a job, and anger management is important (Service Delivery Staff 2).

All of these participants also expressed concerns about the lack of adequate acknowledgement of improvement in a client’s educational, mental health profile as an outcome, and of the work necessary to achieve this. These are highlighted in the extracts that follow.

Education does not count as outcome though 40% of our work is about that. Welfare support referral and advocacy don’t count as outcome….One issue with long-term unemployed is those, whose parents are unemployed, it perpetuates culture of unemployment (Service Delivery Staff 2).

Other work, which don’t count as valuable include referral to CSP [Community Support Program], to Peel Youth, mental health, completion of drug and alcohol dependency program, or transfer from that to methadone program should be rewarded (Service Delivery Staff 2).

Anyone who comes in who doesn’t have a year 10 Schooling which is about 30% to get them back to education, we pay for their course at TAFE. If they are in a course for 12 months we get recognition. But if it is less than 12 we get nothing – even though those short six-month courses may be what they need to move ahead. If I get a long-term unemployed lady she goes to TAFE for Certificate III Community Services, I pay $ 600. This certificate goes for 17 weeks. So the lady gets a certificate after passing, but the department does not see that as of value. So that sort of an outcome does not add to our star rating (Service Delivery Staff 3).

But the alternative is that you are about getting people crappy jobs rather than improving their potential job opportunities so they can get into better jobs. How can a crappy job be a better outcome? We don’t think our agency is better off by this system (Service Delivery Staff 3).
A recurring theme in the interviews thus concerned the failure of funding provisions to recognise genuine improvements when jobs were not obtained. These improvements included successful educational course placements lasting less than 12 months, referrals for rehabilitation, personal development programs, advocacy service, and general welfare support. Muetzelfeldt’s (1992: 196) point that ‘meta-planning’ involves an incentive structure to generate the desired conduct supports that the focus on immediate employment outcomes encourages distant actors, Peel Training and Employment staff in this instance, to channel their efforts in particular directions. While this was certainly true in broad terms, in this case study, these participants’ responses also illustrate that these ‘meta-directives’ may not always be followed, with the staff member’s reference to ‘crappy jobs’ also illustrating the extent to which they may be subject to resistance.

The 2001 DEWR website notes that Peel Training and Employment, together with another Job Futures group in Albany, managed to place 2,402 unemployed people in jobs (DEWRSB 2001c). The site makes no mention, however, of what these agencies achieved in terms of educational and training placements, nor to any other rehabilitation outcomes not deemed commercially valuable. John Harris (2003: 7) notes this disregard commenting that while central authorities ‘are dictating priorities at the local level; the voices of professionals…[and] service users are minimised, even though the policing of practice is undertaken in the name of commitment to the latter.’

A number of policy analysts have joined with the staff interviewed here to draw attention to the inadequate level of resources available to Job Networks to assist clients to build up
their skill levels. In its submission to the 2001 Productivity Commission Inquiry into the Job Network Model, the Australian Council of Social Services, and ACOSS commentes that:

Official evaluations and independent studies indicate that only a minority of Intensive Assistance clients receive substantial training (apart from training in job search) and very few receive subsidised employment experience. Assistance is largely confined to counselling [in-house], coaching, job search training, and short vocational training courses (of a few weeks duration). This is contrary to the expectation of the government when a Job Network was introduced. The expectation at the time was that providers would invest in assistance to overcome employment barriers (ACOSS 2001: 6).

Jobs Australia (2002) has strongly challenged the basis of the official performance calculations, arguing that they do not offer any insight into the quality of the attained employment outcomes. While official data supports that in 2001 over 40 per cent of Intensive Assistance clients were placed into jobs, no details are given of the proportion of those whose 13-week job placements were supported through government wage subsidies. Jobs Australia also point out that once clients have used up their support provisions they often re-register with Centrelink as new applicants in need of employment assistance (Jobs Australia 2002: 4).

In this context, the precarious and short-term nature of the jobs in which Intensive Assistance clients may be placed also needs to be noted. Cranford, Vosko, and Zukewich (2003: 9) comment on the recent rise in insecure and low paid jobs with an ‘insufficient wage for workers to maintain themselves and their dependents’. This has particular implications for those with lower educational qualifications. Based on the results of a longitudinal study, the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER) records that 31
per cent of the employed who did not finish high school during the period 1986 to 1988 were in precarious employment situations (ACER 2001, cited in ABS 2003).

Given these trends, and the limited focus and nature of the current funding framework, Jobs Australia (2002:4-5) has proposed that outcome measurements should include client gains in acquiring of ‘soft skills’, shifts in attitudes towards searching for a job, and client feedback about a particular Job Network. This organisation argued that these points were especially pertinent to the complex experiences of clients under the Intensive Assistance program. Similarly, ACOSS (2001) has suggested that Job Network providers should be adequately compensated not simply for efficient outcomes, but also for service carried out (ACOSS 2001: 4-5).

Against this, DEWR has strongly defended its position, arguing that its outcome formulations were independently developed with the assistance of the Flinders University and the Adelaide Centre for Economic Studies, and later vetted by Access Economics. It maintains that the indicators represent ‘a sound, leading-edge approach to performance measurements’ (DEWRSB 2002: 4; 20004: 2a, d) and put the Government in a position to identify good performance and evaluate outcome comparisons across the industry (DEWR 2004a). The quest to make performance comparisons across a particular industry is echoed in publications such as the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (2002: 4; (2004: 9) and the Financial Management and Accountability Act (1997). In line with this, authorities argue that in order to derive ‘better value for money’, it is necessary to have ‘a competitive procurement process, and require a comparative analysis of all relevant costs
and benefits of each compliant proposal throughout the whole procurement cycle (whole-of-life-costing)’ (DFA 2004a: 9).

In 2000, DEWRSB made the decision to use the star rating mechanism as the primary tool guiding tendering and business allocations (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000a: 2). In 2004 DEWR reasserted this position, declaring that ‘the Star Ratings are a key criterion in assessing the potential re-allocation of business between providers’ and that ‘DEWR will examine the potential for maximising performance by increasing the business levels for Job Network members with high Star Ratings’ (DEWR 2004c). The Government made it very clear that under the new Employment Services Contract 2003-200 ‘those with ratings of three and a half stars or higher were normally offered what DEWR calls an ‘Invitation to Treat’, allowing them to continue at their pre-existing business levels’ (DEWR 2004c: 5 Job Network Member Ratings). Here, the notion ‘Invitation to Treat’ implies a kind of a preferred-service provider status – meaning that achievement of a higher Star Rating helps guarantee business allocation in the following three yearly contracting period.

Rose’s (1996: 55) argument about the importance of “audit” mechanisms in achieving government objectives in neo-liberal regimes is instructive here. As he emphasises, the audit ‘travels well across space and time, is capable of being propagated in a multitude of locales, channelling and organising activities and linking centres of calculation to sites of implementation according to new vectors’ (Rose 1996: 55). Bogard’s (1996: 20) suggestion that computerisation has added another layer of regulation to make claims
Based on simulation is also relevant here. Since the data used in constructing the Star-Rating model captures efficiency achievements defined by DEWR to the exclusion of what actually happens in practice to improve outcomes, this calculation is in fact an exercise in simulation – a mimicking of reality.

The subordination of professional rationalities to efficiency objectives outlined in this section is broadly reflected in the academic literature. For example, Muetzelfeldt (1992) points out that with that the practices associated with neo-liberal governance dislodged the earlier welfare discourses, and alongside them ‘the associated policy practices of managing a mixed economy and the welfare state, which had resulted from previous historic compromises between labour and capital’ (1992: 190). And Rose (1996) remarks that under advanced liberalism, welfare professionals are no longer left to maintain ‘established enclosures’, but, the very notion of professionalism becomes regulated by accounting and financial management regimes (Rose 1996: 54). Pollitt (1993: 11) comments that:

There has been no mention, for example, of social needs, professional standards, deprivation, community or equity. They have not entered the ‘story so far’ precisely because, historically, they played little or no part in the development of managerialist ideologies. Thus the transfer during the last decade or two, of managerialism from private sector corporations to welfare-state services represents the injection of an ‘ideological foreign body’ into a sector previously characterized by quite different traditions of thought.

He also suggests that:

The Whitehall vocabulary of the 1980s soon incorporated the virtuous three E’s: economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the civil service…. In practice, however, the focus seems to have been far more on economy and efficiency than on effectiveness…..This is significant because the three E’s do not always march together (Pollitt 1993: 59).
Cultivating employable minds

In this section I explore how mutual obligation promotes a particular self-knowledge and self-discipline, what Dean (1995: 559) calls ‘self-formation’. My main argument here will be that there is no single subject position located - rather a bundle of a contradictory and inconsistent nature.

Only one participant expressed outright objection to the major aspects of the current system. All the other six interviewed clients said they favoured engagement in the activities and programs offered by the agency. They also indicated their support for the general principles surrounding mutual obligation. In the following extracts four participants identify what they consider to be beneficial when participating in Job Network activities. Their comments indicate a range of ways in which job seekers can experience genuine focus by participating in the programs on offer:

I have learnt about paying attention to resume, manners appropriate for work environment, and people skills. All of that will help me to perfect my job seeking skills and contact with employer. Apart from this training [that is Job Search Training] I receive support through my case manager. I see her for any problem – attitude, resume, relationship with the boss [in reference to employer or supervisor]. It is very good support (Client 1).

At present I’m doing a basic course on JST [Job Search Training]. I never used a computer before. I can use it now and do my resume. Here things are more professional. They’ve done assessment, drawing up contract and I come and see…my case manager every fortnight. She organised an appointment for me to see a counsellor. This agency treats you like a whole person. Case management is very good and very empowering. She also organised a referral for physio – she should be rewarded. There are more things offered here, before I was with agency Mission Australia for about eight months. I never used to receive correspondence from them. I also felt very belittled there (Client 3).
Job Search Training is excellent because it is a good way of upgrading on modern way of applying jobs. There is so much to learn now - I realise even where you put the address on the application has changed (Client 4).

Me and my case manager worked out on the contract. I was involved [in developing an activity agreement]. My obligation is that I bring in a copy of Wednesday and Saturday newspapers - bring in and discuss. My Case Manager also finds other opportunities I overlook. She assists me and has helped a lot. Centrelink sent me to do JST, as part of my obligation I attend this course (Client 3).

The in-house Job Search Training (JST) course is one key form through which such skills are learnt. As mentioned in the methodology, I undertook two full days observing a Job Search Training course, which was running for three weeks. About 17 program participants were in attendance, of whom five participated in my study interviews. The training sought to equip participants with specific job search skills and promote an appreciation of the culture and world of work. To this end, participants role-played a range of ways of job searching such as telephone inquiries, addressing job selection criteria, competing on the job market, attending interviews, and developing and maintaining motivation. They also explored the kind of language, culture, dress code and negotiation skills suited to the world.

During these training sessions, participants talked about their perceptions of the benefits of this program. Three participants spoke in very glowing terms of the skills of the person facilitating the course. As an observer, I reached the same conclusion about the quality of the program and the capacity of the presenter.
The following interview responses, which were voiced in relation to a question about participants’ attitude to mutual obligation, also indicate broad support to the aims of this program:

I think mutual obligation is good because people just live off the dole…it means that I’m attentive, not rude, and give back input. Everyone is in a different boat. Some people don’t have the experience. I have experience in building trade, customer liaison – it all helps. Conditions are there to be abided, so if you don’t meet them, why are you here? Because we are here to make ourselves appreciated by employers.

Activity agreements are brilliant. I’ve achieved a lot of information, which would not be accessible otherwise. I realised there is so much to learn. I was not aware of so many changes - it is good that this service is available. And I don’t think they should wait until people are unemployed to get this knowledge. Everyone should know about it. (Client 4)

It is a good idea [mutual obligation] because that is the way it should be. For example, when I did the course before, many people turned up. You can’t generalise, but it must have an effect. See, I didn’t even have a resume, I didn’t know how to address a selection criteria, I’ve been in the workforce for a long time, I didn’t know what process people go through to get a job these days. (Client 6)

In these, we hear participants taking the view ‘everyone should know about it [Job Network supports]’, and recognising that learning to prepare resumes and address job selection criteria are sensible strategies for future employment. They also internalise expectations about appropriate behaviour (not being rude) and ‘being there to make ourselves appreciated by employers’. As well as indicating appreciation, such responses can be read as showing how the unemployed are involved in a process where their minds are being ‘subjected to public inspection’ (Luther, et al 1988: 125-6). Hutton further states that through involvement in these kinds of activities, individuals are caught up in normalising processes through which government objectives are taken up and used to regulate self-conduct (Hutton 1988: 125-6).
Although most of the participants supported mutual obligation in these respects, that their position was more complex is supported by their responses to other interview questions. When asked specifically to comment on their experiences of mutual obligation, a more qualified response was offered depending on individual circumstance and experience. Thus, one participant who earlier had indicated full support for the existing mutual obligation requirements was understandably displeased that Centrelink breached her for unintentional inaccurate reporting of her income earnings:

I’ve just been told I’ve been breached. I was putting in my net earnings not my gross. I’ve not been breached for an activity here [not at Peel Training and Employment, but at Centrelink], it is more the earnings. They’ve got new forms, every fortnight you say how many hours you have done. It is very demeaning…It doesn’t do much for your self-esteem. They don’t trust you. I understand they have got to breach people but the system is not personalised, everyone is put in the same box. They are not addressing you at Centrelink they are addressing the number (Client 3).

Another participant, broadly appreciative of Peel Training and Employment held reservations about some of the courses he encountered in New South Wales. In his view, obligation only makes sense where it is accompanied by delivery of quality training. He also felt that middle-aged job seekers lacked access to certain training programs.

I worked in a cattle station in Cooma. I did a course in farm skills. I did this ridiculous course. Some, not all courses are good. The trainer was teaching us fencing I knew more than he did. Welding course was good, but there are only a few of those…I did Job Search Training before in New South Wales [NSW]… Young people have more programs, apprenticeship schemes and that sort of thing. Employers prefer young people, because they don’t want to pay too much if they employ us. There is not much here in Mandurah (Client 7).

At the same time this participant made some clear distinction between himself and those he believed rotted the system:
Breaching? That’s fair enough. I’ve been in Centrelink and saw lots of young people. I have heard people say my young one has thrown my diary in the bin. One guy had only one job listed in his diary….The problem with unemployment is that most people are abusing the system, well some. So we all suffer, I think we should have a two-way system, one for the honest people. They should be treated decently. Take my case, I have worked in cattle stations, washing dishes in restaurants, prawn trawler, mining stations, worked in wool sheds pressing bales, done mechanical jobs in cattle stations, there are many scumbags who abuse the system. Politicians should differentiate so we are not all lumped together. If they can wield out the no hopers it should be good for everyone. I don’t want to work for the dole. They treat you the same way like the scumbags.

Management Perspectives

As implied throughout this chapter, the governance of the unemployed ‘is undertaken by a complex linking of agencies within and without the boundaries of the state’ (Dean 1995: 571) with ‘job-readiness’ governed by actors beyond government institutions. Some insights into how this process operates were provided in the interviews with the three case managers coordinating the Intensive Assistance client support plans and two case workers providing client supports under the Job Search Training. The following conversation on the case managers’ experiences in the enforcement of mutual obligation regime offer staff perspectives about breaching:

I don’t have a problem with breaching because it’s in his [in reference to a client previously mentioned by a staff member] best interest, and it is based on what they agree they’re gonna do (Service Delivery Staff 1).

I think they breach themselves. My client has a drug dependency problem. Last week he refused to speak to me on the phone. Said he is working 20 hour a week, and not declaring to Centrelink. He has hung up on me, and not turning up for an interview (Service Delivery Staff 2)

I believe the problem is that he has sold off tools of trade [tailor] that have been purchased for him, he is on parole. He hocked the tools before so we paid to get
them back. But there is a difference between being sure yourself of the problem – we are not doctors (Service Delivery Staff 3).

In the interviews with the Job Search Training workers, government initiatives were also supported broadly, and a reasonably authoritarian stance towards clients taken:

We treat them well as before but we have to be tougher and focussed. If clients don’t turn up then it is a problem. An example of a worst scenario, recently four young people decided they’ll play up – disrupting training sessions, which made difficult to control. They were warned. All warnings failed, so Centrelink was notified but one apologised and was keen to start again, and this was okay…. Certainly there are benefits because now we are more focussed – so it is definitely better for the client (Service Delivery Staff 4).

I think clients should do something like update their own skills. They may be timid or petrified – so it is good people can do something, but they don’t have to simply move from one training to another, as before (Service Delivery Staff 5).

Here, we find that breaching is seen as a system exercised in the ‘client[s] best interest’, as something that is ‘better for the clients’ and able to ‘normalise’ the conduct of those who fail to help themselves. Dean (1995: 577) also offers some glimpses into how the ‘technical and calculative aspects’ of government programs are translated into pastoral practices whereby clients are encouraged to take an active part in their own self regulation – this behavioural emphasis on assisting clients becomes less ‘timid’ or less ‘disruptive’, suggests a narrowing of responses compared to the broad social and economic forms of welfarism.

Walters (1996: 209) is deeply uneasy about a regime that ‘coerces’ people to take up insecure jobs. For him, these practices: ‘do more than obscure the “real” extent of unemployment. Rather they transform the very nature of the real.’
In this situation, those involved in service delivery find their options and actions circumscribed by the procedural and contractual requirements binding them. Thus, for example, the case manager opposed to mutual obligation stated that her drive to support some clients attain long term outcomes was constrained by the requirement to ‘turn around a client with a big problem in one year’. And even those staff who clearly endorsed mutual obligation thought that the lack of sensitivity in the breaching process undermined the client-worker relationship. One case manager, for example, commented that ‘when breaching is recommended it impacts badly [on the working relationship], especially if Centrelink tells them I’m responsible [for reporting a possible breach of participation agreement]. Reinforcing this point, a senior staff said:

For case managers it can be daunting in terms of how clients respond - abuse - are they gonna bring a gun? So I discuss with my staff that you do everything you can before breaching…but you do your own equation – if a client is going to bring a gun, should you be sending a client for referral like anger management? (Senior staff).

**Concluding Remarks**

The Competitive Contracting and Tendering technology used in regulating the conduct of Peel Employment and Training as a provider of employment assistance programs has provided the main focus of my discussion for this chapter. Most specifically, I have explored and described various ways in which employment assistance practices are ordered and promoted. The thesis has drawn attention to the ways in which in the first instance, under these contracting terms, a Job Network provider and its individual clients become drawn in particular contractual understandings of the ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ expected of each client. These understandings are spelled out notions of client responsibility and
these understandings bind the Job Network provider through their particular funding contract with DEWR with a view that they will aim to deliver services within the parameters of responsibility spelled out by the government. Similarly, a recipient of Job Network assistance is expected to follow the terms of service delivery, otherwise they run the danger of being breached by Centrelink. In discursively spelling out notions of responsibility in this way, the case study has demonstrated the way in which non-government providers can be encouraged into ways of understanding and treating clients in ways that closely resemble government intentions.

This chapter has also highlighted the way in which, through the use of Competitive Tendering and Contracting strategy, it has become possible for DEWR, as a government authority, to spell out very detailed service specifications expected of a Job Network provider in meeting their contractual obligations. In this connection, the chapter has identified a growing use of codification practices shaping and reshaping the manner in which staff operate and treat clients. Crucially, the chapter has further revealed the regulation of practice made possible through the contractual arrangements that set very specific terms for performance measurements expected of a Job Network provider and the related compliance achievements.

The chapter has drawn attention to the shortcomings of pursuing value for money, arguing that this appears to be taken too far, creating gaps in inadequate resources allocated to capacity-building and rehabilitation endeavours. In addition, the work argues
that amidst these gaps, we also see an intensification of patterns of self-regulation intended to reinforce a self-gaze conducive to promotion of job-ready mentalities.
Chapter Five

Contracting Family Support Services

Introduction

This case study explores the regulation of homelessness through accommodation assistance provided at Swan Emergency Accommodation (SEA) under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) – a nationwide program jointly funded by the federal and state and territory governments and administered under the latter jurisdictions. The chapter problematises the governing of homelessness - how it is constituted and made knowable through particular authorities and knowledge systems. The research reveals that the management of homelessness is informed by a mix of governing rationalities indicating some kind of hybridisation of welfare rationalities and managerialists forms under the Preferred Service Provider service delivery arrangements. This case study also describes some notable contradictions in these co-existing rationalities of rule in so far as these knowledge systems inform the regulation of homelessness.

Swan Emergency Accommodation is located in the Midland area in Western Australia. The service was opened in 1980 under its previous name, The Junction, signifying a physical location where the Great Eastern Highway and Great Northern Highways meet. Midland is the first large regional urban centre reached by interstate and country travellers who are coming to Perth by road (Swan Emergency Accommodation, u.d: 5).
During the first two years of its operations, the service was totally reliant on the community and voluntary resources. In 1982 it was able to access some government funds. In 2001, a period during which the data for this case study was collected, this community-based agency was receiving about one million dollars annually of government funding through the Preferred Service Provider service procurement system administered by the State’s Department of Community Development.

Swan Emergency Accommodation provides a range of programs from four different sites in the Midland area. These include a family centre known as Transea, catering for families with children. Transea Family Centre consists of four cluster-style dwelling units, providing accommodation to four separate families at a time. Young people are supported through another youth-specific facility known as Snow Bennet Youth Shelter which, like the above mentioned programs, offers a maximum of 13 weeks accommodation for up to 10 young people at a time. In addition, Swan Emergency Accommodation sponsors Karnany Aboriginal Service, a program coordinated with the involvement of the local Aboriginal community. Karnany seeks to provide culturally-appropriate supports and advocacy. Swan Emergency Accommodation also maintains a limited number of supported houses in the community designed to offer additional transition support through a medium-term period, thus enabling easier entry into the mainstream housing options. Where relevant, clients can also access a drug education program run from the main administration premises (Swan Emergency Accommodation, u.d.: 5; Swan Emergency Accommodation, Transea Family Centre, u.d.).
Data Collection

A total of eleven participants were interviewed at Swan Emergency Accommodation. eight of these were members of staff and management. They comprised a Management Committee Chairperson, an Executive Officer, the agency’s Program Manager and six workers involved in undertaking direct client work. Of these client workers, three were Family Resource Workers based at Transea Family Centre, one was a Youth Worker based at the agency’s Snow Bennett Youth Shelter, and another Coordinated at Karnany Aboriginal Service. Interviewees also included three homeless residents residing at Swan Emergency Accommodation; one was a lone father with his two school-age children and two were youths, a female and one male. The researcher was also invited to sit through one of the agency daily ‘hand-over’ meetings, where a summary of client-related matters was presented as the morning shift handed over operational activities to the evening shift.

In order to situate the context of Swan operations, a broad description on the management of homelessness in Australia is useful.

Managing Homelessness in Australia

In 1945 Australia established a significant form of housing assistance under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) and through rent subsidies for individuals and families renting private accommodation. These housing agreements are subject to periodic negotiations, starting with the first Agreement in late 1945, followed by other Agreements in 1956, 1973, 1978, 1984 and 1989. By 1980, the rent subsidy
(Rental Assistance) disbursed through the national income support system (social security) comprised almost half of government outlays targeting housing assistance (Parliament of Australia 1996: 2). Thus, in 2002-2003 the federal government spent a total of $1.847 billion on Rent Assistance alone (Commonwealth of Australia 2002:12). According to National Shelter and ACOSS (2003: 5), Rent Assistance is received by about one million people in Australia. As of June 2003, on average, the Rent Assistance recipients received $75 per fortnight and were paying an average rent of $264 per fortnight (ABS 2003: 2).

Under Schedule 1 of the preamble to the Amendment of the Housing Assistance Act 1989, the Parliament of Australia affirmed its intentions to ‘protect the rights of all its citizens, including people who have inadequate housing, by recognising international standards for the protection of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms’ (Parliament of Australia 1996: 2). Significantly, this emphasises the importance of Australian citizens’ right to affordable housing, as formally recognised through a number of mechanisms, such as outlined by the Parliament of Australia (1996: 2):

a) the ratification of the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and political Rights; and
b) the ratification of the Conventions on the elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and on the Rights of the Child; and
c) the acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; and
d) the enactment of legislation such as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986.
In 1999, the government reiterated the ‘caring’ aspect of Australian society, pointing out that the country ‘has a long history of implementing a range of social policy reforms designed to assist those in most need…includ[ing] responding to the consequences of economic and social events that may adversely affect families and individuals’ (DFCS 1999: 1). It went on to situate the coordinated governmental responses to issues of homelessness in this context.

The Government directs funding to a number of specific areas such as elderly residential care, certain Indigenous housing programs, and those programs designed to facilitate greater independent living for people using Home and Community Care services (HACC), the housing support facilitated through the Commonwealth–State Disability Agreement, and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Programs (Parliament of Australia 1996: 2). It is worth noting that the ‘Australian Government’s main programmatic response to addressing and alleviating homelessness is the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP IV)’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2004a: 5).

Broadly speaking, seen from the perspective of governmentality, such housing provisions have been facilitated through:

the rise of a new formula for the exercise of rule which one can call “social”. The authority of expertise became inextricably linked to the formal political apparatus of rule, as rulers are urged to accept the obligation to tame and govern the undesirable consequences of industrial life, wage labour and urban existence in the name of society: social solidarity, social security, social peace and social prosperity (Rose 1996: 39-40).
Before exploring specifically the current delivery and organisation of crisis accommodation support services at Swan, it is necessary to describe broadly the evolution of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

**Shifting emphasis: SAAP 1 to SAAP IV**

Swan Emergency Accommodation is known as a SAAP agency, a provider in a nationwide network of almost 1,200 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) agencies. SAAP was first introduced in 1985 under the *SAAP Act 1985*. The activities of the SAAP were by no means new, but entailed a nationwide reconstitution of a range of NGO crisis accommodation support services with different historical beginnings and varied sources of government funding (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002: 19; DCS u.d.: 2)

By 1985 these nationwide crisis accommodation services had ‘developed in an ad hoc manner and varied greatly in quality, scope and approach…[and] they were characterised by inadequate funding, poor planning and coordination, restrictive program guidelines and very complex administrative arrangements’ (Lindsay 1993, cited in Commonwealth of Australia, 2002: 19). The birth of SAAP 1 in 1985 involved a new coordinated and centralised strategy bringing together federal and state government funded services under common political objectives (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a: 2-4; Commonwealth of Australia, 2002: 19).
Miller and Rose’s (1990) point about governmentality being typified by centralised planning and ongoing policy appraisals is relevant in exploring the shifting rationalities which have characterised SAAP programs. It is in this way that SAAP I went through a major evaluation in 1987. Concerns were expressed that SAAP I needed to move beyond mere preoccupation with residential needs, focussed at enabling client access to ‘hostels, refuges and shelter accommodation’, to a new framework aimed at ‘assist[ing] clients to return to the community’ and avoid fostering dependency on SAAP services (Commonwealth of Australia 2005.: 2). In turn, the SAAP II enshrined in the SAAP Act 1989 was revamped to drive a major objective aimed at enabling a ‘transition from homelessness to independent living’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002:19). In facilitating this, emphasis was put on pursuing ‘individually tailored responses’, supported by efforts to closely align SAAP operations and access to capital funds under the Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP), enabling SAAP services to procure building funds.

The optimistic justifications for ongoing appraisals to improve outcomes are evident in the 1994 modifications culminating in SAAP III. During this phase, SAAP was revamped ‘to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services to help people who are homeless or at the imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence’ and ‘re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2005c.: 3). This key objective underpinning the SAAP Act 1994 was further embedded in the SAAP IV Memorandum of Understanding and Bilateral Agreements between the Commonwealth
of Australia, states and territories. Through this Agreement, SAAPs are required to produce the following outcomes:

- Reduction in homelessness;
- Crisis responses and solutions that respond effectively to changing patterns of need; and
- Increased partnerships with other service systems to meet the needs of the homeless clients or those at imminent risk of homelessness (Commonwealth of Australia 2002: 1).

It is through these requirements that the intellectual technologies of ‘A National Case Management Strategy’ were also reinforced (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002: 24) as essential in guiding SAAP operations.

In 1999 under SAAP IV, the strategy for the management of homelessness included an emphasis on enabling flexible service delivery models to promote responsiveness to client needs; foster integration and collaboration between SAAP and other service systems; focus on individuals with high support needs; enhance data collection practices; increase performance, knowledge and skills and work towards a centralised performance-based reporting regime, linked through the Productivity Commission (Commonwealth of Australia 2001).

The alignment of SAAP with the broad public sector shifts was noted in the National Evaluation of the Supported Assistance Program (SAAP III) (DFCS 1999: 7), indicating that the evolution of SAAP had ‘responded to the requirements of broader government objectives for how services are conceived, defined, funded, delivered, monitored and evaluated. Many of these requirements have flowed from reforms initiated by the Council of Australian Government (COAG) during the early to mid-1990s’ (DFCS 1999: 7). For
SAAP, the shifts included the introduction of the National Consumer Outcomes approved by COAG, a change that required an increased demonstration of individual consumer outcomes. Under this notion of consumer outcomes, authorities argue that this change is necessary in order to foster transparency and accountable practice, ‘facilitating comparisons between programs with similar objectives across and between jurisdictions, clarifying program objectives, and delineating the roles of the various levels of government and of service providers’ (DFCS 1999: 8). Connected to this is the Family Services Framework, also endorsed by COAG. Under this framework, SAAP services are required to maintain an outcome focus instead of an output-based approach; the program is required to be based on clearly articulated performance and assessment measurements and client access to early intervention supports; and SAAP services are to be procured on contractual arrangements and not ‘funding agreements’. The degree to which these shifts are being taken, however, has tended to vary (DFCS 1999: 10).

The National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP 111) also points out that under National Competition Policy and following the release of the Industry Commission’s Inquiry into Charitable Organisations in Australia (1993), state and territory and the Commonwealth governments have been moving at varied pace to reshape the way social programs are funded. In this quest, governments have introduced tighter service specifications, promoted use of quantitative and qualitative data to guide service planning and resource allocation, and consolidated reporting and data collection requirements. The report goes on to observe that ‘these are “hot issues for SAAP”. Purchaser-provider and competitive tendering models have engendered
considerable angst, disquiet and (at times) outright hostility among many stakeholders. It is complex, difficult and not easily resolved’ (DFCS 1999: 226).

This report draws attention, however, to the proposals of the House of Representatives Standing Committee Report (1998) which recommends that ‘no further steps should be taken towards implementing/pursuing competitive tendering of welfare services until a well-informed framework detailing a continuum of contestability has been developed’ (DFCS 1999: 226). The report proposed that in determining whether a service should be treated as a contestable market, one which could be potentially subjected to competition, ‘but one which does not necessarily need to be opened up for competition’ (DFCS 1999: 226). It is important to take into account the need to preserve existing regulation where this has been enacted to protect public interest considerations. It also noted that contestable frameworks should be confined to areas where the support needs of service users are not complex. In addition, it recommended that these practices are best suited to those areas where customers command a strong purchasing power and where service providers have the ability to meet tender specifications. According to the National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP 111), ‘if this criteria is assessed across SAAP service sector, the capacity of service providers across the board to meet tender specifications is unknown’ (DFCS 1999: 226).

The National Strategic Plan SAAP IV 2000 – 2005 Accountability Framework partly underpins the operations of Swan Emergency Accommodation. During the data collection phase (2001), this was the framework in operation. It was premised on a mix of
measures under the criteria of quality, client outcomes, access, relevance, efficiency and service system development (DFCS 2000: 1). While some of these indicators are more specific, others are fairly broad. Thus, the efficiency criteria required demonstration of cost used in supporting each client per completed ‘support period’, program cost for each day of support, and cost incurred for supporting each client (DFCS 2000: 1). Under the category of ‘client outcomes’, both the SAAP agencies and authorities administering SAAP (that is State and Territory governments) were required to maintain records involving the ratio of clients returning to seek SAAP services within six months of a previous ‘support period’ and the ratio of SAAP residents who manage to secure independent accommodation before exiting SAAP. There is also a requirement to ensure services are appropriate. Under the criteria of appropriateness, data must be kept on the ratio of ‘support periods’, (duration) where program outcomes had been met, the proportion of clients who chose to enter into agreed case plans, and the proportion of clients who lived in independent accommodation before using SAAP services.

Furthermore, the framework requires the maintenance of figures on the numbers of Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background (CALD) people using SAAP services, evidence of ‘service system development’ and evidence of ‘implementation of quality measures’ (DFCS 2000: 1).

While commercial-in-confidence constrained Swan Emergency Accommodation from providing contract details, they did provide a documentation that indicated the type of data collected in respect to the youth program. Under this youth program, outcomes
during this period were calculated by taking into account the number of beds available; average bed capacity; their usage; the number of young people accommodated; the number of young people under guardianship of the Department of Community Development; the number of clients who report satisfaction with the service; and the number of young people who leave to join family, extended family, supported accommodation or alternative forms of accommodation. The outcome criteria included a requirement for Swan Emergency Accommodation to stipulate reasons for terminating a client from their premises.

 Authorities by which SAAP Practices are Made Known

It is possible to identify the authority by which ends and means are made by paying attention to regular and systematic authoritative statements (Kendall and Wickham 1999: 42). This point is also reinforced in some governmentality inspired research (for instance, see Herbert-Cheshire 2001; Higgins 2000). Clarifying the nature of such authorities in the context of political rationalities, Harris draws attention to the work of Miller and Rose (1992), characterising this understanding of governmental rationality as:

the “changing discursive fields” in which the exercise of political power is justified….are ways of thinking about the dimension and practices of government: How government should operate; the ideals and principles to which it should be directed; the relationship between authorities and their subjects (Rose and Miller 1992: 178 – 179 cited in Harris 1999).

The chapter has already described a range of SAAP shifts since the program was constituted. This section specifically and briefly locates the authorities through which SAAP is understood, shaped and re-shaped in the context of managerial and National
Competition Policy reforms. The identified policy statements below set parameters within which the means and ends of SAAP operations come to be understood:

- **Agenda for Reform: Report of the Independent Commission to Review Public Sector Finances (McCarrey 1993a):** Sought to shift government agencies from ‘sheltered’ operations to a position more regulated by market forces. Hence, state government entities are called upon to introduce competition, and use commercialisation and corporatisation methods in order to remain accountable. The report advocates contracting practices in order to pursue efficiency gains.


- **Proposal for greater use of rental subsidy (that is Rental Assistance) for homeless people and a simultaneous call for a reduction in the public housing stock maintained by the former Homeswest authority (see McCarrey Report 1993b).**

- **In 1995 COAG adopted three key intergovernmental agreements: Conduct Code Agreement, Competition Principle Agreement, and an Agreement to Implement National Competition Policy and Related Reforms. The** *Competition Policy Reform Act (Cth) 1996* is enacted, giving legislative and legal basis to the NCP (Queensland Government Treasury u.d:

The Department of Community Development develops a Preferred Service Provider procurement strategy for services delivered by non-government organisations (DFCS 1999a: Foreword).

*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*: SAAP is revamped to ‘provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services’ in pursuit of a ‘maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence’ for homeless people in need of assistance (*SAAP Act 1994: Sect 5*).

*National Consumer Outcomes*: Embedded under SAAP III, this framework promotes a performance system designed to facilitate ‘comparisons between programs with similar objectives across and between jurisdictions’. The framework is also endorsed under the COAG arrangements (DFCS 1999: 8).
National Strategic Plan SAAP IV 2000 – 2005, the Commonwealth, States and Territories commit to an Accountability Framework entailing the development and implementation of outcome based performance measurements (Commonwealth of Australia 2005).

SAAP 2000 – 2005 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The Memorandum brings together the Commonwealth of Australia, States and Territories as signatories operating under a common broad SAAP framework driven by client-focussed service delivery, a need to increase performance, knowledge and skills, a concern to maintain a strong and coherent national approach, and a promotion of flexible service delivery and performance (Commonwealth of Australia 2005e; 2002; 2003b).

Through the National Strategic Plan SAAP IV 2000-2005 – the Commonwealth, States and Territories jointly committed to an accountability framework entailing the development and implementation of outcome based performance measurements (Commonwealth of Australia 2005c).

SAAP IV focuses on data collection and performance reporting procedures linking with new economic and accounting authorities such as the Productivity Commission (Commonwealth of Australia 2001).

National Competition Policy is formally noted within SAAP programmatic texts as an important vehicle through which SAAP programs become subject to ‘competitive tendering for service delivery’ (DFCS 1999b: 10).

It is through a range of these authorities that the SAAPs have evolved against the backdrop of public sector managerialist shifts throughout the 1990s and beyond.
Reforming the Homeless

Complex Profile

Interviews with all staff and management study participants indicated that homeless people using Swan Crisis Accommodation are largely drawn well beyond the Swan region. They come from all over Western Australia, including country and remote areas. A senior staff member also noted that the family centre, Transea, had a 75 per cent Aboriginal occupancy, while the youth shelter comprised only five per cent Aboriginal occupancy.

All interviewed staff cited the complexity of the lives of homeless people attending Swan Emergency Accommodation to be crucial in establishing the context within which the agency’s operations can be explored. They identified an enmeshment of situations ranging from financial, alcohol and drug abuse, history of tenancy liability and history of physical and sexual abuse as common factors experienced by clients attending the service. Staff expressed these complex issues in a variety of ways:

They have experienced a period of homelessness and there are not many options for these groups…Previous histories of physical and sexual abuse in the family – DV [domestic violence] families get stressed, and this presents a lot amongst our clients, so we have to have knowledge to address this (Senior Staff 07).

We usually get the large families. The clients we get through here are large housing commission arrears - have fallen through with Homewest - domestic violence - so really they’re the ones that really need supported accommodation. But because we are short term it is no longer enough to work through issues… So you don’t always know whether you’ve worked with the issues… a lot of issues - we deal with legal issues a lot. We don’t have the necessary professional person
to work with them. At one time and another we see all these things that affect people (Service Delivery Staff 03).

Some of them present with violent behaviour, aggressive behaviour towards each other or anyone else – alcohol and drugs – under influence with all sorts of things (Service Delivery Staff 01).

In mapping out the nature of this complexity, for the purpose of this thesis it becomes almost unproductive to separate one issue from another as these matters are closely intertwined. The staff views illuminate further on this entanglement:

With Aborigines they also don’t have the same opportunities in the private rental market (Service Delivery Staff 03).

Often people don’t realise they have a problem and they wonder why things are not working out they just go out and spend $50 on lollies. It’s like talking to a six year old again - they are weak - they’re very, very weak….Parents prioritise their own needs before their children. Drug and alcohol is taking a lot of money, so they move to the next house and create problems…The older ones the brain is already fried from drugs (Service Delivery Staff 03).

A single father interviewed at Transea Family Centre shared a story regarding his complex circumstances, indicating that in his situation his homelessness is bound up with a range of other difficult factors:

I’ve had these children for four years on my own, without a break. So what I have got to be is have it together. My daughters used to be wards of the state. I had 10 years of jail – so I hope this is a stepping-stone. Homeswest say we gonna stick you in a shitty street. So I basically jail my children – there is a drug dealer on this corner, and that, and that. My kids want to play in the drug dealer’s backyard. Here, I’ve got my own identity and there is someone to talk to 24 hours if I feel I’m gonna fall off the rails [drug related issues]….I have $ 1000 with Homewest because my heater blew up, my water bill used to be $90. There are so many people you are dealing with at Homeswest, I got fobbed off – just because I’ve been a drug dealer and I’ve been to jail (A single father).
For some staff, the complex nature of such situations facing clients begs the question about the role of the agency itself. A response of a senior staff captures the richness of this complexity:

Before this position [a senior position], I was on the committee for a few years, now I have had a snapshot of what the target group looks like. The target group has changed mainly due to impact of drugs. Now we get one to two who are not using [drugs], while before we would get one or two users. Then, diminishing number of beds in psychiatric care is a problem we find - more people with drug and psychiatric problems coming into our care. If we get one person who is demonstrating psychiatric behaviour we are fine - but we get two to three, it is very hard for us then to manage and achieve our case management objectives unless we are reduced to being a bed and breakfast service. We have two at the moment, in fact we had three, but one went to court and didn’t come back I think because he got locked up. So we also get a drug court ringing up with people who get bail. If a young person doesn’t have a home we get a call to accommodate - and we do from time to time. But we’ve got to be careful we don’t become a bail hostel. One young person was on bail for prostitution and then we were asked whether they are meeting their bail conditions! So that can be tricky. Is it our role to police these young people? So getting the right balance is tricky and just maintaining a balance in the household is tricky. So when we had three psychiatric cases we had to close down one or two other beds because workers’ attention and time is required by those difficult cases. You don’t get funded more staff in those instances (Senior Staff 07).

The complexity of client issues expressed by Swan Emergency Accommodation staff is reflected in the government data. A 1999 report commissioned by the Department of Family and Community Services, titled Appropriate Responses for Homeless People Whose Needs Require a High Level and Complexity of Service Provision, provides useful insights on the perceived nature of this group. Couched through professional psychosocial logics, the report identifies that SAAP service users have always included clients with ‘a range of high and or complex needs compounding or contributing to homelessness’ (Ecumenical Housing & Thompson Goodall Associates 1999: iv). Notably, since the late 1980s, SAAP program providers report ‘an increasing incidence of
clients with “high need” (Ecumenical Housing Inc & Thompson Goodall Associates 1999: iv). The document broadly classifies SAAP support services under the following typology of need:

**Category 1** - Intensive needs, which may compromise functioning and ability to meet basic needs which often manifest in difficult behaviours, and are more likely to be ongoing; [and]

**Category 2** - Intensive needs, which may compromise functioning but not the ability to meet basic needs, and are likely to be time limited;

**Category 3** - Non-intensive needs, which are unlikely to compromise functioning, and will be time-limited.

Authors of this report suggest that a more insightful classification is required in order to effectively capture the complexity of clients’ situations. Such a classification would need to capture the following features and patterns of service use:

- Complexity and multiplicity of client needs tends to be associated with repeated occasions of presentation for accommodation request.
- High-level complexity of need is also associated with non-intensive supports.
- That the data collected by non-professional workers at staff sites underestimates the intensity of need due to lack of capacity to carry out diagnostic assessments.
- That SAAP service users also face ‘isolation and marginalisation from community services’ (Ecumenical Housing Inc & Thompson Goodall Associates 1999: vii).

Staff at Swan Emergency had also identified Aboriginal people as comprising about 75 per cent of their service users. Government sources also cite Indigenous people as being ‘at particular risk of homelessness and of needing SAAP services’ (DFCS 2001: 2). The federal department locates this problem in the domain of other disadvantages associated with ‘health, employment, housing, education, cultural and historical factors’ (DFCS 2001: 2), hence, predisposing this group to potential risk of homelessness. It maintains
that for Aboriginal people the question of homelessness is multi-faceted, traversing the ‘spiritual’ dimension, ‘overcrowding’, ‘relocation and transient homelessness’, ‘unsafe home: escaping violence, abuse or neglect’, ‘and lack of access to stable shelter’ (DFCS 2001: 3).

Official sources also points to over-representation of Indigenous people as users of SAAP supports (DFCS 2001; Commonwealth of Australia 2004b; AIHW 2003; 2005). Although in 2001 they only represented an average of two percent of the national population, they comprised 14 per cent of SAAP recipients. During 1998 to 2000, Indigenous people comprised 13 per cent of the total SAAP service users. In Western Australia between 1999 and 2000, a total of 8,140 people used SAAP services; of these, 2,475 were from the Indigenous population. This represents 30.4 per cent of overall SAAP service users, indicating that Aboriginal people in Western Australia were 10.7 times more likely to access these support services compared to the general state population. The West Australian figure is the highest rate of representation in the country (DFCS 1999b: 5). The estimated 75 per cent Aboriginal client population at Swan Emergency Accommodation is far above the state and national averages. In addition, Indigenous people exhibit a high pattern of repetitive crisis accommodation use (support periods) of SAAP services compared to the rest of the population (ABS 2003: 4).

Moreover, the study notes that prior to receiving SAAP services, Aboriginal clients are less likely to be in private rental housing compared to the rest of the population. Instead, the group is comparatively over-represented in public and community housing.
addition, Aboriginal SAAP users are less likely to have been purchasing or living in their own homes compared to the general population. The following illustrative official data is adapted from a Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS 2001: 11)

### Type of housing immediately before support – Indigenous and non-indigenous support periods by location, 1999-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of housing before support</th>
<th>Urban centres</th>
<th>Rural centres</th>
<th>Remote centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ind. % Non-Ind. %</td>
<td>Ind. % Non-Ind. %</td>
<td>Ind. % Non-Ind. %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public or community housing</td>
<td>13.3 6.0 20.5 8.2</td>
<td>39.9 8.4</td>
<td>22.5 6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting in private market</td>
<td>9.8 15.0 14.0 23.0</td>
<td>3.4 15.9</td>
<td>9.5 17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing/living in own home</td>
<td>0.6 3.6 0.9 5.9</td>
<td>0.9 4.1</td>
<td>0.8 4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(DFCS 2001: 11)

### Disciplinary Practices

Having outlined the SAAP and the complexity of the clients circumstances, attention can now be given to the disciplinary practices involving Swan Emergency Accommodation service operations. Operational case management tools and interview responses reveal a range of psychosocial techniques engaged in cultivating desirable conduct among service users under the Preferred Service Provider arrangements. Unlike the Labour Market Program case study in Chapter Four, the techniques used in the delivery of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, while exhibiting managerial tendencies, also show a certain level of reliance on professional and welfare approaches.
In marked difference from the client assessment strategies of the job Network case study, all participant interviews and agency assessment forms show that Swan Emergency Accommodation’s initial assessments are undertaken on-site and in-depth by the agency staff. Workers obtain information using detailed, open-ended forms to establish individuals’ current circumstances. This involves collecting relevant social demographic information; profiling a client’s potential threat from domestic violence; and ascertaining their current social and economic circumstances, referral sources, place of accommodation prior to seeking crisis assistance, including a brief history; and medical and psychiatric status. Other key details relate to employment participation, income source, special needs and the children’s status, including their identifying information details, schooling arrangements and medical history (Swan Emergency Accommodation, Individual Profile and Transea Family Centre booklet u.d. a, c).

This kind of assessment practice follows on from modern welfare traditions, whereby, firstly, it is essential to collect detailed information as part of the process in making sense of a client’s psychosocial circumstances. Client work, therefore, becomes informed by such psychosocial assessment techniques. Although these techniques are by no means homogenous, they have been influenced by welfare delivery traditions (see O’Connor, Wilson and Setterlund 2003; Howe 1987; Compton and Galaway 1994; Payne 1997). Rose (1996: 39) characterises this practice as ‘social’ in character, enabling ‘persons and activities…to be governed through society’ (Rose 1996: 40). In this way, the power of psychosocial knowledge produces its own constructed ‘domains of objects and rituals of truth’ (Foucault, 1977: 194 cited in Porter 1998: 211). Putting this in a context:
Of course, individual speakers who want to be taken seriously must talk about the sort of objects collectively agreed upon by the scientific community of which they are members, but what determines the shared canons of seriousness are not the real or primary relations nor the reflective secondary ones, but by way secondary and primary relations are organised by discursive practice (Foucault 1977: 194 cited in Porter 1998: 211).

In keeping with SAAP III requirements (DFCS 1999a: 4), Swan Emergency Accommodation uses a case management framework requiring staff to provide their homeless clients with the opportunity to set up strategies and action plans aimed at addressing and reviewing client goals and outcomes. This case management model enshrined in the Commonwealth/State and Territories Agreement under SAAP III (DFCS 1999a: 4), thus finds expression in the agency’s contractual service specifications. Here, the model is also identified as ‘case plans’ (Swan Emergency Accommodation, Service Specifications u.d.)

All interviewed staff spoke about their work in terms of assisting clients in normalising relationships with their significant others and of enhancing parenting skills as part of the effective management of a stable household. Specifically, most interviewed staff referred to the agency’s case plan documentations [case management tools] which, they indicated sum up the essence of their day-to-day operations.

These case plans are informed by a detailed open-ended Goal Setting tool conducted with individual clients. This tool guides the workers and their clients to identify working goals under the following specific themes: relationship with self, relationship with significant others, accommodation, housing-related debt and non-housing related debt (Swan
Emergency Accommodation, Goal Setting u.d.). Techniques used in examining one’s relationship with the self include exploration of confidence and self-esteem issues, and, where relevant, experiences of anger. Techniques used in assisting self-investigation on relationships with significant others delve into residents’ feelings and perceptions regarding their current relationships with partners and children, their approaches to parenting and their relationship with their family of origin.

The Goal Setting tool also prescribes that the residents be encouraged to think about the type of accommodation suited to their family needs and assisted to cultivate desirable tenancy attitudes. Therefore, we find Goal Setting texts (tools) drawing attention to the examination of housing affordability, securing tenancy references and exploring debt status through examining rental arrears, water and power accounts, damage to property debts and other liabilities (Swan Emergency Accommodation, Goal Setting. u.d).

The behavioural techniques on offer also enable residents to build resource awareness, for example, where to find budget furniture and various household items. Staff and their clients use the Goal-Setting tool, delving into detailed accounts of what level of debt a client has accumulated, their financial status with utilities providers, Telstra, Western Power and Alinta, including identifying specific plans that can be put in place to address existing debt with these agencies. The checklist also enables workers and their clients to look at an individual client’s tenancy history, including their relationship with the Ministry of Housing (Homeswest) – accumulated debt, whether bankruptcy has resulted from tenancy liabilities with Homeswest, then history of receipt of Bond Assistance and
subsequent repayments. A debt repayment plan can then be proposed. Other types of debt are also investigated such as hire purchase and car repairs. In addition, any existing legal issues are also examined.

Other efforts to reform the homeless at Swan detailed in the case management framework entail the use of ‘direct debit’ method to pay Swan’s rental, electricity and power costs (Transea Family Centre u.d: 3). In this way, since clients are required to pay for the use of crisis accommodation facilities, this practice affords opportunity to inculcate responsible tenancy behaviour. In this connection, the direct debit method is also progressively encouraged in addressing outstanding external debt issues. Thus, attending to the Ministry of Housing, telephone or electricity arrears, can also be seen as an exercise in the cultivation of obeying minds, amenable to paying rents and achieving reintegration and normalisation in society.

It is also in this connection that all staff mentioned broadly their professional roles in enabling enhancement of ‘life skills’, ‘counselling’, ‘parenting skills’, ‘budgeting skills’, and promoting clients’ preparedness for the ‘rental market’. In the process of inculcating house management disciplines, most staff mentioned that accommodation units are inspected accordingly. As one service delivery staff noted: ‘we assist clients with life skills, you know, hygiene standards, so that they are acceptable for when they are ready to rent’. Towards this end, families also receive a client manual setting out rules and conditions of residency at Transea Family Centre. Among other things, these rules stipulate that drugs and alcohol are not permitted in the centre and residents found under
the influence of such substances will have their residency terminated. The rules also ban smoking and violent behaviour within Swan Emergency Accommodation premises. With these efforts in mind, most of the interviewed staff members noted that through their case management roles, the majority of their clients are successfully relocated into some kind of accommodation during the 13-weeks of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. The quest to build client skills and produce desired results can be understood in the words of Porter (1998: 213) who states, ‘what it means is that knowledge is never simply used for the sake of understanding the world. Rather, it is always used and constructed with a purpose in mind. That purpose may either be to control nature or to influence behaviour of others.’ Thus, it is also worth noting that through the roles and techniques invested at Swan Emergency Accommodation of practice, expert knowledge is implicated in ‘align[ing] the self-governing capacities of subjects with the objectives of political authorities by means of persuasion, education and seduction rather than coercion’ (Rose, 1996, p.50). It is by this means that we come to see the promotion of self-knowledge as promoted through various authorities by which crisis accommodation assistance has been conceived.

Tenancy rules at Swan Emergency illuminate on the self-policing involving service users. Two interviewed youths spoke of their appreciation in regards to learning household routines, receiving care and adhering to at least basic crisis accommodation tenancy rules as necessary in consideration of the benefits of securing and maintaining a secure service. They used expressions such as the value of getting ‘good food’, ‘a caring service’, ‘a roof over my head’, and importantly, the young male client emphasised: ‘the support the
workers give you is important. We don’t get a feeling from them that “we are just here to do a job” they really care about our wellbeing’. Here, the clients are internalising self-knowledge about what a well-functioning household ought to offer – a knowledge implicated in decisions they continuously make about housing options, including the option of family re-unification for youths who run away from home. These two youths, while appreciative of Swan’s supports, seemed to the researcher far from being docile bodies. On one hand, they indicated awareness of house rules, which they are expected to observe, such as not returning to the premises under the influence, undertaking allocated house chores, and facing breaching consequences if implicated in substance abuse, violence, and offence, and so forth. On the other, they had clearly done their homework and both of them related that the agency provides one of the best support services in Perth. The young male seemed to have a very good knowledge of various SAAP ‘shelters’ around the metropolitan area - what they offer and those, that he intends ‘never’ to use due to their limited care. In this sense, it seemed this participant was exercising choice within the parameters of what is on offer and in the context of the value he placed on the perceived quality of Swan Emergency Accommodation supports.

It can also be argued that the homeless people’s desire to partake of the mainstream private rental market or the public housing can be understood as a self-regulation, facilitating greater conformity to dominant tenancy attributes in Australian society. Thus, in discussing the use of such techniques in regulating the conduct of a service user, first, it should be appreciated that:

discourse is not simply that which manifests [or hides] desire – it is also the object of desire; and since as constantly history teaches us, it is not simply that which
translates social struggles or systems of domination, but it is the thing for which there is struggle, discourse is the power to be seized (Foucault 1984: 110).

While the three interviewed clients spoke glowingly of the agency support, staff delved deeper into the workings of the current SAAP practices, identifying a number of other factors they considered a barrier in achieving maximum client outcomes under the current SAAP framework. Without exception, staff felt that in some cases the 13 weeks set to address the crisis of homelessness is limiting for some clients. They thought that the cultivation of independent living goals amongst their clients was hampered by the lack of adequate medium-term supported accommodation.

The following responses typified this concern:

…it is just that the ones we can’t place, it is very difficult to place them in 13 weeks. They need more than just crisis accommodation. What we really need is an extension of something like medium supported housing [six months stay in a community-based supported accommodation] - you know what I mean. There’s certainly a need for a lot more crisis accommodation (Service Delivery Staff 01).

We need more independent supported accommodation, but there are waitlists up to six months to get into independent supported accommodation (Service Delivery Staff 02).

13 – weeks stay is a constrain – 13 weeks is just the tip of the iceberg, we’re just getting to know the person and its time for them to leave. But there’s a provision in our contract for us to accommodate one extended stay person, in this case after 13 weeks, we can allow them an additional 13 weeks. We also have youth houses now, so some young people can be moved to supported accommodation if there is a vacancy. But the point is we have to juggle and see if people are appropriate for the vacancy, if they can stay together – they can have a falling out. And despite this availability, it is just not enough to meet the needs of a lot of other clients who could benefit from medium supported accommodation (Service Delivery Staff 02).
Some staff went on to make a range of remarks, indicating that even medium-term supported accommodation may not be adequate to cater for all clients’ needs. One staff put it in these terms:

For some people it’ll be beneficial to have time extended. The biggest stumbling block is with medium-term accommodation they are allowed to stay there for a maximum of nine months. But there again before accommodation ends they get upset and children agitated. So it’s not enough (Service Delivery Staff 05).

This point can also be seen in the context of earlier concerns expressed in relation to the diminution of the Ministry of Housing’s welfare function.

Six respondents expressed additional concerns that the agency had limited resources to support residents who are making a transition through medium-term accommodation. They felt that a successful transition into independent accommodation is more effective when it is adequately supported with resources. These quotes put their views into context:

There’s no time to see and cover all clients after they leave the service. Vicky, the Program Manager she does continue to see some, but her time is limited. Outreach is neglected – outreach is an area of need too. So when a client leaves our service there is no time to cover. Y (coded) is also a counsellor, she can see some ex-residents, but can’t see them all - no time (Service Delivery Staff 02).

We mostly do individual advocacy – we take people to appeals interviews and advocate on their behalf, address debt and homelessness. Here [in the Indigenous program], we need more support to get all of this in place. It’s only two of us. There are two workers - a receptionist and myself. For me to be able to do these things we need another worker here (Service Delivery Staff 03).

I am a bit uneasy about moving people from crisis to medium accommodation and how you move that to long-term, outreach will be important. You need outreach resources…but we are trying to build a relationship with another agency to see if they can provide outreach (Management Committee Member 08).

Two of the frontline staff who noted the connection between barriers to outcomes and limited transitional medium-term accommodation, also, noted their inability to compel
people into participating in the case plans. This meant that some clients were individually responsible for remaining stuck in situations of perpetual shift.

Well, as I see it, [constraints] this is more due to people’s willingness to participate. Really, the only constraint is what they put on themselves, I’ve not come across anything [in terms of barriers barriers] – for me the opportunity is there. Clients are the only ones who prevent themselves from grabbing those opportunities, they are there…We see, quite honestly, now a lot of problems we’re seeing behind that are drug and alcohol related, right. We offer them services to get help in those areas – a lot of them are not willing to go down that track - You know what I mean. They are not willing at this point in time - it’s what I’m saying. Sometimes you just get frustrated you know people have got potential but they won’t – you know what I mean? As I said, but they wont take that extra step. It is challenging, it is disappointing, it’s - you’ve your successes, and you know it’s a real cross section of people we’re dealing with (Service Delivery Staff 01).

Another staff member also felt that lack of compulsion was bound to affect desired outcomes. In fact this response suggests that in this context the treatment of clients under the current system is ‘less coercive’.

Before we had one house and they had one bedroom each and we could direct them and mums were asked to stay with children and we would run a session for them. Here [the current independent unit dwellings] they can leave them. It is difficult to compel now because programs are not compulsory. So autonomy – there is more of it for them [client autonomy] because we more or less have to run it the government way… Before, via supported action planning we could say you must attend and we will give them a warning. Now [service funding] specifications say if they want accommodation only, then that’s all you give. We try when they come we say you will attend SAAP meetings but if they don’t we can’t enforce (Service Delivery Staff 05).

Yet again, the same staff member seemed to accept the shift in the current notions of client choice and seemed to find a way of working around this change. Rather than reinforcing unproductive compulsion, this staff member still saw informal interactions
with clients as valuable, regardless of the absence of contracted case plans or working agreements:

People are not compelled to participate because that way [if compelled] they won’t get anything out of it. But it’s amazing that even if they are coming to the office to discuss things, they see us as being in charge there in the office. And you can get the same person in the courtyard or in their unit; they seem to be more relaxed like ‘this is my turf’. There they don’t feel as threatened. It’s amazing, you sit with them over a cup of coffee in the house, and it’s amazing how they open up…. ‘I’m in my home, I’m in control’ (Service Delivery Staff 05).

The notions of choice regulating the relationship between individual clients and their SAAP agency signifies a social democratic discursive framework privileging a particular way of respecting felt needs. This is evidenced by the right embedded into service operational rules, stipulating, for example, that while all clients are expected to participate in this Case Management Service involving ‘Support Action Plans’ (Transea Family Centre 2002: 2), the ‘residents have the right to refuse a service and refusal should not prejudice their future access to services’ (Transea Family Centre 2002: 7).

Notwithstanding this social democratic notion of choice about whether or not to enter into case management arrangements, these practices can still be seen as disciplining mechanisms used in reforming excluded groups through the normativity of the social body, thus, making populations into ‘subject of needs, attitudes and relationships, a subject who was to be embraced within, and governed through, a nexus of collective solidarities and dependencies’ (Rose 1996: 40).

At least four long-serving interviewed staff drew further attention to the role of the Ministry of Housing; the following senior staff response best illustrates this opinion:
Then, [prior to reforming the Homeswest] on exiting crisis accommodation, they [clients] went into Homeswest housing because it was plenty so they’ll be housed. This has gotten difficult - minimum waiting list is five years - about two year waitlist before, so we now don’t have a third level [long-term], therefore accommodation is no longer there...If it is mum and dad with kids, yes, they can get into private accommodation. But if it’s an Aboriginal family with five kids, the reality is different. So they can go to relatives, which can lead to another family becoming homeless (Senior Staff 07).

Most of the staff dealing with families strongly felt Homeswest should offer their clients some supports aimed at sustaining good tenancy mentalities to minimise the risk of eviction.

It’s just not enough [crisis accommodation and long-term housing options] - we’re just the tip of the iceberg – we’re not meeting the demand. Yeah, this is my personal opinion, like they’ve been evicted from Homeswest accommodation for rental arrears or whatever - they come to us, and we negotiate with Homeswest to start addressing their debt to get them back into Homeswest, there’s a hole there! If we can negotiate on their behalf for the client to repay their debt and allow them to get back in, I feel there needs to be somebody there, to work with them to address the debt, rather than dislocate the whole family! You know what I mean, and I think that’s creating a lot of anti-social behaviour, because kids are being uprooted away from school, their friends, the whole network, to me it should be addressed at Homeswest level. I just don’t understand – because I mean a lot of our clients are only going to be housed with Homeswest - they are big families with four, six kids on social security, really you don’t have much chance of getting private rental, you know. I feel there is still a need for somebody in the public housing section that should be able to work with them [Homeswest residents at risk of losing their home] to address debt. It bothers my mind that Homeswest allows a person to get to eight, ten - thousand dollar debt! …that’s what blows me away! (Service Delivery Staff 01)

Here we are conscious of our responsibility – they pay me here – clients pay their rent. I just don’t understand. Some of that could be damage to a house – I understand that, but at the end of the day if it is damage - throwing someone out, they still have to fix that house, so even if they could work with them at that level to prevent them from being evicted. So I feel there is a need to work with them at that level to avoid eviction. Have family workers within their structure to address this. As we say, with some of them here, if they learn nothing else, they learn to pay a rent. And it’s only because of our presence – so something like that in Homeswest will help (Service Delivery Staff 01).
Fopp (2002: 52) also expresses concern over a lack of adequate long-term housing provisions for these groups. He argues that in putting emphasis on medium-term accommodation, ‘SAAP has potential to increase the gaze, the surveillance, thereby enhancing the potential for power or technologies of domination, which can be exerted over clients. He observes that as far back as 1993, housing evaluation studies were showing that crisis accommodation agencies were finding it difficult to support their client’s secure accessible and affordable accommodation. Fopp (2002: 55-56) then goes on to argue that the change to SAAP II, with its emphasis on transitional options (for example, medium-term housing), signalled that the problem of homelessness had gone beyond being simply of a crisis nature. In his view, this shift in approach signalled the end of a commitment to provide long-term affordable housing for those in need, to one that prized linkages between crisis and other community resource agencies. Fopp (2002) further cautions that such SAAP’s emphasis on notions of community support and the pursuit of medium-term housing options runs the danger of fostering surveillance upon members of the homeless population who are simply in need of long-term housing. In his view, the main hindrance to attaining optimal outcomes for homeless people has more to do with diminishing access to affordable and appropriate public housing due to the proliferation of free market policies.

**Contradictory Rationalities**

The nationwide policy shift favouring the use of the Rental Assistance strategy has been challenged for failing to deliver affordable housing for at least a third of the one million Australians who are under this system. In the first instance, 35 per cent of people
receiving Rental Assistance ‘exceed the government’s own measure of housing affordability by spending more than 30% of their incomes on rent’ (National Shelter and ACOSS 2003: 4). Moreover, another 9 per cent of Rental Assistance recipients spend 50 per cent of their earnings on rent alone. It is important to recognise that between 1993/94 and 2003/2004, the federal expenditure on Rental Assistance rose by 7 per cent, representing a $1.92 billion increase in real terms. During the same period, however, the overall federal and state government expenditure under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) had gone down by 54 per cent to 1.28 billion (National Shelter and ACOSS 2003: 5). The decline in such funding earmarked for public housing is worth bearing in mind in making sense of ongoing challenges in relation to the management of homelessness in Australia. Those challenges remain evident in a range of other literature (AIHW 2005; Commonwealth of Australia 2004a, b).

Drawing from the experiences of staff at Swan Emergency Accommodation outlined earlier, there are some homeless people who are less likely to enter the private rental market even following SAAP intervention. As noted in the National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP III):

A situation of concern to the national Evaluation Team is the inappropriate housing (crisis through to long-term) made available to Indigenous people who are homeless. Due to the lack of facilities capable of housing large families, there were consistent reports of overcrowding. The Western Australian Evaluation Report (Cameron Associates, 1998) highlighted one example of a 23-member family living in a single family unit. The Report shows that such overcrowding can exacerbate the situation of the marginally housed by, for example triggering violence. This is often the experience of young people who are marginally housed and can lead to the loss of accommodation. Although an extreme case, this example is indicative of the outcomes of inflexibility and lack of affordable and appropriate housing (DFCS 1999a: 98).
The National Shelter and ACOSS (2003) report on housing affordability discussed above also adds weight in partly problematising the effectiveness of the Rental Assistance mechanism. Here, the public choice and neo-classical economics assumption of there being a supposedly universal rational individual whose housing market preferences can be simply dictated through Rental Assistance methods (the quasi-market signal) to redirect homeless people into private rental does not fully hold. As implied in the client profile sketch earlier, the housing needs of some of the homeless people are complex and not easily mathematically disentangled from other psychosocial struggles by simply encouraging reliance on rental vouchers.

Instead, an exploration of the National Competition Policy practices as implemented by SAAP in Western Australia is more meaningful through considerations of the public housing calculations that followed the McCarrey Report (1993b). The competitive practices influencing the provision of SAAP services (under the Preferred Service Provider model) are only one part of the exercise of rule. In this case, a concurrent and relevant key area of reform is one that required the then Homeswest to strategically de-emphasize its ‘welfare function’ (McCarrey 1993b). As discussed in Chapter Two, the logic advanced for this shift was the need to use public finances more effectively and efficiently according to neo-liberal governance. This can be seen through everyday client experiences at Swan Emergency Accommodation who struggle to secure long term accommodation.
A more neo-liberal shift in the state’s housing provisions is demonstrated by the housing shortage connected with the Ministry of Housing’s limited housing stock and the commercialisation principles leading to evictions.

**Other Views on Contractual and Service Specification**

There is a common view among all interviewed staff that the Preferred Service Provider model has added more administrative requirements, producing more paperwork in the form of six-monthly reports. Senior staff communicated that they also submit quarterly financial reports to the Department for Community Development, (DCD). In addition, since the inception of the Preferred Service Provider practices, DCD, acting in its capacity as a funding authority, convenes regular review meetings following a submission of every bi-annual report. These periodic meetings involve regional department funding officials and Swan Emergency Accommodation’s executive staff. SAAP services, however, are not subject to the spot checks that characterise the working arrangements between Job Network agencies and DEWR, their funding provider.

Interestingly, the three interviewed management and executive staff were very positive that under the Preferred Service Provider arrangements the department had become more pro-active and supportive of Swan Emergency Accommodation. They praised the departmental funding officers for being more accessible, maintaining and facilitating open communication, clarification and feedback on service performance. Thus, senior staff felt the Department of Community Development is more helpful under the current model compared to the previous system.
Unlike the Job Network senior and frontline staff who were very clear about the shifts involving the contracting process, Swan Emergency Accommodation frontline staff stated that they were not as clear about how this process worked. For example, none of the casework staff expressed any awareness that the Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS) was involved in facilitating industry-specific consultations in assisting both the government and the community sector in working through service (tender) specifications – a crucial process in influencing the design of service frameworks at a state level. At the same time, some of these frontline staff expressed concerns over a perceived government monopoly in determining program service specifications. They felt that the new system reduced their access to operational resources. For example, one worker noted that:

It would be good to have some family days, but how you organise them differs and varies – and depends on the family we have got at the time – if they get along together. If we had a bus, cooking classes and cooking days – so we block these thoughts [due to perceived inflexibility in the funding system]….Parenting classes will be good, you ask if I’ve spoken to the Community Development Officer at DCD, we’re not sure they can offer that though – they inform us of programs at neighbourhood centres. Perhaps if they surveyed us beforehand especially because our clients are not highly motivated [hence, they cannot be simply slotted to an existing program without taking their needs into account] (Service Delivery Staff 06).

Another staff member stated that ‘in many ways, the agency has operated in good ways, and now the government tells us what to do and how to do’. In addition, an example was shared by a separate staff member who explained how she had to go to a police station to identify a former client of Swan Emergency Accommodation: ‘sometimes it is very hard
to account for what you are doing in the program – this is someone who doesn’t live here anymore!’

When discussing the processes involving the development of service specification, frontline staff stated that aside from the regular program-related reports they were not aware that any room existed for them to influence service specifications under the Preferred Service Provider system. Rather, some workers saw contracting specifications as a mere rationing resource tool. This is exemplified in the following responses:

I would like to run a cooking class, parenting, I don’t know…We are not privy to any of that info about budget, we’re just told money is tight. So this affects how we deliver services. Residents need pots and pans. Residents have storerooms; we should ensure all units have everything they need. Towels, sheets should be in storage area. But it is now being used to store maintenance shed. It would run better if every unit had its own storage shed. So I put it down to lack of money (Service Delivery Staff 05).

But we’re always under-funded, we run well, provide outcomes, but our creativity is stifled because of lack of money. But we can’t always put this in the progress report, so that can create disillusion (Senior Staff 07).

This practice shift may be described as a ‘change by limitation’ (Foucault, 1991b: 56) since these agency staff already value services that are included in the contractual specifications, but feel constrained by increased lack of flexibility, which they attribute to ongoing rationing. In this way, the competitive discourses are ‘reproducing unequal power relations’ (Porter 1998, p.216).

In addition, drawing on the point made by a Family Resource Worker that they exclude certain information from periodic program reports, analytically, such practice facilitates ‘self denial’ by not capturing some of the staff’s own evaluations (Porter 1998: 216) –
evaluations that could generate other intervention ideas. Through such self-denial or censorship, as Porter (1998) points out, it becomes possible to limit what comes to be regarded as true practice knowledge. In practice this means certain views about service delivery held by frontline workers can not be guaranteed necessarily to reach relevant senior staff within DCD, and may also not be captured fully through the industry tender specification input consultation coordinated by WACOSS.

Another worker felt that since the establishment of the Preferred Service Provider model, her planning and decision-making capacity was being impacted upon because she could no longer work out the financial status of the programs with which she had a significant involvement at Karnany Aboriginal Centre:

It limits me because they get a bookkeeper to come in, he comes in three days per week from Swan - so I need a copy of the budget so I know what I’m working with. We talk about these issues with the Acting Executive Officer - I feel we’re addressing issues - If I know what’s going on, it takes away all these niggles that you don’t want (Service Delivery Staff 03).

While senior management at Swan Emergency Accommodation had acknowledged the positive aspects of the Preferred Service Provider framework, they noted that the demands of the current model may prove problematic for some of the smaller non-government providers. They pointed out that while their agency service benefits from the professional expertise of their senior workers, there are other small agencies in the Swan region who may struggle to meet additional administrative demands such as bi-annual reports. In this context, one participant concluded that in her view ‘we [NGOs] need change in the way community organisations are run’, a view that found resonance with another senior staff member’s perception that the ongoing government demand for
accountability under the Preferred Service Provider system has implications in terms of structure:

new model requires new structure – I see that we’ll have different structures. We need [the composition of the management committee] someone with background in accounting as well as service delivery….but there is fear of liability of being accountable for someone else’s actions – so not everyone is prepared to be involved, not many people see it as a viable option (Management Committee Member 08).

Accompanying this disquiet was the expression of uncertainty about a potential takeover by other community organisations. A senior member in the Management Committee at Swan Emergency Accommodation said he felt very strongly about communicating these concerns to the researcher, indicating that in his view, this issue should be given urgent attention since contracting practices bring to the fore issues of conflict of interest amongst members of voluntary management committees - a point he felt has been overlooked in the conceptualisation of the contracting system. He pointed out that most of these voluntary management personnel are individuals already connected with other parts of the welfare sector in the Swan region. Thus, under the premise of contestable markets, such volunteers could potentially use knowledge concerning strengths and weaknesses of an agency they are managing on voluntary basis to promote competitive tendering interests in favour of organisations that employ them. The following quote puts these concerns in a perspective:

Too many of our NGOs are easy to take over. Agency X [agency name coded] has grown incredible power, $ 2 to 2.5 million in - they brought under their umbrella all these small organisations. They have wanted to absorb a few groups. Often the same groups are on the management committees [of other local organisations] because of interplay with councillors and juggling of budget and some wanting to abrogate responsibilities [local government]. Swan Accommodation some time ago avoided a coup. We had new members who stack the meeting so they can take over part of Swan Accommodation. We have come so close to being taken
over, and the motives for the takeover were very poor. It may not matter to FaCS [now the Department of Community Development] that there could be a takeover - but it does matter. Someone wanted to takeover Karnany [the Aboriginal Family Centre affiliated with Swan Emergency] – power – not concerned with services, but just wanted to takeover! [Management Committee Member 08].

De-emphasising Collective Systemic Activities

Interviews with all Swan Emergency Accommodation staff indicated a marked departure from practices of collective systemic advocacy as an important mechanism in fostering responsive human service delivery. While thus far it has been argued that the application of the case management model and the Preferred Service Provider systems exhibit a strong sense of hybridisation, the focus on the client-centred practice tips the balance away from systemic advocacy, lobbying and networking. To appreciate this change fully, it is necessary to look at where the bulk of the accommodation worker’s time is going and, importantly, what activities are seen by staff to be falling by the wayside. Staff noted with concern the shift taking them away from collective systemic inputs as part of the normal service practice. Using their words:

I don’t get out due to time limitations, it’s very hard sometimes to get out and meet other people like Centrelink and JPET [Job Placement, Employment and Training Programme], Swan Youth Service, etc. It is important sometimes to meet people you often talk to on the phone. Networking is valuable, but fitting in is difficult. Ministry of Justice - we work a lot with them, since a lot of our clients are referred from that department we work a lot more with them. (Service Delivery Staff 02)

Sometimes it doesn’t allow me to do everything I want to do. The service we are in, accommodation, we can’t just go off, like other services. We look at [individual] advocacy, mediation, etc. Before was the same [in terms of limited funding], but because now flexibility is gone, it is more evident for us in the constraints presented by the new system (Service Delivery Staff 06)
The Indigenous Program Coordinator also stated that she was too preoccupied with individual client-centred operations, leaving her with limited time to attend collective efforts, which she said were confined to one particular interagency network:

In terms of working with other agencies, I don’t think I’ve done anything much to sensitise others [external agencies] about their criteria. But we have opportunity for interagency cooperation through the Midland Aboriginal Advisory Group – [comprising of] workers in departments, Aboriginal workers from government departments, MOJ [Ministry of Justice], Police Citizens, Yerrigan, the employment service centre, the police, and community leaders, etc. What we hope to achieve is address issues when they come up and who’s best positioned to address those issues and allocate which agencies are to follow up and resolve, and tell everyone what’s happening. They’ve these sorts of groups in the country. So that group allows things to come to the fore. We meet monthly (Service Delivery Staff 03)

Furthermore, a senior staff member noted that there are more possibilities for pursuing collective strategies. She felt, however, this role was limited due to heavy demands connected with individual casework operations:

In fact, we may have more bargaining power than other agencies, we can’t strike, but we can raise [issues] with ministers, Michael [Executive Officer] and I used to ring ministers. Now operational activities take too much of our time. Lack of involvement in lobbying is now endemic. We have lobbied, and networking is valued, but we are stretched with our operational matters. It costs your time to lobby, network, unless funding is threatened….They closed AMES [Aboriginal Medical Service], Derbal Yerrigan in Midland, I wrote to the Minister to express concern. Of course I prioritise, if it is major, I will [lobby]. I don’t go to most community meetings this is partly because I don’t work full time. And we can’t afford additional staff but it is simply that there is less money to go around (Senior Staff 07)

The complaints about lack of flexibility indicated here stand in sharp contrast to the key SAAP objective aimed at promoting flexible service delivery as enshrined under the Commonwealth/State and Territories SAAP 2000 – 2005 Memorandum of Understanding (Commonwealth of Australia 2005b). In addition, the quest for a client-
centred approach reinforced through SAAP’s shifting objectives, while enabling certain operational possibilities, do limit the range of operations.

The privileging of individual client interventions marginalises systemic advocacy, lobbying and networking. Yet, official SAAP sources emphasise that other community resources such as the Job Placement, Employment and Training Programme (JPET) are essential in providing ‘a holistic approach to assist young people...to overcome problems preventing them from maintaining stable accommodation and entering into full-time education, training or employment’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2004a: 10; Commonwealth of Australia 2003b: 6-16). This departure from collective strategies ‘changes by implication’ and ‘limitation’ (Foucault 1991b: 56). In this new position, the authorities’ favouring of the commercial value of the client-centred operations displaces the boundaries of practice. Swan Emergency Accommodation as a provider assumes a reformed ‘position and role’ as a ‘speaking subject in the discourse’ (1991b: 56), within the Preferred Service Provider framework. This is not to say individual solutions are not important, rather, the decoupling of individual advocacy from systemic strategies shifts the boundaries of operations and the sense that is made of the notion of homelessness. Yet, as noted in the National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP 111), the support needs of SAAP service users are high and offer very minimal choice between services (DFCS 1999a: 226). Drawing attention to the caution raised by the House of Representatives Standing Committee Report (1998) here, it may be still necessary to take account of service users’ level of need in determining the appropriateness of SAAP services to contestable market arrangements (Commonwealth
of Australia 1999b). It can be argued that the requirement for systemic advocacy will be higher with this group given its demonstrable high support needs. Under such conditions, specifications may need to be approached with an even greater caution (much as it seems SAAP authorities have not gone along to embrace the fully-blown competitive tendering versions).

The decline in systemic advocacy at points of delivery is not the preserve of the Preferred Service Provider arrangements. This seems to be a growing feature in some human service areas where there is an emphasis on being client-centred and where competitive practices have been introduced. For instance, the funding criteria for Australia’s migrant settlement services under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme (DIMIA 2000/2003) marked a strong departure from previous funding arrangements directed at a variety of policy advocacy programs, in preference to more individual client-centred approaches. Emphasising a similar point, Mendes (2003b) discusses a parallel shift which sees a significant decline in the spread of government-sourced advocacy funding across a range of peak umbrella bodies around the country, justified through the methodological individualist assumptions of neo-classical economics, which reduces collective advocacy to a function of self-interest.

It would be misleading, however, to assume that given these constraints, no creative community linkage is occurring. For example, the coordinator of the Karnany Aboriginal Centre reported that: ‘we got funding for young people to learn new skills – sports. So we’re finding lots of alternatives, shifting people away from drug use. The Shire has
given us two big jobs [through a tender bid]. We also put in a submission to lotteries for a bus’. Thus, in this context, innovative projects are also evident despite the shifts that have taken place in relation to boundaries of practice.

Official SAAP texts put great emphasis on SAAP’s role in facilitating effective community service linkages as a critical element in attaining client outcomes. Partnerships, effective linkages, collaboration and service integration are highlighted under SAAP IV and enshrined in the Commonwealth/State and Territories Memorandum of Understanding (DFCS 2005b: 4; Commonwealth of Australia 2002: 6; Ecumenical Housing and Thompson Goodall Associates 1999). Elaborating on this point, a government-commissioned report on homelessness prepared by the Ecumenical Housing and Thompson Goodall Associates (1999) highlights the necessity of these linkages as essential in:

- Raising the profile of homelessness in the community, particularly where people are excluded from services;
- Developing collaborative relationships with specialist and generalist services locally;
- Participating in local regional planning for coordinated services;
- Participating in training and education of mainstream services to increase the responsiveness and appropriateness of service to homeless people.

(1999, p. ix-x)

Despite the emphasis given to such a strategy, however, the workers experiences at this particular site of practice are largely paradoxical and contradictory to this claim.
Neglecting Professional Development

Most of the interviewed staff expressed concern over what they described as a growing neglect of ongoing professional development needs for staff under the Preferred Service Provider system. A senior staff member confirmed that the Department of Community Development’s training wing, Community Skills Training Centre, no longer provides training for SAAP workers on an ongoing basis. The exception is applied to new SAAP staff. As a result, Swan Emergency Accommodation is no longer in a position to ‘claim back money for our workers attending upgrade of skills, but they [DCD] only now target new workers.’ This senior staff revealed that she was already planning to write to DCD asking the department to rethink its decision.

Another management staff explained that this shift is disempowering of Swan Emergency Accommodation staff, a point echoed by a Family Resource Worker asserting that ‘we must update skills, before we used to do CSTC [Community Skills training Centre training courses], now they’ve stopped that…but now it’s just like, “well there is just no money for that”.’ In this sense, the shift in the ‘nature of directing principle’ (Foucault 1991b: 56) inscribed in managerialism elevates instrumental rationality, while simultaneously disregarding the relevance of ongoing professional development practices. As Pollitt (1993: 60) observes, managerialism tends to be accompanied by moves away from development of human resources in preference for greater emphasis on resource control.
Concluding Remarks

The chapter has explored the governance of homelessness as understood under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program at Swan Emergency Accommodation. In this context, I have explored how housing needs are made knowable through a mix of existing authorities, noting the continuing presence of traditional welfarist rationalities, mediated increasingly through managerialist forms. In looking at the everyday procedures and frameworks guiding the regulation of the homeless population at Swan Emergency Accommodation, the discussion has also made visible the diverse relations of power that inhabit the ‘social body’ (Foucault 1980c: 96). The focus on client intervention techniques, while certainly engaged in normalising client conduct and making it more amenable to particular household management forms, also reveals practices divergent from those observed in the previous Job Network case study. In the case of SAAP, the case plans remain ‘voluntary’, differing markedly from the more competitive practices instituted in the delivery of Labour Market Programs. In this context, despite the limits imposed through the managerial shifts involving SAAP II, III and IV, the parameters set for client and staff autonomy, while constrained, are far less subjected to the advanced liberal ‘calculative regime’ (Rose, 1996: 54). Put simply, at an operational level, it can be argued that a range of psychosocial rationalities co-exist with the rationing managerial and competitive practices. As Cheek and Rudge (cited in Porter 1998: 213-4) observe, ‘at any one particular point in time, various discursive frameworks will co-exist. Some will complement each other, others oppose each other, some will be dominant, others submerged within that dominance.’
At the centre of this discussion is also the concern over diminishing long-term housing options for homeless people, a phenomenon accompanied by an equally increased complexity in the situations of homeless people in need of accommodation assistance, pre-occupying this SAAP agency with greater client-centred operations. Under these conditions, we simultaneously see the demise of collective advocacy strategies, squeezed out due to lack of resources.

Under these conditions, the growing managerialist features are evident in the further development of performance measurements noted in the report titled Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), Annual National Performance Report 2002 – 03 (Commonwealth of Australia 2004a ). In this context, continuing data development trends are worth our ongoing attention since they play part in discursively defining SAAP’s field of operation.

Given the non-government sector’s broad reliance on the use of voluntary management committee personnel, a question has also emerged about the conflict of interest associated with the notion of contestable markets (that is, allowing for potential contenders to take over program operations previously undertaken by another provider if they prove themselves more competitive).

A final theme emerging in this chapter is also the marginal positioning of Indigenous people embedded in the regulation of homelessness relating to shifts that have
significantly reduced the extent of available public housing stock in keeping with the pursuit of greater public sector efficiencies that occurred throughout the 1990s. The techniques of rental assistance intended to encourage families to access private rental housing appear oblivious to the subject positioning of this disadvantaged group.
Chapter Six

Reflections

This study set out to look at the influence of Australia’s National Competition Policy in reshaping human services. In this final chapter I draw out key research findings and reflect on the influence of National Competition Policy reform in shaping human services. I also offer some insights into the policy and research implications of my findings. I conclude with some reflections on the methodology.

I have drawn heavily from governmentality theory in the exploration of my research question. The thesis has also broadly situated the welfare rationalities within a social democratic tradition, in this case drawing on the work of Pusey. Locating these welfare rationalities in this tradition was important as it is the so-called social democratic context that NCP has increasingly dismantled.

Findings

Governmentality techniques and the project of National Competition Policy

In my introduction, I stated that in order to shed some light upon the impact of competition policy in re-shaping human services, it was first necessary to describe the broad formulation of the policy. To this end I described the influence of neo-classical economics, public choice theory and a managerialist body of knowledge. Connected to
this, the thesis followed the trail of policy techniques used in assembling the National Competition Policy reform, such as Competitive Tendering and Contracting and Competitive Neutrality as variously engaged in facilitating new governance of the economy of human services. As part of this analysis, it became clear that the justifications used to put together this reform are reliant on a variety of discursive formations, characteristic of the neo-liberal era. These insights are useful in showing how particular NCP methods and frameworks circulate in the public sector, and, in turn, influence activities of non-government organisations. The significance of this point ought not be underestimated, especially as human services are not commonly understood to be priority target areas under NCP.

**Specifying, ranking and organising human service practice**

In teasing out the workings of Competitive Tendering and Competitive Neutrality, my research has demonstrated that they have managed to alter approaches in the style and form of service delivery by prescriptively and contractually detailing specific accounts of what services should be delivered and how they should be delivered. I have suggested that through these frameworks, programs can increasingly regulate human service operations through notions of ‘value for money’. In this way, more and more of human service programs are defined and clarified in greater detail by central authorities in a bid to govern the economy of human services.

Part of the genius of Competitive Tendering and Contracting arrangements lies in their ability to order practice in ways they consider superior. In this respect this thesis has
drawn attention to NCP’s promotion of one reading of what constitutes notions of client responsibility in the course of working and interacting with Job Network clients. The significance of reworking this cannot be underestimated. It suggests new directions in the way relationships involving unemployed people, society and the state are being constructed. In this respect, I have also demonstrated how a discursive closure has been rendered possible through the circulation of official definitions that impose specific meanings about how a responsible job seeker is meant to behave in relation to their employment assistance agency (Job Network), and in relation to their continued preparedness to maintain a perpetually job-ready status.

The thesis illustrates the way in which official policy can influence and regulate a Job Network provider so that they come to align their practice with governing objectives. This has implications not just for the Job Network programs covered in this study, but also for programs designed for people with disabilities and single parents.

Given its capacity to detail prescriptive specifications relating to the practices expected from a non-government provider, the Competitive Tendering and Contracting system as used by DEWR and monitored by Centrelink, should not be simply as a tendering method. Instead, it is a strategy used to consolidate government objectives, in the process ensuring non-government providers keep pace with the broader governing aims. In this way, these strategies can be further described as part of what Gordon (1991: 2) calls a way of looking at ‘who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed’.
I would like to conclude this discussion by drawing some attention to the work of Le Grand (2007; 1984). Most particularly, I recap this analysis in connection with the point Gordon (1991: 2) makes, as used in the discussion above, regarding the need for understanding these strategies as ways of looking at ‘what governing is; and what is governed.’ Le Grand (cited in Means 1994: 64) reminds us that these quasi-market arrangements are readily distinguishable from other private markets in that the choice for purchasing a service is not commonly extended to the consumer. Even where clients use vouchers, the existing arrangements only allow them access to a pre-determined or specified service. Moreover, actors involved in service provision are themselves regulated in the context of the terms of their delegated power. For Le Grand, the success and failure of these quasi-market arrangements need to be assessed in the way in which they manage to promote notions of efficiency, equity and choice. These assertions have relevance to the contested nature of what comes be regarded as the domain of governance; and who is subject to it; and under what terms. Yet, given Le Grand’s argument that these matters are not simply about efficiency, but also equity and choice; then it can be possible to subject understandings of contestable to further scrutiny. In his more recent work, he suggests that quasi-markets can promote innovative practice (Le Grand 2007: 212). However, it should be noted that his formulation of quasi-markets is consciously articulated as separate from managerial models that are preoccupied with performance calculations (see Le Grand 2007).

In drawing attention to Le Grand’s (2007) position, it should be remembered that his view of economic regulation of social problems retains some flavour of his earlier work.
emphasising efficient outcomes, consumer choice and promotion of equity (see Le Grand 1984). Under this interpretation, it can be seen that the contestation around the calculations of choice can contribute in thinking about how services can be organised in the future.

**Regulation through intensified codification strategies**

My thesis also involves identification and discussion of the codification techniques used in ordering and systematising day to day client support processes and service operations. Again, I maintain here that through these practices, it becomes possible to reshape activities of non-government parties (contracted providers) into alignment with the governing objectives of the day. More specifically, the codifications manage to organise and rank practice knowledge in ways aligned with managerialism. In this way the principles of National Competition Policy (Hilmer 1993; DFA 2002a, b, 2004a; NCC 2002a) are translated into specific codified operational frameworks and thus have effect at a local level. Consequently Quality Assurance practices such as those at Peel Training and Employment embody more in the way of managerialist governing assumptions in relation to the unemployed than one might initially expect.

Writers such as Harris (2003) and Pollitt (1993) have long commented on the managerial use of strategies reminiscent of Taylorism discussed in Chapter Three, in containing and pre-empting the scope of professional practice. My thesis takes this analysis a step further by revealing step-by-step how the codification inventions are put into operation in the regulation of everyday human service delivery processes and practices. My arguments
also suggest that there is a need to pay attention to a growing trend involving instantaneous transfer of information from sites of practice to funding headquarters such as DEWR in Canberra, promoting a centralised compliance regime by virtue of these highly ordered and systematised processes. My thesis cautions that the kind of regimented practice that may result may hinder responsive professional practice as people’s unique individual circumstances may get overlooked.

Regulating through performance measurement

The new measurement techniques associated with National Competition Policy stand out as one of the very significant means whereby the interaction between Job Network providers and the unemployed people is regulated. While the role of outcome measurement in shaping human service practice is not new, the intensified use of this strategy in achieving the goals of NCP is evident especially in relation to services funded under the framework of Competitive Tendering and Contracting.

In this regard, this study highlights the current emphasis on job placement outcomes, with the associated aim of reducing reliance on income support benefits. In particular those measures may have deleterious long-term impacts on those groups that exit the schooling system prematurely, since they are more likely to be in need of opportunities requiring step-by-step skills development. The need and benefits for such skill development is evident in the ACER (ABS 2003) study noted in Chapter Five. Clearly, post-secondary qualifications do make a difference in the longer term, a point reinforced in a recent OECD (2006) study where it has observed that:
On average across OECD countries, only 56% of adults without proper upper secondary qualification are in employment. Of those who are, 26% earn one-half or less than one-half of the national median earnings. While many countries have seen steeply rising benefits from university education, including some of those where university education has expanded most, people who have not completed upper secondary school, and particularly women, continue to face serious labour-market penalties (OECD 2006: 1).

In Australia, ACOSS (2001) and the Jobs Network (2002) suggest, that to be effective, Australian Labour Market Programs need to incorporate developmental, education and skills training underpinnings. The authors argue that these components need to be incorporated in the Job Network payment structure overseen by DEWR to ensure these providers can adequately provide referral and emotional support service in the course of its day-to-day interaction with clients. As noted in Chapter Five, the current SAAP performance measurements, in contrast to the Job Network system, include the ‘occasions of support’ for each client. In reporting these figures, central authorities now maintain data on the extent of repeated use of crisis accommodation provisions for each client. This information should be helpful in indicating some of the long-term trends and constraints in achieving long-term housing solutions.

Another significant practice promoted by National Competition Policy is the development of centralised performance information systems enabling authorities to evaluate and make cost comparisons across human service industries (for example, see Hilmer 1993; McCarney 1993a, b; DFA 2002c; 2004a FMA 1997; DFCS 1999). In this thesis I noted that both the Competitive Tendering and Contracting and the Preferred Service Provider systems are underpinned by a comparative performance approach aimed at promoting ‘value for money’. These comparative strategies make it possible to reward
higher performing providers with automatic contract extensions without necessarily being
subject to the rigour of a competitive tender system. In using Competitive Tendering and
Contracting strategy, it thus becomes possible to shape and foster particular service
priorities and provider behaviour. I stress that the consequences are worrying since
difference between a higher and a lower performer may result from fostering job
placement outcomes at the expense of capacity building. In addition, my research points
to the fragility of arrangements that draws in Job Network providers who remain
ambivalent about the credibility of what counts as good performance.

Regulating behaviours and beyond

Following on from work done by a range of governmentalist writers and contributors (for
example, Dean 1999; Miller and Rose 1990; Harris 1999; Walters 1996), the thesis draws
attention to the regulatory practices engaged in normalising the conduct of homeless
people. It describes in some detail a case management approach targeting homeless
people with a view to promoting acceptable household management behaviours,
normalised tenancy and family-relationship attributes. These regulatory practices are not
neo-liberal in character and do not necessarily stand in tension with traditional
professional practices. Nonetheless, the impact of the accounting reforms that reshaped
the then Homeswest housing authority following recommendations of the McCarrey
Report (1993b) produced reforms that seem not only managerialist, but also decisively
neo-liberal in character. In promoting Rental Assistance (vouchers) methods as a less
expensive and more targeted alternative to the expansion of public rental stock, these
strategies overlooked the position of certain disadvantaged groups, including Aboriginal
people. In other words, mechanisms such as Competitive Neutrality promoted under the National Competition Policy and in turn underpinning the previous housing reforms, contrary to their claim to universality have unequal effects at the population level in relation to people’s social, material and cultural circumstances.

As well as the significant over-representation of Aboriginal people indicated in the SAAP figures, there are other vulnerable groups. As reflected in the national data profile, the clientele using crisis accommodation services include people experiencing substance abuse, psychiatric conditions, and some people caught up in the justice system. This suggests a need for contractual service delivery arrangements that are more sensitive to human complexity. In raising this, I am keen to draw attention to the view taken by the Productivity Commission Inquiry Report (2005), which seems to clear the way for the possible extension of competitive practices in other areas of human services. Here, Le Grand’s views on the regulation of social problems can be of use as he treats efficiency, choice as specific objectives upon which the role of the market must be judged upon. A less critical acceptance of the proposal of the Productivity Commission Inquiry Report stands the chance of reinforcing application of methodological individualism to complex social and economic issues.

Finally, the mechanisms of Competitive Tendering and Contracting prescribe and/or encourage particular forms of behaviour among their subject populations, in this case the unemployed and the homeless. In particular, the promotion of mutual obligation, as Dean (1995: 566) points out, can be described as ‘ways of problematising and disclosing what
it is to be a human being’. Following from the new Welfare to Work Employment reforms that came into effect in July 2006, a range of people with disabilities and single parents are now subject to various forms of mutual obligation requirements. Insights from this thesis suggest that they too will become subject to the significant yet distant influence of NCP.

**Treating human services as contestable markets**

I now turn to the question of conceptualising human services as contestable markets, an assumption that underpins the NCP logic leading to the use of contracting and tendering practices. I will discuss this point in relation to significant gaps evident in the Preferred Service Provider contractual arrangements covered in this thesis. In this study, it has been suggested that the policies and practices aiming to turn human services into competing rival markets, have shifted operations away from collective activities such as advocacy, lobbying and networking in preference for client-centred activities. These losses are worth of close attention, as they stand in tension not only with the desires of some of the service providers, but also with other official government strategies. So while SAAP’s official documents highlight the importance of collaboration, partnerships, service integration, and the promotion of effective linkages in addressing issues of homelessness, many of the staff in this study felt deprived of the opportunity to pursue these roles. This suggests that the compartmentalisation of roles attendant on the Preferred Service Provider model may be leaving limited opportunities on the ground to undertake broader and collaborative work. If the performance indicators to which SAAP is subject do not recognise these broader inputs around service and program development more generally,
then it is likely that the individual-centred operations will maintain a stronger hold at the expense of other possible operations.

The neglect of professional development under the Preferred Service Provider arrangements is also a point of concern. The rationing of access to the previously readily available training support programs through the state’s Community Skills Training Centre, seems at odds with the goals of SAAP IV (Commonwealth of Australia 2002: 41), where official emphasis is given to the need to foster improved knowledge acquisition among SAAP providers. It is also questionable whether community providers command enough power at the bargaining table to cost fully their contractual obligations, so that they incorporate the continued operations of their non-case management responsibilities (that is networking, lobbying and building partnerships). The Government of Western Australia formalised an agreement with peak bodies in the state community services sector under the Funding and Purchasing Community Service: A Policy Statement on a Fresh Approach to Funding Relationships With Not-For-Profit Sector (Government of Western Australia and State Supply Commission 2002). These arrangements, which promise to deliver responsible contractual practices, are worth future attention to see the extent to which they engage and respond to the experiences of everyday practice. Under this policy it is clearly affirmed that ‘Public authorities have a role in developing the capacity of the not-for-profit sector to meet needs in the community’ (Government of Western Australia and State Supply Commission 2002: 17). This point is reiterated in the Government’s Industry Plan for the Non-Government Human Services Sector, which identifies capacity-building strategies as necessary in the
pursuit of good governance, accountability over finance and human resources, leadership and policy development; and service delivery (Government of Western Australia 2004: 20). More broadly, however, improvements of this nature will involve the federal government. If notions of collaboration and service linkages are to be given enhanced expression on the ground, then the cooperation of various tiers of authority to rework the existing incentive structure will be needed.

Finally, I argue that any application of the notion of contestable markets to the human services needs to pay attention to the potential conflict of interest involving management committee members who may hold multiple loyalties with a range of other local organisations that under the promotion of competition, may stand to gain through another organisation’s loss (including those whose management they assist on a voluntary basis). In this context, these quasi-marketised arrangements may promote self-interest in ways that the architects of contestable markets may not have intended. Broadly speaking, these concerns may have relevance across a range of human service industries reliant on volunteer management committees to manage their services.

I note in previous chapters the extension of Competitive Tendering and Contracting practices to other federally-funded programs such as the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Services, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services, and the management of detention centres holding asylum seekers around the country. In Western Australia, there are also other moderated versions of competitive practices and service agreements currently deemed in keeping with the competition arrangements (Auditor General 2000;
Government of Western Australia 2004a: 20; Government of Western Australia 2004b; State Supply Commission 2002). It is worth noting that a recent Productivity Commission Inquiry, the Independent Review of Job Network, Inquiry Report (Productivity Commission 2002), was required to make reference to a possible extension of the fully blown Competitive Tendering and Contracting methods to other areas of human and community service. More specifically, it considered ‘payment based outcomes; [and] competition that rewards good performers with more business’ (Productivity Commission 2002: sect. 15.1), adding that the competitive Tendering and Contracting system can be considered for application to other human service areas. Significantly, a recent review of NCP reforms (Productivity Commission Inquiry Report 2005: 85) supports the extension of competition techniques to a broader range of human services, it maintains that the NCP reform is an economic necessity, but does acknowledge that the reform should seek to offer support to people who are unlikely to fare well under it. This is a clear reminder of the tight parameters within which general community welfare under NCP’s neo-classical economic underpinnings is interpreted and regulated. Under such ongoing policy appraisals, it is important that the issues associated with notions of contestability in relation to human services are further explored and debated in order to better inform future policy considerations.
Reflections on the re-making of professionalism, including the role of technology

In Chapter Four the thesis discussed professional concerns that become apparent as the new managerial forms consolidate particular ways of ordering operational processes and procedures. Key to these reflections are broader implications on the containment of discretionary privileges once exercised by professionals, and the shifting and contested expectations of what it means to be a professional, within these managerialised arrangements. These arrangements include the role of new technologies, professional practice, and the need to understand these changes within the broader concerns of social relations.

The constraints on professional autonomy strongly experienced by staff at Peel Training and Employment, and to some extent the limitations felt by staff at Swan Emergency Accommodation reverberate in other areas of human service practice (see Jones 2003; Duff and Larsen 2003; Lonne, McDonald and Cox 2003). According to Clarke (1998), one of the most significant points about the new managerialism is its ability to facilitate greater level of compliance, while at the same time leaving practitioners rather cynical about the role of these new managerial innovations. Clarke concludes that what makes managerialism successful in reshaping practices is its success in pre-empting practitioner judgements, leaving staff to conclude that ‘there is no alternative’ (1998: 178) outside of these dominant arrangements. In the process, concerns with mediating the political, social and economic conflicts embedded in the capitalist systems are redefined into concerns
with techniques accounting for ‘performance’ and ‘quality’, as if these questions can be completely abstracted away from politics.

The impact of the new technologies as seen in the LMPs Case Study thus need to be understood beyond their role in classifying and ordering human service operations, and as part of radical change of professional practice. Similar to the findings of this thesis, a study by Brown (2003) highlights that often the design and installation of computerised client systems are developed and installed without input or deliberations with professional staff working in these human services. In this study, Brown (2003: 3) found that 110 supervisors (who were attending her university class in management of human services) overwhelmingly had not been consulted on changes relating to use of new client data base systems. Yet, these changes directly impacted on practitioner decisions by prescribing which practice needed to be recorded or excluded. As she puts it, ‘how could they do something they saw as professionally relevant if there was no box in which to record it? How could they avoid a task that was computer generated if they thought it was not appropriate at the time?’ (Brown 2003: 3). Loader (1998) concludes the new technologies are not as benign acquisitions, but often purposefully put into use with a view of regulating social relations of welfare practice. In his view, they constitute competing power struggles with major ramifications about inclusive and exclusive practices, in the process, ‘reinforc[ing] existing patterns of inequality: or to define the terms of engagement’. This leads Loader to caution that the Post-Fordist arguments can be problematic due to their lack of concern with the disquiet indicated by welfare professionals in relevant areas. Later on I reflect on the Schumpeterian welfare thought
where there is some indication that some writers that are starting to engage with some notions of social relations.

If the issues concerning the re-configuration of professionalism are becoming clear, there is still no common position about how to respond to the issues involved such as the managerial attacks on notions of autonomous professional practice. Ife’s (cited in Jones 2003) response to the challenge of de-professionalisation, whereby he takes the position that any engagement with the dominant managerial discourses can only further serve to undermine social work values. Ife suggests that social work interests are best served by renewed commitment to notions of community work. It still remains unclear whether welfare practitioners driven by a community work ethos can shelter themselves from the market practices that have come to redefine service provision beyond the public sector. Neither is it clear whether a community work ethos can be understood as a homogenous position. Hugman (cited in Jones 2003: 2) takes the view that traditional understandings of professional practice are no longer tenable and suggests that practitioners think more along the lines of responsiveness and openness in service delivery. In this context, Hugman (2005) proposes that rather than consider professional value positions as ‘rules of conduct’, we would do well to treat them as frameworks for thinking our way through the issues on any given matter. It is in this way that we come to see the moral and ambiguous nature of current professional practice. For Jones (2003: 3), the autonomous claims of professional practice are now of less relevance considering the shifts that have place, leading him to conclude that professionalism should be seen in the context of constant re-consideration of positioning within the emerging complex dynamics of power
relations. On the other hand, Duff and Larsen (2003: 7) note that the future of these arrangements may partly rely on their impact on service delivery and the context in which they are experienced by practitioners and their clients.

I believe that the subject of de-professionalisation could benefit from further research. That may include some of the issues pointed to in this thesis, but also to the need to look more broadly at other contemporary themes that are indicating major shifts and challenges in relation to who is a professional, their role within the context of a welfare state, and the mediation and regulatory roles played by people working in human services.

**Reflections on the Schumpeterian thoughts and notions of workfare**

The thesis previously noted that in the context of Schumpeterian understandings, economic change is always seen to be influenced by innovations in the methods of production; and that these innovations occur in areas beyond the pure economic sphere, while paradoxically becoming the catalyst for ongoing economic change. Understood in this context, innovation entails distinct shifts in the methods of production – the sorts of shifts involved in reforming Australia’s employment assistance programs. This implies the deployment of key strategies such as the use of Competitive Tendering and Contracting in determining which agencies should be involved in providing Job Network programs. The notion can also be applied to a range of managerialist operational practices such as the consolidation of online information system capable of instantaneous data
transfer, practices of outcome measurements and so forth. Seen in this narrow sense, the LMPs shift can be understood as part of a neo-Schumpeterian Competition State, although how far the Schumpeterian thesis fits Australian developments is debatable. More specifically, it is problematic because the shifts involving Job Network and mutual obligation practices are heavily dependent on the application of methodological individualism in regulating the conduct of provider organisations and their unemployed clients. I call it neo-Schumpeterian in the sense that Schumpeter himself was completely opposed to the application of individualist calculations (as discussed in Chapter Two) in the non-economic sphere, while still reinforcing that it was the non-economic sphere which served as the engine of economic development. Hence his opposition to the individualist calculations of neo-classical economics in relation to notions competition in understanding and fostering economic change. This may be a useful context to bear in mind when reflecting on the workfare practices.

It is also clear that notions of a workfare state although bearing certain common elements, they still cannot be generalised (see Torfing 1999; Lodemel and Stafford 2002; Grover and Stewart 1999). Studies across a number of welfare states indicate that the UK and US programs are fairly neo-liberal in character, while Denmark’s workfare innovations have consciously been disarticulated from a neo-liberal tone. And clearly, where a neo-liberal approach is evident (Grover and Stewart 1999; Torfing 1999), programs tend to exhibit application of innovations that seem more influenced by methodological individualism. In turn, we see what Torfing (1999) calls defensive neo-
liberal workfare strategies used to drive down wages and introduce more flexibility, and reduction in social security benefits.

In this context, I would like to emphasise a couple of key points emerging from reflections on European-based workfare programs. The study by Lodemel and Stafford (2002) is relevant here, as it covers a number of European countries and also draws on the US experience. The study was also undertaken in conjunction with six institutions and centres of research across Europe. Lodemel and Stafford highlight the need to enhance the quality of workfare program measures offering more ‘individually tailored options with a strong evidence of human resource development’ (2002: 4). They also suggest the need to set up particular rights-based systems alongside current notions of obligations. Such rights, they believe, would need to incorporate outcomes that go beyond paid job placement. These include individual gains in social participation, psychological wellbeing, and reduced levels of dependency on drug and alcohol use. This argument resonates with the views of Australian LMPs providers and analysts discussed in this thesis. What is interesting about the European experience is that the Lodemel and Stafford (2002: 14) study indicates that in France the structuring of workfare programs targeting unemployed people with high support needs seems to be producing specific programs involving solid levels of training by private employers, which yielded some of the best results for people with lower level education.

The French experience has relevance to the recent policy shift in Australia involving a stronger regulatory regime for sole parents and people with disabilities, including those
with mental illness. Given the difficulties some of these groups face when it comes to labour market entry (as illustrated in the sorts of profiles indicated in my SAAP case study) the call for entrenching notions of rights alongside obligations can further be understood in the context of such vulnerability (although not exclusively). As summed up in this quote:

[Workfare programs] expanded to include wider target populations in all six countries [Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, France and Norway], compulsory programs are increasingly used to target recipients who have greater and greater barriers to work. In this situation, regular work may be a distant prospect or even an impossible aim for many recipients. It is therefore necessary to secure the right to activation also for these groups (as seen in Denmark) and tailor programmes to further the social integration of excluded people (Lodemel and Stafford 2002: 15).

**Reflections on thesis**

The governmentality approach has proved a rich source of analysis illuminating a range of methods and techniques that are reworking approaches to human service delivery. Specifically, it has thrown a focus on the discourses governing the management of unemployment and homelessness. The approach has also been useful in offering pointers to the sorts of self-governing possibilities and relations to particular human service organisations fostered through the techniques of NCP. In considering areas for future research in this area it remains important to conduct ongoing studies into the nature of social relations connected with the governance of the unemployed and homeless people. The findings of this research offer some useful pointers emanating from everyday client experiences and organisational operations and processes for further study. In the meantime, the study, in probing how the NCP jigsaw puzzle has been put together - how
various notions have been produced and fostered, and through which particular techniques - suggests the unstable nature of these arrangements and the basis upon which they are being justified. In this way they are indeed, contestable and changeable. Perhaps, then, it is fitting to end this work with a statement from Rose (1998) to precisely this effect:

The virtue of Foucault’s work to me is its capacity to enable one to see that things could be different – that things were once different and that things can be different again – and that our ways of understanding and making truth about the world shape what is possible to do in the world….

The kinds of battles that that can be fought, it seems to me, are battles in truth. That is to say, in any situation, wherever there is a set of relations of power which depend upon arguments making a claim to truth, then a fight can be mounted, different forms of truth can be justified, different forms of truth can seek to find their authority (Rose 1998).
08 March 2001

Celia Will
Manager
Peel Training Employment
Mandurah

Dear Celia,

I am a Lecturer in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University I am currently undertaking research, exploring the impact of National Competition Policy (e.g. competitive tendering and out-sourcing) on delivery of government-funded labour market programs and family support services. The study is part of my Ph D program being undertaken at Murdoch University.

I am interested in getting your service (employment program) to participate in my study specifically as a provider of Flex 1, 2 and 3 Programs. The study will focus on three major questions:
- How does the competitive tendering model affect treatment of clients?
- Who gets what service?
- Under what terms are services being accessed and delivered?

The study will take a form of two case studies for which your agency will be one of them. The second case study is being drawn from a list of state-funded family support providers. The methods involved in this research will include interviews and focus groups. I am interested in having the opportunity to speak to your clients, and staff involved in direct client support, managerial staff and the management committee.
It is my hope that this project will contribute in promoting understanding of how program structuring under competitive tendering models is influencing the treatment of clients at the point of service delivery. It will also increase understanding of what kind of recipients benefit from the new program and service delivery arrangements. Thirdly, it will highlight ways in which organizations are responding to these new models of service delivery.

All possible steps will be taken in the course of study to protect issues of privacy and confidentiality. In addition, your agency will have opportunity to comment on the draft report before it is publicly released.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Signed
Pendo Mwaiteleke
(BSW, Post-Grad Welfare Diploma, MA (Public Policy))
INVITATION LETTER

Pendo Mwaiteleke
C/O School of Social Work and Social Policy
Curtin University of Technology
Kent Street
BENTLEY
Ph: 08-9266 7681 (w) 9478 3570 (H)
e-mail: mwaitelp@spectrum.curtin.edu.au

Mr Michael Mills-Borley
Swan Accommodation Services
53 Northern Highway
MIDLAND

Dear Michael,

As I briefly explained over the phone, I am a Lecturer in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University I am currently undertaking research, exploring the impact of National Competition Policy (eg. competitive tendering and out-sourcing) on delivery of government-funded labour market programs and family support services. The study is part of my Ph D program being undertaken at Murdoch University.

I understand that your agency receives funding from the Department of Family and Children Services (State) to support families in crisis with accommodation services. I also gather that your service has been there for a while, and has been a beneficiary of government funding under the old ‘grants’ funding model as well as the new Preferred Service Provider model. On basis of this criteria I would therefore like to formally extend an invitation for your agency to participate in my study.

The study will focus on three major questions:
- How does the Preferred Service Provider model affect treatment of clients?
- Who gets what service?
- In what terms are services being accessed and delivered?

The study will take a form of two case studies for which your agency will be one of them. The second case study is being drawn from a list of federally-funded Jobnetwork providers. The methods involved in this research will include interviews and focus
groups. I am interested in having the opportunity to speak to your clients, and staff who are involved in direct client support, managerial staff and the management committee.

It is my hope that this project will contribute in promoting understanding of how program structuring under competitive tendering models is influencing the treatment of clients at the point of service delivery. It will also increase understanding of what kind of recipients benefit from the new program and service delivery arrangements. Thirdly, it will highlight ways in which organizations are responding to these new models of service delivery.

All possible steps will be taken in the course of study to protect issues of privacy and confidentiality. In addition, your agency will have opportunity to comment on the draft report before it is publicly released.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Pendo Mwaiteleke
(BSW, Post-Grad Welfare Diploma, MA (Public Policy)}
Dear Celia,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your agency for accepting to participate in this study. As you advised, I will be speaking to your deputy, Mark Lawther to clarify how further arrangements might proceed.

Upon your return, I will be requesting a brief written confirmation reiterating your agency’s acceptance in participating in this study. I will also be seeking clarification about access to any of the relevant internal agency client data, so that I am clear what rights I have in relation to using this information in my report.

Thanks again for your cooperation, and I am looking forward to a continued productive working relationship.

Yours sincerely,

Signed
Pendo Mwaiteleke
(BSW, Post-Grad Welfare Diploma, MA (Public Policy))

cc: Mark Lawther
29 October 2001

Don Tuncliffe
Swan Accommodation Services
53 Northern Highway
MIDLAND

FAX: 9250 1513

Dear Don,

I am taking this opportunity to thank you and Swan Accommodation staff and the Management Committee Chair for the opportunity given for me to conduct my research work at your agency. I have started analyzing data and will be happy to share some of this information with your agency in the future, once my first draft report is completed. As indicated at the outset, we could organize a meeting in the future with a few representatives from your agency should you wish to provide any comment relating to a preliminary report.

In the meantime, I will appreciate a brief letter from you reiterating your agency’s acceptance in participating in this study. It is simply the requirement of the University’s ethics policy that I keep a record of this documentation. In addition, if you have a new annual report or other statistical information I will appreciate looking at it. This is mainly general information on the statistical breakdown on types of clients you assist and the nature of services provided.

I am looking forward to a continued working relationship.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,
Pendo Mwaiteleke
Lecturer, Curtin University
(BSW, Post-Grad Welfare Diploma, MA (Public Policy)
Ms. Pendo Mwaiteleke  
C/O School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Curtin University of Technology  
Kent Street  
Bentley WA 6102

Dear Pendo,

I wish to confirm our willingness to participate in your study. In regard to access to internal agency client data, due to confidentiality and commercial in confidence issues we are unable to allow you access to contracts and client records. However, we have a number of other records such as Business Plan, Policies and Procedures and QA Manuals as well as annual plans etc. that we are happy for you to access.

Finally, with the number of staff meetings planned for you with staff, I am sure they would be happy to discuss, in general terms, the clients they deal with and the services they provide. Also, the Training Manager would, where appropriate, be happy to arrange for you to sit in on training sessions as an observer.

I look forward to meeting with you again soon.

Yours Sincerely

Celia Will  
Chief Executive Officer  
Peel Training and Employment Inc.  
24th April 2001
Pendo Mwaiteleke
C/O School of Social Work
and Social Policy
Curtain University of Technology
Kent Street
Bentley

02/11/01

Dear Penda,

This letter is to confirm that Swan Emergency Accommodation (SEA) agrees to the study being conducted and that SEA agrees to the documents supplied to you be used for the study. Any other documents may be obtained when they become available.

Yours sincerely,

Don Tunnicliffe
Executive Officer
- Appendix 7 –

INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION A

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING FEDERALLY-FUNDED SERVICES (LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMS)

i) Direct staff providing employment and training support for ‘jobseekers’ (Jobnetwork service)

ii) Policy and management staff (Jobnetwork)

iii) Clients – Employment & training (Labour market programs)

Direct staff providing employment and training support for ‘jobseekers’ (Job Network service)

Factors influencing tendering and contracting of services apart from the notion of competition

Ways in which the current funding service criteria is accommodating client needs.

Identifiable constraints of current model of service procurement in addressing perceived priority service gaps

Treatment of clients under the new system

Usefulness of JSCI tool in assessing client needs

Formalised client activity agreements mandated by government funding contracts.

Enforcement of mutual obligation.

Incentives promised by the new system to focus encourage service providers broker ‘real jobs’.

How competition amongst providers is encouraging improved results for your clients
Policy and management staff (Job Network)

For Profit Organisation/Not for Profit/ or Profit made to cross-subsidise other programs.

Tendered program as a small single service/ or part of a large state/ nationwide network?

Available documentation on aims and objectives of service.

Funding structure relating to your program – Flex 1, 2 & 3.

Description of program delivered in the context of the existing service contract?

Target groups benefiting Flex 1, 2& 3.

Designing eligibility criteria for Flex 1, 2& 3.

Designing the assessment (JSCI) tool

Organisational changes made to accommodate the current program framework

Changes in client practice

Opportunities and constraints under the new service framework

Enforcement of mutual obligation.

Program/service cost structure

Duration of current program contract funding.

Policy advocacy relating to general clientele

Opportunities in the sector to work with other service providers on issues of mutual interest

How organisation adjusting to change

Clients – Employment & training (Labour market programs)

Age ..........Sex..........

Unemployment duration..........
Support being receiving from this agency

Category of service
- Flex 1
- Flex 2
- Flex 3

Client obligations for continued receipt of income benefits.

Client views on breaching system and mutual obligation.

Range of choice regarding which Jobnetwork client may use.

Activity agreement

JSCI assessment
SECTION B

A FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE FUNDED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES (FACS).

i) Management staff of Swan Accommodation Service
ii) Direct staff providing accommodation services at Swan Accommodation
iii) Clients

Management staff of Swan Accommodation Service

For Profit Organisation/Not for Profit/ or Profit made to cross-subsidise other programs.

Programs funded by FaCS under PSP model

Total funding currently received from FaCS $…………

Tendered program as a small single service/ or a large state/ nationwide network?

Needs and characteristics of target group.

Current program funding.

Target groups

Designing program eligibility criteria

Designing service delivery model

Please, provide information on the tender criteria

Organisational changes made to accommodate requirements of the new framework

Changes in client practice in line with the new framework

Identifiable opportunities and constraints with the new service framework

Comment on the current program cost structure

Agency policy advocacy function in the current context.

Impact of contracting system on type of services offered.
Program funded for………years

**Direct staff providing accommodation services at Swan Accommodation**

Interview guide as per ‘Management staff of Swan Accommodation Service’ indicated above.

**Clients**

Occupation:

Category of service received
- SEASAP
- Youth Shelter
- Family Shelter

Support received from this agency

Lengthy of time in receipt of Swan accommodation service

Experience of using this service.

How is the service currently meeting client needs

Comments on responsiveness to client needs
CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,
I am a PhD research student at Murdoch University and a lecturer at Curtin University. I am currently undertaking a research study exploring the impact of competitive tendering in providing government-funded services in employment and training programs (labour market programs) and family support services.

The study looks at three major questions:
- How does the competitive tendering model affect treatment of clients?
- Who gets what service?
- Under what terms are services being accessed and delivered?

Your contribution will involve participating in an interview, which will take a maximum of 1.5 hours.

It is my hope that this project will contribute in promoting understanding of how the current policy changes are influencing the treatment of clients at the point of service delivery. It will also increase understanding of what kind of recipients benefit from the new program and service delivery arrangements. Thirdly, it will highlight ways in which organizations are responding to these new models of service delivery.

All possible steps will be taken in the course of study to protect issues of privacy and confidentiality.

My supervisor and I are happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this study. Feel free to contact me on 08-9266 7681 or my supervisor A/Prof. Patricia Harris on 9360 6000.

I………………………have read the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity, however, I know that I may change my mind and stop at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree that research data gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information that might identify me is not used.

Signed…………………………………….
Participant/Guardian/Authorised Agency Representative
Date:……………………….
References


Commonwealth of Australia 1999b. Proof Committee Hansard, Senate, Select Committee on the Socio-economic Consequences of the National Competition Policy. Brisbane. 


Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)].  


Department of Premier and Cabinet 2004b. Western Australian Government Indexation Policy for the Non-Government Human Services Sector. Approved by Cabinet and Expenditure Review Committee as part of the 2004/05 State Budget. Perth.


DIMIA [Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs]. Annual Report 2000/2003, Outcome Two Output Items.  


Government of Western Australia 2004b. Western Australian Government Indexation Policy for the Non-Government Human Services Sector. Approved by Cabinet and the Expenditure Review Committee as part of the 2004/05 State Budget. Department of the Premier and Cabinet.


Amendment of the Housing Assistance Act 1989.  


Mort-Braun, L. 2003. “‘Doing Development”: Investigating the Social Relations of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project’. In Against Neo-liberalism: Gender, Democracy and


http://www.oecd.org/document/37/0,2340,en_2649_37455_37387877_1_1_1_37455 (accessed November, 19, 2006).


Peel Development Commission 2003. Regional Trends and Indicators. 


Peel Training & Employment 2000. Quality Assurance Manual. AS/NZ ISO 9002. Controlled Document No.1. Form W1 – F1-0006, Form W1-F1-0002, Form W1-F1-0010; Form CL-F2-0001, CL-F2-0002; Training Record Form CF 010; Job Futures, the National Employment Network, Form 1A5; Form 1A4; Audit Checklist CP007-00013.
Peel Training & Employment 1999. Quality Assurance Manual. Flex 2, Project Procedures PP-F2-0001; Form 1A3(b), Form CP008, CF0013, CP007, Form W1-F2-0001, W1-F2-0001..


SAAP Act 1989 [Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989].

SAAP Act 1994. [Supported Accommodation Assistance Act].

Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994 (Cth).


Stromback, T., Dockery, M., Ying, W. 1998. Labour Market Programs and Labour Market Outcomes, the Centre for Labour Market Research and Curtin University of Technology, CLMR Discussion paper series 98/1.

Swan Emergency Accommodation u.d.a Individual Profile.

Swan Emergency Accommodation u.d.b Service Specifications.

Swan Emergency Accommodation u.d. Transea Family Centre.

Swan Emergency Accommodation u.d. Providing Crisis and Medium Term Accommodation for Homeless Youth and Families (client flier)


Swan Emergency Accommodation, Goal Setting. u.d.


