

**GOVERNING HOMELESSNESS:
The Discursive and Institutional Construction of Homelessness in
Australia**

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Jane Bullen

Certificate of Authorship and Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Jane Bullen
May 2010

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACT	Assertive Community Treatment
AFHO	Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations
AVO	Apprehended Violence Order
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DOCS	Department of Community Services (NSW)
DV	Domestic violence
HPAP	Homeless Persons Assistance Program
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NGO	Non-government organisation
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SGI	Super Guarantee Component
WESP	Women's Emergency Services Program
YSS	Youth Services Scheme

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses changes in the ways in which the phenomenon of ‘homelessness’ has been conceptualised in Australian policies, programs and services for homeless people since the early 1980s. My experience working in this area suggested to me that a fundamental shift had occurred, away from a policy understanding of the causes of homelessness as being produced by ‘structural’ social and economic factors such as poverty, lack of affordable housing and domestic violence, to one in which homelessness was now understood more as a result of ‘individual’ issues caused by problems or behaviours of homeless people themselves. This thesis asks: how and why had such changes taken place?

I show that, consistent with my experiences, conceptions of homelessness in policy and programs have indeed been understood in homelessness research and commentary in terms of, on the one hand, structuralist conceptions of the causes of homelessness, and on the other hand, explanations that rely on a methodological individualism, with a shift over the last 30 years *from* structuralist *to* methodologically individualist conceptions of homelessness. Attempts to reconcile these two explanations, for example by means of the policy concept of ‘social exclusion’, have generally failed in practice to move beyond this dichotomy.

I address the question by drawing on Foucault’s work on ‘governmentality’ and examining both historical official statements about homelessness policies and programs and in depth interviews with people who have worked in the area. I show *how* policies and programs have a constructive role in shaping understandings of homelessness and of the situations of homeless people. In particular, I show *how* changes in homelessness policies and programs over the past thirty years involved not a retreat of the state as some commentators assert, but an extension and reconfiguration of political power ‘beyond the state’ through a diversity of service providers. These changes sought to replace the welfare state with an ‘enabling’ state or so-called ‘advanced liberal governmentality’ which characterised the causes of homelessness in terms of ‘dependency’. Homelessness programs became focussed on techniques designed to produce a managed form of self-reliance - interlinking both freedom and constraint. The

policy conceptualisation of homelessness shifted towards ‘individual’ factors and away from ‘structural’ factors. The ambiguous nature of these techniques is reflected in evidence of both improvements and reductions in service delivery, including the exclusion from services of some ‘high risk’ homeless people who could or would not meet case management requirements.

PROLOGUE

Sometime in the late 1990s, I came to the perplexing realisation that ‘the causes of homelessness had changed’, or as I sometimes thought of it, the location of the homelessness policy ‘problem’ seemed to have shifted. Policies about homelessness that were promulgated by governments to homelessness services now seemed to locate both the causes and remedies of homelessness almost entirely within the individual homeless person themselves. I had been involved since the early 1980s in social policy and services relating to homelessness through both government and non-government organisations. As a result, I was aware that fifteen years or so earlier, the causes of homelessness as cited in government documents and within services highlighted issues such as poverty, unemployment, housing affordability, domestic violence and sexual abuse, which were conceived as being related to underlying social and economic forces. Now, these seemed much less discussed, particularly by governments, and the focus was on issues considered to be within or concerning the person themselves: personal characteristics, needs and behaviours. From the vantage point of a position I held from 1998 to 2006, co-ordinating a government funded service which assists homeless women, and involving contact with many others working in the area, it was my perception that significant changes had occurred over time in the way in which homelessness was conceptualised in policies, programs and, to some extent, in services.

At the service where I worked we received ever-increasing quantities of government policy and program documentation. In recent years the emphasis of this material seemed to have changed so that homelessness, homeless people and programs to address homelessness were described primarily in terms of individual situations. Issues of mental illness and drug and alcohol problems among homeless people were now highlighted in a way that rendered them as ‘individual issues’ of vulnerability or bad behaviour unrelated to wider and deeper issues such as poverty or violence. Issues that had previously been seen as socially or economically produced had been reframed in this documentation and as a result were now seen as lying within individual agency.

I was particularly struck by a draft ‘Service Framework’ document circulated in 2001 by government to services in our state (NSW Department of Community Services 2001,

p. 126), which set out performance requirements and measurements for use by the Department in negotiating individual service contracts with each agency. This was part of an overall change to a more commercially influenced approach by governments more generally to the provision of services. The draft Service Framework included a tool for agencies to categorise the needs and situations of 'clients', in order to provide government with information on services needed, outcomes sought and performance measures. It listed a selection of 'indicators of client need' framed as *individual deficits* such as 'lack of living skills', 'inability to maintain physical/mental health', 'excessively demanding', 'ongoing inability to obtain/maintain housing' or 'unable to form non-abusive relationships' (NSW Department of Community Services 2001, p. 18). The indicators included no reference to deeper structural factors despite, for example, a worsening in housing affordability and availability for low to moderate income earners (Australian Government 2008c).

The government documents that our service received did not present any evidence to suggest that this changed policy emphasis on individual characteristics corresponded to a change in the composition of the homeless population that would result in the reduced significance of these underlying structural factors. I had not detected such a change in the precipitating events or needs of people using the services with which I was involved. I did, however, discuss with colleagues our shared observation that debilitating struggles with feelings of failure and self-blame about their situation seemed now to be very prominent in the lives of the homeless people we met, in a way we had not noticed in the past.

This intensification of focus on individual responsibility as the policy response to homelessness built on recent policy directions. The aim of services like ours, according to government documents, was to help people 'achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence', as stated in the recently revised aims for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) through which homelessness services were then funded (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*). There had been a shift from the policies of the 1980s that understood homelessness as a temporary situation for many, brought about by 'crisis', and to be addressed by the provision of short-term accommodation and some basic information and support until the person re-

established themselves in permanent housing (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1985*). The notion of 'crisis' does not necessarily imply individual deficit, but is able to include crisis related to social and economic factors. While 'independence' had been a Program aim in 1985, 'self-reliance' was added in 1994. The revised aims and the roll out of 'individual case management' from 1995 as the primary response by services to homeless people supported the focus on the individual. I knew that this somehow linked to statements by various media, political and academic commentators about the dangers of people being 'dependant' (Murray 1984; Pearson 2000a; Saunders 2000).

Paradoxically, many of the people who used our service had been self-reliant in a way that most of us could not imagine. Some, for example, had run away from violent and abusive families at a very young age and had had to find their way without the family help and support usually available to young people. Along the way many had suffered exploitation or abuse by various other people and had managed, as best they could, the emotional toll of their experiences. As adults many didn't have the kind of network of family and friends that I had to call upon if I needed help. Some, as adults, had left situations of domestic violence where they were not permitted to take the role of independent people in a partnership, but were made to be dependent on, submissive to and violently dominated by their husbands. Some had fled persecution in other parts of the world and were trying, against all odds, to find a place to establish a home in a new country. Again, those who had fled violence and oppression had often experienced a fragmentation in their lives, which meant they had had to fend for themselves in extreme circumstances. Some had survived as a result of struggles that were unquestionably heroic. I was perplexed at the idea that such people might suffer from too much dependence and not enough self-reliance. If there were a simplistic formula of this kind, surely it would be the reverse!

Whatever trauma, abuse or other problems the women who used our service had experienced, one thing they did have in common was that they were finding it difficult to meet the city's high rents with, at most, limited incomes from insecure or low paid employment or government benefits and pensions. The unavailability of affordable long-term housing both contributed to people becoming homeless and led to a delay in

their being able to leave the service. This delay caused a corresponding delay in our ability to offer housing and support to additional people.

The overall housing situation also meant that people needed more and more individual help from services, even where they did not require support in areas other than finding housing. There was a widespread and strongly held impression voiced by experienced homelessness support workers both where I worked and in other services, that they were needing to work harder and harder to advocate for each individual person through assisting with applications, writing support letters and appealing departmental decisions but that there was less and less actual available housing or other assistance 'out there'. While governments had not emphasised the lack of housing, services including ours had raised the issues through whatever forums were available. Our experience was that private rental was generally too expensive for people with very low-incomes and supply was so short that there was fierce competition for places and even 'rental bidding', the practice where prospective tenants offered to pay higher rent or rent in advance in order to secure a property. On a number of occasions we spent considerable time helping people search fruitlessly for private rental that they could afford.

In addition, waiting times and eligibility criteria for public housing had, over the years, dramatically rendered it almost inaccessible, even for homeless people. The public housing authority in our state was, by this time, regularly rejecting applications from homeless people with minimal incomes, on the basis that they should rent privately. Even if homeless people were approved for housing, they would first need to 'prove' that they could not rent in the private market and then wait a 'reduced' period of one or two years, depending on the specific application. This could involve what many experienced as a humiliating and frustrating process of self-denigration, in an attempt to highlight personal vulnerabilities and hide capabilities in an attempt to 'succeed' in being accepted onto the waiting list. Access to public housing had been further complicated over time by the fact that people could no longer simply apply without assistance and bureaucratic support. 'Linking people in with services', so that they could obtain more support letters stressing their level of need and eligibility for public housing, had become a major task of services. In this sense, then, policy and program

changes in other parts of government had actually produced the need for an individual approach.

The government's promotion of self-reliance and individual responsibility as the solution to homelessness in the climate of housing shortage engendered a variety of responses from people working in homelessness services that I was aware of and sometimes led to debate within and between services about how assistance should be offered. I was interested to note that this debate occurred alongside the shared experience of services in witnessing the extraordinary difficulties experienced by homeless people in obtaining housing, and the sector's broader commitment to lobbying governments to increase the supply of housing that might be accessible to people facing homelessness. In our service for example, there was a vigorous disagreement about a suggestion by some staff members that the agency should aim to charge each homeless person entering the service an accommodation bond at commercial rates (up to \$1,000) on the basis that this would result in the person asserting a greater level of self-reliance and being less likely to become homeless again. This could be paid in instalments. Others, myself included, argued that this would just present a further obstacle for people in entering the service, imposing an unhelpful burden on people while they were still in dire financial situations. Those of us who opposed the suggestion also believed that it would lead to unhelpful interference resulting in the bond money being still tied up in our service's property when the person required it for other purposes, such as to buy furniture or pay a bond on a new property. As a result I did not implement it. Nevertheless, the fact that the debate occurred at all seemed to me to be illustrative of a shift away from the idea that a major part of addressing homelessness involved making housing and other assistance more accessible rather than less so.

The justification for this suggested new approach stressed the benefits to the homeless person of having accumulated such a lump sum. The prescribed solution seemed to locate the problem as being within the individual – in this case a need for financial prudence – and to prescribe disciplinary measures as the remedy. Thus the focus was on issues such as those raised in the departmental document referred to above: some aspect of the situation or behaviour of homeless people themselves. As well, it seemed interesting that market or commercial norms were advocated as the norm for all, even

those who had apparently been unable to compete in the market. The argument was that, given the tight market facing those using the service, supervision of people's savings was necessary if they were to compete. If we provided assistance without requiring such savings we would be failing to 'prepare' people for entry into this tough environment. Later, as I read more of the literature, I became aware of the resonance of this small debate with wider views that were current at the time, such as Murray's (1984) argument that welfare provides an incentive for dependence and Mead's (1997) promotion of 'new paternalism', or 'supervisory' policies to deal with poverty.

Our service received a good deal of departmental material covering matters including case management, good practice, service standards, competition policy, outcome measurement, a client-centred approach and risk management. We were very positive about the idea of improving our service, and most of the changes made their way into our practice in some form. Many of these changes focussed on codifying, standardising and measuring aspects of service provision as well as on the more individualised approach. Some of the changes such as the 'Service Framework' described above (and somewhat modified in final form) were linked to the move by governments to a more 'competitive' or commercial approach. The changes had been broadly presented to services as improving 'standards', but there was discussion by some staff that the changes seemed go beyond this: they implied a change in the task of homelessness services rather than simply 'the same, but better'. For example, concern was expressed that the act of conducting a risk assessment on each new homeless person who entered the service might cause staff to view people predominantly in terms of risk rather than as a person seeking help. Some staff were concerned that this change was not simply a means to provide a better service, but would significantly change the supportive relationship between homeless people and the service, and therefore also the nature of the service that was being provided. There was also a worry about the diversion of staff members' time in managing the extra paperwork involved. We were a little unsure about the extent to which some of these 'improvements' would really help people who were homeless. The departmental material we received did not address the overwhelming struggles we faced in actually helping people find housing. It was difficult to make sense of how the housing problems we saw were best addressed by the limited solutions that were available.

Overall, it seemed to me that in a context of decreasing housing availability and affordability there had been a shift away from viewing homelessness as a problem driven by social and economic forces. Instead, services were being encouraged to see the problem as coming from elsewhere. We were asked to put more effort into looking for solutions at an individual level and into encouraging those needing housing to be 'self-reliant'. Greater effort by services was to be supported by increased attention to improving the service's own procedures and practices. Self-examination and improvement on the part of both homeless people and homelessness services were promoted as the tools for dealing with homelessness. It felt like working in a vacuum.

In 2008, while writing this thesis, I worked at a generalist housing service in a different state as the housing crisis worsened. Private rental vacancies were at record lows and public housing waits, even for those in the most extreme circumstances, were several years. Families and single people of diverse ages came into the service if they had lost their accommodation or it was under threat. Many of the people I saw had to leave private rental because they could not afford rent rises or had suffered a drop in income, and had been unable to find other accommodation they could afford. Crisis and interim accommodation were not sufficient to cater to the demand, and were often not available (see also Australian Institute for Health and Welfare 2009). We would press people to think and rethink whether they had any friends or relatives to stay with, and try to keep their spirits up as they received repeated knock-backs for private rental properties in the tight rental market. Business had, in a manner of speaking, responded to the problem through an expansion in accommodation enterprises that rented out houses by the individual room, including the living areas. The rents on these 'boarding houses' were very high for such minimal shelter, but these properties were more available and affordable than any other option, so that we were forced to refer to them. Tenants had no say on who else was in the house, and they could be unpredictable and unsafe places, and not suitable for children, although they were used by families with children. The service where I worked was empowered to pay for a few days accommodation in such places (or in cheap hotels if there was a vacancy) for people who had absolutely nowhere, but after that, we often had little immediate help to offer people.

We were witness to people in such circumstances struggling to maintain their children's schooling as they moved from one interim place to another, people using up their savings on expensive short term accommodation, people losing their furniture and whitegoods because they had nowhere to put them and people grappling with the emotional and physical toll of the uncertain existence of moving from one temporary arrangement to another, approaching one agency after another but remaining homeless. Many people became frustrated at these numerous contacts with government and non-government agencies, and complained that they were going 'round and round'. I, too, felt frustrated that there was so little that was concrete to offer. One woman, homeless and living in a car with her children, facing limited opportunities to rent privately and a two year wait for government housing and who had been referred to another agency for what was termed 'crisis support' looked at me and asked despairingly: 'But all they can do is talk to me, can't they?' I did not have a satisfactory response.

INTRODUCTION

MY RESEARCH QUESTION

I began to develop the research question underlying this thesis as a result of the experiences described in the Prologue and the questions that the transformations in homelessness policies and programs raised. In particular I became interested in the question: why and how had such changes taken place? From the standpoint of the present moment homelessness now appeared to be a quite different phenomenon than that which I had understood it to be in the 1980s. It was not simply that policies had changed, but that these changes involved a different way of actually *thinking* about homelessness, and that this shift in thinking had produced some very significant shifts in program formulation and services designed to assist homeless people.

Earlier policies had highlighted an understanding of homelessness as a temporary result of crisis including social and economic factors, and the solution to homelessness as being achieved through the provision of accommodation and support until the person re-established her or himself independently in permanent housing. In the context of a worsening shortage of public or other low cost housing, particularly evident since the 1990s, the policy conceptualisation of homelessness had changed to become increasingly individualised. The new policies focussed more on supposed individual characteristics or deficits, such as the ‘ongoing inability to obtain/maintain housing’ and the other ‘inabilities’ listed in the draft ‘Service Framework’ discussed previously.

As a result of this individual focus, the solution to homelessness came to be seen to lie both with the individual homeless person who was to become more self-reliant, and with homelessness services, which were to implement individual case management of people seeking their assistance. This new policy approach implied a notion of homelessness that was not the temporary result of crisis and that could not be resolved through the availability of housing – both because the cause was construed to be ‘inabilities’ rather than lack of housing, and also, in an apparent contradiction, because housing had become so scarce and so expensive. Instead, the solution to homelessness was to be sought within the homeless person themselves, in the form of greater self-

reliance. Thus, a housing service was able to offer ‘crisis support’ but not accommodation to the woman who was living in her car with her children. Homelessness policies, taken together, implied a new and a-contextual emphasis on personal responsibility over broader social and economic responsibility regardless of individual situation, and a response to homelessness that highlighted scrutiny and change of the self.

Indeed, these new responsibilities for both individual homeless people and homelessness services were to be more in line with market or commercial activities. For individual homeless people, the shift from viewing homelessness as a lack of access to affordable housing, to viewing it as an ‘inability’ to obtain or maintain housing, seemed to frame the homeless person as a failed consumer in the housing market, rather than as a person who, at least in part, had been failed by wider society. The rationale behind the suggestion of the \$1,000 bond was that it would help people develop skills to compete in a housing market lacking in affordable and suitable dwellings, through developing their self-reliance. Similarly, services themselves were viewed as a site of scrutiny and as potential change agents that would implement these new policies and practices. In a change that paralleled the requirement for homeless people to be more self-reliant, the relationship between services and government was also re-formed through the use of ‘contract’ to imply a ‘market’ arrangement where services were ‘purchased’ from autonomous or self-governing entities. From the late 1990s services were expected to meet changed standards and norms in service management, service provision and administrative processes, as well as to improve and innovate. Some of these expectations were contained in service contracts while others were communicated through other departmental material.

Further, while governments promulgated these changes, they were not changes solely driven from above. This was already clear from my own experience. For example I was aware of the widespread concern among homelessness services, evidenced in multiple sector publications and activities (see, for example, Australian Government 2008b; Council to Homeless Persons 1999a, 2004) that the shortage and unaffordability of housing was a major cause of homelessness. At the same time, various actors in government and non-government agencies, such as the staff who debated the proposed

\$1,000 bond, interpreted and responded to the new policy directions in various ways in local situations. This experience was confirmed by the complex responses I was to receive from people working in homelessness services and policy areas while undertaking this research. In the case of individual case management, for example, there was resistance in various forms, as well as widespread but uneven embrace of change by those in the field, with many interviewees expressing mixed feelings about developments. The activity of change resulted in processes whereby case management was to varying degrees imitated, amended, adopted, critiqued and redescribed by the diverse and often strongly motivated web of organisations and individuals in the sector of homelessness policy and services.

I was perplexed at how the promotion of self-reliance and individual responsibility had come to be seen as the solution to homelessness in the climate of housing shortage. Why was so much emphasis placed on case management and service management practices, and, seemingly, so little on making affordable housing more accessible? How was it that community services to assist homeless people had now come to be viewed in business or market terms? How had these new approaches and techniques been understood and translated in services other than the ones where I had worked? How had other homelessness services and homeless people themselves been recruited and what secured their continuing participation?

My thesis is concerned with Australian policies, programs and services for people identified as being homeless. In particular, it is concerned with the ways in which ideas about homelessness and, indeed, conceptualisations of the phenomenon of 'homelessness' itself, changed over the period since the late 1970s and early 1980s. As I have described above, my experience working in the area indicated that these changes involved a shift away from an understanding of homelessness which focussed on 'structural' social and economic factors such as poverty, lack of affordable housing and domestic violence. Instead, homelessness seemed to be viewed more as an 'individual' issue, caused by characteristics, problems or behaviours of homeless people themselves.

My thesis is therefore framed by the following question: what is involved in this reconceptualisation of homelessness from a 'structural' issue requiring action by

governments and markets, to an 'individual' issue to be addressed primarily by the actions of homeless people and homelessness services to resolve people's individual problems? Why and how, in practice and in detail, have these changes occurred at this particular time?

POLICY AND RESEARCH – SHIFTING PARADIGMS

Homelessness policies are sometimes discussed as though homelessness itself is a natural or pre-given fact of life. As a result, much of the discussion is therefore organised around the question of how to develop appropriate responses to this already and always, naturally existing phenomenon. As I pursued my original hunch that, from my perspective in homelessness policy and services, the causes of homelessness seemed to have ‘changed’, I discovered that things were not so simple.

Firstly, literature reveals that ‘homelessness’ itself is a relatively new concept. The idea of homelessness as it is now understood in Western countries did not exist in the 19th century: the deprivation that people experienced was conceptualised using notions such as pauperism and destitution (Garton 1990; Lund 1996, p.84). In Australia and other Western countries the destitute were further classified into two groups: those who were seen as lacking in morality or respectability and were considered ‘undeserving’ of assistance and those individuals who were assessed as ‘deserving’ and might receive charitable assistance together with religious instruction and encouragement of industriousness and moral improvement (Dickey 1980; Garton 1990; Rathbone 1994). In a similar dichotomy, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the United States both relied economically on the casual unskilled labour of poor transient workers or ‘hobos’ and, at the same time, characterised them as vagrants, criminalising and imprisoning homeless unemployed workers under various Tramps Acts (Anderson 1998). In the 20th century prior to the 1970s the concept of ‘homelessness’ in Western countries focussed on ‘skid row’ men, again often involving blame and classification of people as ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’, and explanations of homelessness were dominated by factors related to what were viewed as individual characteristics such as alcoholism, mental illness or lack of a work ethic (Anderson & Christian 2003; Avramov 1999; Dickey 1980; Fitzpatrick & Christian 2006; Garton 1990; Hopper 2003). Despite the destitution and dislocation brought by the depressions of the 1890s and 1930s and a severe shortage of housing in countries such as Australia and the UK following the Second World War, the problem was not constructed as a social problem of ‘homelessness’ (Lloyd 2000; Pleace & Quilgars 2003).

The earlier part of the 20th century saw a volunteerist conception of homelessness gain currency. This blamed homeless people by characterising them as ‘choosing’ to live on the streets in a homeless ‘subculture’ (Wright 1997). These explanations in terms of individual characteristics were consistent with policy neglect (Wright 1997). In both Australia and internationally many cultural images of homelessness remain based on individual explanations and have been called upon by governments to support their ideologies or strategies (Feldman 2004; Hanover Welfare Services 2006; Hopper 2003; May, Cloke & Johnsen 2005; Min 1999; Pleace 1998; Wright 1997).

The emergence of ‘the homeless’, as with ‘the poor’, was dependent on recognition by society and the resulting categorisation of individuals (Hopper 2003, p.15). It was not until the ‘rediscovery’ of poverty in the 1960s that ‘homelessness’ was viewed as a social problem (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999; Pleace & Quilgars 2003). This was followed by the recognition in many countries including the UK, the US and Australia that homelessness had become an urgent problem (Hopper 2003; Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999). The term ‘homeless’ was first used in the Australian Parliament in 1974 (Schindeler 2007).

During the 1970s and 1980s, in the context of wider economic, political and social changes, there was a broad shift in policy and program focus to place less emphasis overall on individual explanations of homelessness and more emphasis on structural explanations of homelessness, with attention to issues such as economic inequality, land use, housing availability, poverty, unemployment and domestic violence (Avramov 1999; Busch-Geertsema 2001; Fitzpatrick 2005). This period saw the implementation of a range of policies and programs that extended the financial responsibility of the state in relation to homeless people, although often through non-government organisations rather than by means of direct state provision. The emphasis was on strategies such as providing shelters or other temporary accommodation for people who were homeless (Busch-Geertsema 2001; Wright 1997) and the selection of some to be admitted to permanent government housing (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999). These changes did not constitute a sudden and complete break with the past, but a shift in degrees, resulting in a compromise between competing ideologies of state welfare: on the one

hand, a structuralist ideology under which the state was responsible for addressing social need and on the other, a minimalist ideology which saw state provision as limited only to those 'deserving' support (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999, p. 21). In the later part of the twentieth century a further shift occurred in policy concerning homelessness, consistent with the changes I witnessed, to focus on the characteristics of the homeless population and therefore on individual explanations (Pleace 1998). Secondly, then, the literature on changes in policy concerning homelessness shows that this sequence of developments and changes in conceptualisations of homelessness was similar in Western countries generally (see for example Avramov 1999; Minnery & Greenhalgh 2007; Polakow & Guilleen 2001).

Thirdly, the literature about homelessness reveals that there has long been a policy and research 'struggle' over the definition of homelessness as a 'problem' and over policies responding to homelessness (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999). In Australia even the conceptualisation and definition of the core SAAP concept of 'self-reliance' itself is a subject of review and research (Kunnen & Martin 2004). The people I interviewed for this research, who worked in homelessness policy and services, also displayed a 'struggle' over homelessness policies. They responded to my questions about what, if any changes had occurred, with not only a vigorous account of policy and service changes, but, interestingly, with complex and conflicted responses.

Explanations of homelessness contained in international research that informs homelessness policies and the 'struggles' associated with these policies have frequently been implicit, atheoretical and contradictory, with homelessness explained simply as either being caused by what are known as 'structural' or 'individual' factors (Neale 1997). Structural explanations of homelessness focus on underlying social and economic factors such as housing market conditions, poverty, unemployment, domestic violence and the extent of provision of social services. Sometimes social changes such as increased family breakdown are also cited as structural factors (Fitzpatrick 2005). Explanations that see the individual as the fundamental cause of homelessness by contrast tend to focus on individual pathology, the personal characteristics, behaviours and needs of homeless people. Neale (1997) describes two strands of explanations that are individualist in their orientation. The first is a victim-blaming explanation, where

individuals are viewed as responsible for their homelessness. This explanation is associated with stereotypes of 'deviants, dossers, alcoholics, vagrants and tramps' (Neale 1997, p. 36), and with the provision of only minimal assistance. The second maintains that homelessness occurs because of individual failure or inadequacy beyond the person's control. A minimalist response is usually seen as inadequate for situations where the individual is not held responsible, and individuals are viewed as needing humanitarian assistance, such as casework or psychiatric treatment. Neale notes that structural and individual explanations are linked to the notions of 'deserving' and 'undeserving'. Where homelessness has been linked to structural factors beyond individual control, the homeless have tended to be viewed as deserving of assistance. Where responsibility has been ascribed to the individual, the person has been likely to be considered undeserving of any assistance.

Fourthly, while there has been a strong characterisation of homelessness in terms of the dichotomy of 'structural' and 'individual' factors, there has been less emphasis on the active role of the state and other political institutions and actors in constituting or constructing 'homelessness' and the responses to this issue. In this regard, understanding of the ways in which states have responded to and made provision for homelessness has historically been tied to the political and ideological positions of governments of the day (Christian 2003; Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999; Pleace, Burrows & Quilgars 1997).

To summarise then, understandings of homelessness at the level of policy and programs have changed significantly from nineteenth century ideas about pauperism and destitution to a series of debates, playing out differently at different points in the twentieth century, about whether the causes of homelessness are primarily individual factors or underlying structural factors. These debates and the views and conclusions that they have generated, have framed the various decisions about what the most appropriate policies and programs for addressing homelessness might be. Further, much research into homelessness has tended to simply reflect these historically constituted arguments and, as I have suggested, have led to research that by and large tends to be empiricist in method and analysis. The exception to this, however, is more recent research which takes seriously the idea that homelessness is a historically and socially

constituted phenomenon and that therefore, the processes through which the constitution or, more specifically, *construction* of homelessness takes place themselves need to be examined and *problematised*. This theoretically innovative approach to understanding homelessness (and the policies and programs that are developed in response to homelessness) however, is currently marginal in relation to those empirically-oriented studies.

HOMELESSNESS: MOVING BEYOND EMPIRICAL STUDIES AND THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS SOCIAL STRUCTURE DIVIDE

In the last twenty to thirty years, starting in the UK, researchers began to consider homelessness in ways that challenged the reductionism of the individual versus structural interpretive divide (Dant & Deacon 1989; Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999; Pleace 1998; Pleace & Quilgars 2003). These researchers recognised that this divide was unhelpfully simplistic and that other theoretical traditions could be drawn upon to challenge this (Neale 1997; Pleace 1998, 2000). However, what this produced was not so much a more theoretically nuanced understanding of homelessness but an interlinking (in theoretical and methodological terms) of individual and structural factors, whereby individual characteristics were seen to make some people more vulnerable to housing labour market and other structural changes, and therefore more predisposed to becoming homeless. This position has been labelled by Pleace (2000, p. 591) as the ‘new orthodoxy’.

The ‘new orthodoxy’ does not, however, fully describe this interlinking of structural and individual factors. Fitzpatrick (2005), for example, while acknowledging the ‘new orthodoxy’ as more adequate than the either/or binary between approaches that focus on the individual or those that focus on structural factors, remains unsatisfied. She finds the ‘new orthodoxy’ unable to accommodate the full *range* of situations leading to homelessness, and to be ‘essentially pragmatic rather than theoretically robust’ (Fitzpatrick 2005, p. 3). To overcome these shortcomings, some researchers (Fitzpatrick 2005; Neale 1997) advocate an approach which attempts to move *beyond* empiricism but which stops short of the idea that homelessness is socially constructed. Instead, these researchers draw on the work of the British sociologist Anthony Giddens and in

particular, his theory of 'structuration' (1984). Giddens' theory conceives of structure and individual 'agency' as an interrelated 'duality', rather than as separate phenomena. Social structures are constituted by human agency, and at the same time both constrain and enable that agency. Thus, Neale (1997) maintains, 'structuration' views homeless people as neither entirely responsible for their circumstances nor entirely as victims of circumstance, and there is no single agreed cause of, or solution to, homelessness. Fitzpatrick (2005), also drawing on Giddens and advocating what she labels a 'critical realist' approach, suggests that causal mechanisms of homelessness exist on four levels: a field of economic structures, a field of housing structures, a field of patriarchal-interpersonal structures and a field of individual attributes. She argues, consistent with the chaos/complexity perspective that is influential in realist social theory, no hierarchy or influence can be assumed between these fields.

This analysis of homelessness as an expression of 'structuration' has been an influential one, particularly, in the UK. In the UK, New Labour, with Anthony Giddens as one of the primary authors of New Labour's 'Third Way Politics' (Giddens 1998), was elected in 1997 and began the process of reconceptualising and in institutional terms reconfiguring the architecture of the British welfare state. Key concepts around which this reform was organised were the terms social inclusion and social exclusion (Giddens 1994). Social exclusion and inclusion subsequently also came to characterise approaches to homelessness in many European countries (Polakow & Guilleen 2001).

Of course, welfare policies organised around ideas of social exclusion and inclusion are enacted as policy responses to wider economic and political forces – namely globalisation. As many commentators have pointed out, however, neither the market nor welfare state measures to redistribute wealth have successfully addressed the economic inequalities produced by globalisation within wealthy countries, in particular long term unemployment (Pleace 1998). Although multiple factors are understood to be involved in creating social exclusion, actual policies may focus on some factors at the expense of others. Governments may prefer to deal with the 'individual' factors that they view as more readily able to be modified than the economic and other structural challenges (Horsell 2006; Neale 1997; Pleace & Quilgars 2003; Stax 2001). In practice, the social

exclusion approach has not maintained a 'balance' between structure and agency (Neale 1997; Pleace & Quilgars 2003):

There is no question that the structural problems, such as declining supplies of affordable housing or hypercasualisation in labour markets that create a context in which homelessness is more likely to occur, can possibly be addressed. Rather, the sole intervention possible is to equip homeless people with the necessary skills and resources to mean that subsequent exposure to those structural forces will not mean a return to homelessness.... It is not a question of changing the world, but ensuring that citizens are equipped to deal with a largely uncontrollable and ever changing world (Pleace 2000, p. 584).

Thus the social inclusion approach, rather than addressing underlying structural factors as well as the circumstances of individuals' lives, has involved reconstructing the citizen to suit the economy, rather than the reverse, and assisting and containing those who face problems such as lifelong unemployment in the context of the shift away from universal welfare services (Horsell 2006; Pleace 1998, 2000; Stax 2001). As a result, instead of being seen as causal factors, the housing and labour markets are seen as being 'reintegrative' and social exclusion is reconceptualised as focussed on individual need (Stax 2001). Stax therefore points out that a focus on individual factors clearly disadvantages those categorised as socially excluded, but has been useful to governments in managing this situation:

There is a useful fit between an understanding of social exclusion, as caused by a range of diverse factors, owing to individual deficiencies and pathologies, and the development of a view of change in the organisation of the welfare state, from universal coverage to a specific coverage with predefined targeting of the various measures provided (Stax 2001, p. 77).

At the start of the twenty-first century the work of some researchers articulated a clear challenge to this approach (associated with third way politics and the policy paradigm this informed) of seeking to identify those who experience 'social exclusion' and to target policy interventions to those individuals. In studies of homelessness one such

researcher was Bessant (2001), who investigated 'risk discourses' by means of considering research about 'youth at risk' of homelessness (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 1998) and the relationship between youth homelessness and crime (Hagan & McCarthy 1997). Bessant notes that such research claims to be based on objective and measurable empirical data and has attained a 'common sense' status among many social scientists, policy makers and practitioners. She argues that it is actually based on constructed concepts such as 'risk' and 'homelessness', which are not 'objective', but are based on norms and assumptions. Bessant analyses these constructed concepts, and argues that they reinforce some discourses at the expense of others and fail to take into account the actual inequalities and diversities of society. In these ways, the category of 'at risk', like other abstract objects of empirical social science, is rendered measurable through unacknowledged discursive practices, despite the empiricists' insistence that they are dealing only with 'already existing', objective and measurable phenomena.

Bessant challenges the basis of this category of 'youth at risk', and locates the 'science of risk' in the normalising tradition of the 'sociology of deviance' associated with an older, 'mainstream sociology'. She argues that the 'science of risk' is a political and moral process 'designed to change uncertainties into probabilities' and thus make them amenable to administrative regulation based on 'scientific principles' (Bessant 2001, p. 33), in order that policy initiatives can be efficiently targeted. This 'science of risk' assumes that young people themselves are central to 'problems' such as homelessness, and diverts attention from the role of adults and 'the disciplinary technologies of power as they now operate' (Bessant 2001, p. 39).

Bessant's work signals that our understandings of social problems are not objective givens, rather, they are actively constructed and framed through discourses and practices. There is a growing literature that now takes seriously the discursive production of social policy problems (Bacchi 1999) such as welfare dependency (Cruikshank 1999; Fraser & Gordon 1994), domestic violence (Murray 2002; Murray & Powell 2009) and public housing reform (Marston 2004). This includes a small but growing literature that considers the discursive construction of homelessness, drawing on the early work of the historian of ideas, Michel Foucault. This literature includes analysis of discourses generated by the media about homelessness (Min 1999; Pascale

2005), discourses of management in homelessness services (Sykes & Treleaven 2005), discourses of homelessness as social exclusion (Horsell 2006) and discourses associated with the body and emotions (Robinson 2008). There are also studies which examine the ways in which discourses associated with crime, punishment and surveillance have come to inform not only policy, but have reconfigured administrative practices in the field of service provision for homeless people (Fopp 1996, 2002).

.Only very recently, however, have researchers looked to insights subsequently developed by Foucault in his later work – that is, in his work on governmentality – as a way of not only describing the discursive construction of homelessness but of understanding *how* it is that those discourses translate into modes of political reasoning informing not only policy and practices but also re-shaping the institutional arrangements through which homeless people are governed (May, Cloke & Johnsen 2005; Schindeler 2007). It is this work that I wish to draw upon in seeking to answer my research question and to understand in detail *how* the reconceptualisation of homelessness from a ‘structural’ issue to an ‘individual’ issue has occurred.

RETHINKING HOMELESSNESS

Discursive strategies and political reasoning - government is a problematising activity

In his lecture on ‘Governmentality’ (1991), Foucault considers the emergence of ‘modern’ government in Europe from the seventeenth century. He makes three points about the modern form of government that I think are conceptually significant for this thesis. First, modern government is a *problematising* activity, or as Rose and Miller explain, modern government ‘poses the obligations of rulers in terms of the problems they seek to address’ (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 181). Foucault characterises modern government in terms of this deliberative, problem solving approach, based on ‘rational principles’, and distinguished from pre-modern or early modern forms of government which were founded on ‘natural or divine laws’ (Foucault 1991, p. 97). Similarly, Gordon (1991, p. 7) distils Foucault’s more expansive enumeration of the problems which came to preoccupy modern government into the one question: ‘how to govern’. This formulation also signals that Foucault is concerned with government as an activity

or ‘art’ (Foucault 1991). In other words, modern government is concerned with reflecting rationally on the practice of government, in order to address problems of ‘how to govern’ at the level of both the ‘thinkable’ and the ‘practicable’ (Gordon 1991, p. 3).

This idea that government is a problematising activity, that is, that all government can be regarded in terms of problems requiring a solution, is conceptually significant because it works to *frame* my particular concern with policy and programs for homeless people. That is, it allows me to see the transformation in policy and programs developed for homeless people over the last 30-40 years in terms of this effort being a particular ‘problem of government’ or problematisation: that is, how to most effectively and efficiently govern the problem of homelessness and the population(s) of homeless people?

Problematics of government and political rationalities

Second, Foucault suggests that such problematics of government can usefully be analysed in terms of their *political rationalities*. Political rationalities are here defined as the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualised (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 175). Foucault argues that it is possible to identify specific political rationalisations at particular historical moments and sites, underpinned by coherent systems of thought (Rose 1999, p. 24). Political rationalities then, can be understood as the ‘regularities’ that we discern in political discourse (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 178).

Political rationalities according to Foucault operate to link what he refers to as the problem of government in the *general* sense and in the *narrow* sense. What Foucault refers to as ‘government as a general problem’ (Foucault 1991) may be defined as ‘the conduct of conduct’ and refers to ‘the way in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed’, for example the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families or of the sick (Foucault 1982, p. 220-1). Government in this sense is not limited to political or economic government but includes all activities that aim to shape, guide or act upon what Foucault refers to as the ‘possibilities of action’ of other people

or even of oneself. On the other hand, Foucault refers to government in the narrow sense as 'the actual definition ... of the state' or the 'political' form of government (Foucault 1991, p. 88).

Foucault's distinction between these two senses of 'government' draws attention, on the one hand, to the ways in which modern government (or more accurately, political power) extends far beyond conceptions of power as 'sovereign'. In this way, the governing activities of a (sovereign) state may be conducted by agencies of the state itself, and in particular, by that group of agencies known as 'the government', but government also involves a profusion of agents and agencies of other kinds (Dean & Hindess 1998, p. 3; Rose & Miller 1992, p. 180). This way of thinking about government captures for me most accurately the ways in which not only governments, but churches, charities, community activists and other non-government organisations and agencies and their staff, as well as social workers, philanthropists and even businesses are central to the project of governing homeless people.

On the other hand, Foucault's conception of power and government links my concern with the discursive strategies pursued by governments to include also, equally importantly, government in the 'general sense' or the 'conduct of conduct':

Foucault's injunction to study government as the 'conduct of conduct' entails a concern for the government of conduct as much as the conduct of government. To be concerned with the former is to be concerned with the ways in which authorities and agencies attempt to shape, mould and direct the conduct of individuals and groups.... Furthermore, rule in advanced liberal societies often entails the shaping and reshaping of the identities of those whose conduct is to be governed (Dean & Hindess 1998, p. 11).

The 'conduct of conduct' thus involves the shaping and reshaping of behaviour and of identities, through the discursive strategies pursued not only by governments but a multiplicity of non-government agencies, organisations, groups and individuals that seek to give effect to governmental ambitions (Dean 1999, p. 11). This notion of government extends to include the notion of 'self-government', where an individual

questions his or her own conduct in order to be better able to govern it (Dean 1999, p. 12).

Several points arise as a result of these two ideas – that government is a problematising activity, and that the problematics of government may be analysed in terms of political rationalities. Firstly, an emerging problem for Australian governments from the 1970s (as I will describe in detail in Chapter 1) was to develop an approach to governing the increasingly recognised, and growing, problem of homelessness. Until this time, homelessness had not been conceived as a problem for the welfare state, and was addressed through charitable or other non-government organisations and subject to their discretion and their philosophy.

Secondly, these traditional organisations, together with new women's and youth refuges that arose as a result of community pressure, were to comprise the basis of the new, expanded response to homelessness that was to be established, starting from the mid-1970s. This increased number of services was subsequently to be formed into a system that was to focus on individual case management of homeless people. The idea that governing involves the reshaping of identities by a myriad of agents operating 'beyond the state' (Rose & Miller 1992) is descriptive of the governing role that was to be envisaged for these non-government agencies and other entities, in helping homeless people to achieve government objectives of 'self-reliance' (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*).

Thirdly, the analysis of government in terms of political rationalities provides a means for me to analyse the changes that have occurred in homelessness policies, programs and service delivery. The notion of political rationalities as discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualised and justified enables me to focus on the ideals of specific political rationalities and their 'way of viewing' (Dean 1999, p. 32) the problems they address and the solutions they employ. Foucault and others have examined various rationalisations of government that emerged in specific places and times, including rationalities of modern liberal government that have framed the government of homelessness in Australia prior to and during the period of this research (Dean 1999; Gordon 1991; Rose 1999). These rationalities of liberal government may

be briefly characterised as follows. Early or ‘classical’ liberalism was based on the principle of ‘*natural* private interest motivated conduct of free market *exchanging* individuals’ in the context of its analysis of the limits of the State’s ability to know and govern (Burchell 1993, p. 271). In the twentieth century, particularly after the Second World War, welfare liberalism responded to crises of classical liberalism by seeking to ‘encourage national growth and wellbeing through the promotion of social responsibility and the mutuality of social risk’ (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 192). Rose and Miller argue that welfarism was not a ‘coherent mechanism’ but an ‘assemblage of networks’ (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 193) intended to govern ‘through society’ but at arms length (Rose 1993, p. 285).

Multiple ‘advanced liberalisms’ arose in the later part of the twentieth century from critiques of welfare liberalism that sought a reconceptualisation of the role of the state and its relation to the people and the economy. One of these critiques arose from interpretations of the work of Freidrich von Hayek (1944, 1960) who had argued at the time of the Second World War that central economic and social planning inevitably led to totalitarianism in the form of either socialism or national socialism. Hayek conceived of the market as ‘a spontaneous social order’ resulting from cultural evolution, that should be developed within political conditions that protect individuals from market favour or discrimination so they can pursue their own interests (Dean 1999, p. 157). Another critique was put forward by a German group, the *Ordoliberalen*, who recommended the implementation of the competitive market ‘as an artificial game of competitive freedom’ (Dean 1999, p. 56). Under this approach non-economic aspects of life were to be structured as enterprises, and individual freedom conceived in terms of this competitive freedom (Gordon 1991, pp. 41-2). The post-war American Chicago School, on the other hand, expanded the scope of economic theory so that human conduct generally was recast in economic terms, underpinned by a principle of rational ‘choice’. Further, the individual would be seen as ‘not just as an enterprise, but the entrepreneur of himself or herself’ (Gordon 1991, p. 44).

Advanced rationalities of liberalism thus share a basis in ‘*artificially* arranged or contrived forms of the free, *entrepreneurial* and *competitive* conduct of economic-rational individuals’ in contrast to early liberalism’s basis in the idea of markets as

naturally occurring (Burchell 1993, p. 271). Within advanced liberal rationalities, there are, as indicated above, differences in the way this artificial market is conceptualised and the extent of its reach into non-economic aspects of life. Broadly speaking, however, advanced liberal rationalities have sought to replace the welfare state, which was concerned with securing a 'social' sphere seen in terms of needs, entitlements and social responsibility, with an 'enabling state' concerned with facilitating the resources of the community and the promotion and monitoring of responsible conduct by working *through* the regulated freedom and aspirations of individuals and groups (Dean 1999; Rose 1999).

Advanced liberal rationalities can thus also be said to share a 'reflexive' nature, whereby 'the central target and objective of national government becomes the reform of the performance of the existing governmental institutions and techniques' (Dean 1999, p. 179). The division between state and society that had existed under the welfare state is replaced by what Dean refers to as a 'folding back' of the objectives of government upon themselves, so that the objectives of policy become their means, for example in the construction of 'quasi' markets as a response to critiques of the welfare state as being bureaucratic, expensive, rigid and as causing dependency. Reflexive government aims to work *through* the freedom and agency of individuals and groups, and to regulate that agency by indirect means (Dean 1999, p. 149). The purpose of these processes of reform of the institutions and mechanisms of government 'is to secure them in the face of processes that are deemed beyond government control, of which the governmental rationality of economic globalization is paradigmatic' (Dean 1999, p. 179). Thus, individuals and groups are to become self-governing and to be responsible for the management of their own risks rather than participating in the welfare state system that had sought to mutualise risk. This self-governing activity is to extend to civil society generally, so that individuals and diverse groups are to co-operate in order to manage their own needs and risks:

Individuals are to be governed through their freedom, but neither as isolated atoms of classical political economy, nor as citizens of society, but as members of heterogenous communities of allegiance, as "community" emerges as a new

way of conceptualising and administering moral relations amongst persons (Rose 1996, p. 41)

Under these advanced liberal rationalities, problems such as homelessness are conceptualised in terms such as ‘dependency’ (a lack of self-government, one of the causes of which was conceived as the welfare state itself); ‘exclusion’ from the economy and the community; and ‘risk’ (Rose 1999). The aim is to address these problems by increasing individuals’ self-reliance and capacity for inclusion, where possible by means of ‘community’ organisations and agents that are outside of government, but regulated by government. Assistance is not an entitlement, but depends on willingness to participate in the process of ‘responsibilisation’ (Rose 1999).

Over the last three decades Western governments, including Australia, have embraced versions of advanced liberal rationalities with various political orientations, influenced by social democratic, ‘neo-liberal’ and ‘neo-conservative’ visions (Dean 1999; Gordon 1991). It would appear that the Global Financial Crisis that has occurred from 2008 may challenge some but not necessarily all rationalities of advanced liberalism (Rudd 2009). I will show that ‘homelessness’ and homelessness responses in Australia have been shaped by the specific forms of liberalism and ‘the social’ existing during the research period. This research will focus on developments since the 1970s. This period involved a shift from an era of welfare liberalism, which had dominated the 20th century, to various rationalities of ‘advanced liberalism’: first a more social democratic version, followed by a period of ‘neo-liberal’ rationalities, some with neo-conservative social goals. At the end of the research period there has been a shift away from the previous neo-liberal rationalities to a form of advanced liberalism which reclaims the title of ‘social democracy’ (Rudd 2009). The notion of political rationalities enables me to show how conceptualisations of, and responses to, homelessness in Australia were shaped by these political rationalities and, in particular, how advanced liberal rationalities have aspired to work through the agency of homeless people with the intention of shaping their identities towards ‘self-reliance’ – a concept which is understood as a personal attribute of the individual (Eardley et al. 2008), involving the management of one’s own risks with the guidance of partnerships of self-governing but regulated non-government organisations and entities.

It is important, however, to note that these changes in political problematisations do not refer to discrete ‘periods’ but to developments which may not be ‘sharply delineated or mutually exclusive’ (Rose 1993). Further, developments in thinking about homelessness do not necessarily correspond to an idealised picture of a history of liberalism. Instead, developments in the problematisation of homelessness also occurred in the context of past rationalities for its management, including charitable rationalities and community activist rationalities that had existed within earlier forms of liberalism, which will be discussed further in Chapter 1. As the research reveals, long-standing conceptualisations and practices do not necessarily suddenly disappear but may engage in a complex interplay with new truths and technologies.

Problematics of government and governmental technologies

The third point that Foucault makes about modern government is that, in order to understand the problematics of modern government, it is necessary not only to analyse the specific political rationalisations which inform the exercise of power, but to consider how ‘authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions’ (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 175), or the ‘tactics’ and ‘techniques’ that governments employ (Foucault 1991, p. 103). Political rationalities do not operate simply at the level of thought or ideology; rather, these discursive fields are inextricably connected to a vast range of governmental technologies – techniques, programmes, calculations, documents, apparatuses and procedures. Governmental technologies seek to ‘translate’ these political rationalities into the domain of reality (Miller & Rose 1990, p. 8), although they are not simply a manifestation of government values (Dean 1999, p. 31). Technical means are a necessary condition of governing, and may themselves impose limits over what it is possible for government to achieve.

In analysing this practical aspect of government or what has been referred to as the *techne* of government, I am seeking to understand *how* governments have attempted to achieve their ends or values: ‘by what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies is authority constituted and rule accomplished?’ (Dean 1999, p. 31). I am seeking to consider not only the specific

rationalities that framed particular ideas about how homelessness might be governed, but also the practical means that have been employed to translate these ideas into reality. By doing so, it is possible to analyse the operation of government, for example at the level of homeless people and services to assist them:

Through an analysis of the intricate inter-dependencies between political rationalities and governmental technologies, we can begin to understand the multiple and delicate networks that connect the lives of individuals and groups and organizations to the aspirations of authorities' (Rose & Miller 1992, pp. 175-6).

Technologies of government are conceived as not simply a matter of 'implementation' of the ideal in the real, but as 'heterogenous mechanisms' or 'the complex assemblage of diverse forces' (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 183):

'... forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgement, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscription techniques and so forth, traversed and transacted by aspirations to certain outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed...' (Rose 1999, p. 52)

These disparate elements, once assembled, form a system that operates beyond the effects of its individual parts, and beyond the local level (Dean 1996, pp. 59, 64; Foucault 1979, p. 26). Such a system forms new connections between 'the aspirations of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups' that establish a changed conceptual framework so that 'aspects of the decisions and actions of individuals, groups, organisations and populations come to be understood and regulated in relation to authoritative criteria' (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 183). In this way connections such as shared interests, common modes of understanding and norms and standards come into being, which, Rose and Miller argue, operate to compose a network that enables rule 'at a distance' (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 184)

The analysis of government in terms of governmental technologies allows me to analyse the complex changes that have emerged in policies, programs and services for people who become homeless. In particular, there are two key technologies that have been introduced by governments from the 1980s, in order to enable them to govern homelessness at arms length, and that have interacted with particular political rationalities to enable a change in the conceptualisation of homelessness from a 'structural' issue to an 'individual' issue. These are a technology of performance management in homelessness services, and a technology of case management of homeless people.

I argue that 'performance management' was introduced as a means to regulate the activities of each of the diverse non-government organisations that were involved in assisting homeless people, and to form them into a homelessness service system that would implement government policies. Performance management comprises an 'assemblage' including the introduction of SAAP itself (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1985*); upgraded wages and working conditions, including the introduction of awards; training for both staff and management committees; the introduction of planning mechanisms for both individual services and the service system as a whole; the use of performance measures such as outcomes and outputs; the introduction of assessment and referral systems, user rights and client information; a national data collection; and changes in the nature of the agreement between government and the non-government services. These changes involved firstly, the use of service agreements, and subsequently the change from a submission model to the purchaser-provider model, including the use of techniques of competitive tendering, contract and expression of interest.

Similarly, I argue that the introduction of 'individual case management' has not only acted upon the lives of individual homeless people, but has also opened up new ways of conceptualising and making calculable the 'homelessness' that they experience and to which, in turn, governments and services respond. 'Individual case management' also comprises an 'assemblage' including legislation, a resource kit, service expertise, the aspirations of homeless people, changes from congregate accommodation to individual

units, instructions, checklists, staffing requirements, examples, policies and procedures, flowcharts and plans (National Case Management Working Group 1997).

Both of these technologies interlink with technologies of inscription, calculation and expertise to assist in enabling 'rule at a distance' in the area of homelessness (Rose & Miller 1992, pp. 185-189). These material forms, such as the recording of outputs, outcomes, data collection and case notes have acted to embody, codify and normalise certain ways of seeing and doing, and to reinforce claims of expertise. Rose and Miller emphasise the power of these forms (1992, p. 187): 'Making people write things down and count them ... is itself a kind of government of them, an incitement to construe their lives according to such norms.' The collection and use of these items by centres increases this power. Centres in the context of homelessness might include the government department or agency, the homelessness service or the case conference. My research will show how these technologies have been introduced and 'translated' at service level, and the diverse and contradictory ways in which such technologies have been interpreted. The fieldwork for this thesis provides detailed accounts from within services of how technologies have operated and changed at the level of service provision.

THE EVIDENCE EXAMINED

In my thesis I draw upon this 'genealogical' method described by Foucault (1984, 1985, 1994) and others (Dean 1999; Rose 1999; Rose & Miller 1992) to investigate changes in the problematisation of homelessness by Australian policies, programs and services. Foucault conceives of genealogy as the history of problematisations (Foucault 1985, p. 11). In other words, the methodology used in this thesis is an analysis of the government of homelessness in terms of the three points discussed above – the concerns of governments to solve a problem (constructed as a problem of 'homelessness'), the changing political rationalities within which they have understood and undertaken this task and the technical means which they have employed to achieve their ends – and in terms of how these have impacted on homeless people themselves (Barry, Osborne & Rose 1996, p. 2).

The emphasis of this research, therefore, will be on analysing the attempts by governments and others to put their intentions into practice rather than on describing social structures and institutions. This research seeks to diagnose changes in thinking about governing homelessness, in the truths that emerged concerning homelessness and the ways these truths were translated and enacted in policies, programs and services. Where the research does document systems to govern homelessness, it does so in order to analyse how homelessness has been governed in these ways rather than to produce a history of how homelessness services have been administered. This study is not 'realist', then, in the sense of studying the all of the detail of the actual operation of the systems established to respond to homelessness, but it is 'empirical' in that it is a study of the 'stratum' of knowing and acting (Rose 1999, p. 19) of those involved in understanding and responding to the policy problem of homelessness in Australia. This process may be described as one of attempting to 'diagnose an array of lines of thought, of will, of invention, of programmes and failures, of acts and counter-acts' (Rose 1999, p. 21).

This study is, therefore conceived as a 'history of the present' (Barry, Osborne & Rose 1996, p. 2) which aims to understand how it was possible that the changes that I identified came to occur in the way that homelessness has been understood and acted upon. The 'history of the present' is a term that has been used by Foucault and others to describe this genealogical approach to history that specifically seeks to undermine complacency about the way we think and act in the present – to challenge our tendency to regard our current perspectives as natural. Foucault's approach to writing a 'history of the present' seeks to avoid what he refers to as: 'writing a history of the past in terms of the present' (*Discipline and Punish*, p31). Instead, a 'history of the present' investigates past assumptions and practices while viewing current assumptions and practices, not as a norm to be preserved but as a present which is itself impermanent and always in the process of becoming history.

Following Foucault, I carry out this study of government rationality and technology by means of two strands of activity: historical work and incorporation of 'disqualified' or 'local knowledges':

By subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on the one hand, I am referring to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systematisation ... and which criticism – which obviously draws on scholarship – has been able to reveal.

On the other hand, I believe that by subjugated knowledges one should understand ...a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity...(such as that of the psychiatric patient, of the ill person, of the nurse, of the doctor – parallel and marginal as they are to the knowledge of medicine – that of the delinquent, etc.)...

Let us give the term *genealogy* to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today. (Foucault 1994, pp. 20-22)

I aim to examine changes in how homelessness has been problematised by analysing both sets of ‘knowledges’ referred to by Foucault: historical documents and the ‘local’ or ‘subjugated’ knowledge of people working in the homelessness field. In doing so, I aim to access perspectives that may expand understandings or challenge accepted knowledge of the formation of ‘homelessness’. The task of genealogy is to bring these local perspectives to bear upon the official and accepted accounts of the problems and activities of government in order to understand how these accounts and activities have been ‘put together’ (Rose 1999). This process aims to enable the reassessment of received wisdoms that I sought in the Introduction. Foucault describes this task of genealogy as being to:

... entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge ... (Foucault 1994, p. 22)

Firstly, I have considered ‘historical’ items in the form of documents and statements of political and strategic position regarding social policies, programs and services to address homelessness. These documents were produced by government bodies, non-government bodies and various other entities such as those established to undertake inquiries and evaluations. They include legislation, government or ministerial statements, departmental public statements, strategies, funding specifications, guidelines, reports and other publications. As well, I have examined documents from non-government bodies, including peak bodies and individual services, as well as social narratives, such as media stories, critiques and reports as texts which relate to proposals and developments concerning homelessness policies, programs and services.

Secondly, I have conducted interviews with a selected sample of people with experience during the last 30-35 years in policies, programs and services relating to homelessness. These interviews bring the informed perspectives or ‘local knowledges’ of those who are closely involved with the provision of services for people who are homeless. Their accounts are used to bear upon official accounts of government’s responses to homelessness by confirming or challenging aspects of these accounts with the aim of increasing understanding of how governments have thought and acted in this area. The people I interviewed for this fieldwork had worked in homelessness services, peak bodies for homelessness services and/or social policy and program areas of the State and Federal bureaucracies. The interviewees included people with backgrounds in both charities and community-based organisations, and in a variety of service types, including traditional hostel-style services, women’s refuges, youth refuges, medium-term services, organisations providing multiple services, community housing providers, other housing and information services and services for specific target groups. I used an interview guide approach (Patton 2002), and the questions I asked of interviewees were general questions about whether they had seen any changes in homelessness policy, programs, practices and services, the issues facing people who used them and how services viewed homeless people and assisted them. Details of the Fieldwork Method are at Appendix 1; the Information and Consent Form used is at Appendix 2; the Interview Guide is at Appendix 3; and Appendix 4 contains information about the backgrounds of interviewees together with numerical codes that link this background information to interviewee quotes used in the thesis.

I argue that the ‘local knowledges’ of these interviewees are of particular value in this research, which is seeking to understand how it was that conceptualisations of homelessness changed over the period since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Homelessness research in general has not made a great deal of use of the experiences and perspectives of those who work in homelessness policy and program areas. These people bring a perspective that is critical for my research, however, because they have both witnessed and participated in the policy changes that have occurred over the research period. As a result, they have detailed understandings of how policies have actually been translated at the service level and of the effects of these policies and programs in assisting people who were homeless. They are highly engaged participants who, in the course of the fieldwork interviews, expressed a high level of commitment to improving policies and services about homelessness. They therefore contributed a wealth of perceptions, views, observations and analyses about the way that homelessness has been understood and addressed over time, and about the changes that I am seeking to understand.

The inclusion of a set of interviews specifically with people who were currently homeless could further extend this research. Some interviewees who now work in homelessness services did contribute useful discussions of their own past experiences of homelessness. While I do believe that fieldwork with a wider range of people who were homeless during the research period would have resulted in valuable information from a different ‘local’ perspective about how homelessness has been governed, supervisory advice, resource limitations and the need to limit the scope of this research as a PhD student precluded extending the fieldwork. I believe that interview material from homeless people would be a valuable contribution to this research about how homelessness has been governed and could usefully contribute to any future, extended study. I do not, however, believe that the composition of my fieldwork compromises the argument I am making in this thesis.

Further, the research could be extended through a more extensive process of fieldwork that included interviewees from a wider geographical spread. This, too, might produce a richer detail of ‘local knowledges’. Because of resource limitations, my fieldwork was

limited in scale, and almost all of my fieldwork was based in NSW. I acknowledge that the detail of the implementation of homelessness policies has differed in different parts of the country, partly because of the joint Commonwealth-State/Territory arrangements for governing homelessness, and partly because of differences in population, history, geography, state government initiatives and non-government activity. I attempted to incorporate information from wider sources while remaining within my resources as a PhD student by including some interviewees who had some kind of overview of developments in a number of localities and in some instances, a number of states, either through involvement in peak bodies or through having worked in homelessness services in other states. I also drew on written material from both service providers and researchers in a number of states. In particular, I drew on material in *Parity*, which has been published by the Council to Homeless Persons in Melbourne since 1988, and includes contributions from people involved in homelessness services particularly in Victoria, but also across Australia.

The evidence is that the broad changes considered in the thesis did, however, occur at national level, and that the scale and geographical limitations of my fieldwork do not compromise my argument. The focus of the thesis is principally on the policy goals and implementation of responses to homelessness that occurred at a national level, through national and Commonwealth-state programs. Nevertheless the scope of this research and the resources available for it mean that the thesis does not reflect all of the differences in policy and implementation that occurred within or alongside national responses.

I expect that respondents may have an interest in the issues raised by the research and might even find some of the results to be of value. These would constitute possible motives for their voluntary participation. There was no other inducement or reward offered but the research will be available to participants. This is consistent with my view of the interviewees as research partners rather than as objects of research, and is also consistent with my status as a student. I hope that participants would view the research as a diagnostic process of our contemporary ways of thinking and acting about homelessness that has the potential to 'enhance their contestability' (Rose 1999, p. 59).

THE ARGUMENT

Having identified my research question and located it within the field of relevant research, and arguing in this way that significant insights flow from the work on governmentality, my thesis now sets out to chart the nature of those changes in the ways in which the homeless have been ‘governed’ over the last 30 years.

In summary, my thesis shows that, consistent with my experiences, conceptions of homelessness in policy and service provision have been understood in research and commentary about this field in terms of, on the one hand, structuralist conceptions of homelessness, and on the other hand, explanations that rely on a methodological individualism (which explains social phenomena as the result of individual actions) – as well as on attempts to reconcile this dichotomy. Structuralist conceptions of homelessness view the causes of and solutions to homelessness as residing in underlying social power structures such as housing market conditions, poverty, unemployment and domestic violence. Individualist conceptions of homelessness see the causes of and solutions to homelessness as lying within individual homeless people themselves. In the last 30 years almost all commentators agree, the shift in conceptions of homelessness in policy, programs and services has been in the direction *from* structuralist *to* methodologically individualist conceptions of homelessness.

This explanation of policy development and changes in program and service delivery essentially sees this shift as involving a ‘retreat of the state’ (Graycar 1983) or a reduction by the state in its involvement in policies, programs and services relevant to homelessness. Such an explanation, however, tends to ignore the more profound shifts taking place in social policy and welfare services across Western liberal democracies more generally. Following those authors who have sought to explain this shift not in terms of a retreat of the state but rather in terms of a re-configuration of ‘political power beyond the state’ (Rose & Miller 1992), I argue that changes to homelessness policies, programs and service delivery are more accurately understood as involving a shift from liberal to so-called advanced liberal governmentality. That is, that we can more accurately understand the nature of the changes in homelessness policy, programs and

service delivery in terms of the development of a more complex form of liberal governmentality through which welfare state institutions and entitlements are reduced or reconfigured and individuals and groups are increasingly required to govern themselves. This so-called advanced liberal governmentality requires, in other words, that individuals and groups govern themselves *through their own* freedoms. Such freedom as I will show is, however, not the individual freedom of autonomous citizens rather it is a regulated and ambiguous freedom conceived and configured through the re-arrangement of a whole range of state and non-state agencies and institutions, relying on market techniques to ‘manage’ services and individual homeless people. The ambiguous nature of these arrangements is reflected in evidence that their operation in homelessness services led to mixed results, and even contributed to some homeless people being excluded from receiving assistance. These apparatuses of government in this way give institutional expression to the forms of political reasoning (political rationalities) now informing homelessness policy, programs and service provision.

Following from the Introduction, Chapter One of my thesis examines changes in the ways in which homelessness has been conceived and addressed as a ‘problem of government’ in Australia over several decades from the 1970s, in order to understand the changes in how the causes of homelessness have been understood. I argue that, from the 1970s the definition of homelessness was already being expanded from the homeless people defined as ‘skid row’ alcoholics to include groups of ‘new homeless’, such as women, young people and children escaping domestic violence and young people affected by labour market changes or family breakdown. This ‘new’ homelessness was broadly recognised as being created by economic and social forces, rather than simply resulting from individual characteristics or situations.

At the same time, a critique of the welfare state and centralised planning began to gain traction from the mid-1970s, based on the arguments of Freidrich Hayek and others (Hayek 1944), who advocated reducing social welfare entitlements and facilitating the operation of the economic market. This new, advanced liberal rationality sought to work *through* the regulated agency of self-governing citizens, and in Chapter One I show how it was to impact on how governments conceived of and addressed homelessness in two ways. Firstly, in keeping with the critique of welfare, Australian governments

progressively reduced the availability of certain welfare state entitlements that had previously acted to pre-empt homelessness for some people, so that the definition of homelessness and the numbers of homeless people expanded further. Initially, governments also expanded funding for non-government organisations to offer temporary accommodation and, increasingly, support to homeless people. These organisations included both the religious and charitable organisations that had traditionally provided basic shelter to the 'skid row' homeless, as well as new, activist community based groups, which wished to set up women's and youth refuges, initially in order to create social change by drawing attention to issues of domestic violence and young people's rights.

Secondly, governments began to move away from the previous approach of the welfare state to instead encourage welfare recipients' activity in overcoming their disadvantage. As the critique of welfare developed, it began to more strongly conceptualise problems of poverty and homelessness in terms of 'dependency', rather than in terms of a lack of access to housing, employment or other opportunities, caused by changes in the labour and housing markets, or by social issues such as domestic violence, as had been the case under the rationality of the welfare state. Instead, 'dependency' was conceived to be an effect of the welfare state's social provisions based on entitlement, as well as an obstacle to economic development and the wellbeing of individuals and the population more generally (Department of Community Services 2000; Mead 1997; Murray 1984). The fostering of activity, independence and self-reliance in homeless people, and ultimately their increased participation in the economy, was therefore to be conceptualised as the solution to the problem. These tasks were to be primarily undertaken, not by governments directly, but by non-government organisations. I analyse how, from the mid-1990s, then, the previous growth in the capacity of Australian homelessness services ceased, and changes were introduced into homelessness policies and services that reflected this new thinking about welfare that was developing in liberal democracies, and which aimed to activate both welfare recipients and non-government agencies to take on additional responsibilities in resolving disadvantage. I argue that the new policies conceptualised the solutions to – and causes of – homelessness as lying within the individual homeless person.

In Chapter 2 I focus specifically on how the transformations in thinking about welfare impacted on the operation of services to assist people who become homeless. I argue that, as Australian governments, like similar governments internationally, moved away from direct welfare state provision, they used existing non-government organisations as a vehicle to deliver, at arms length, increased homelessness services for the expanded population of homeless people described in Chapter 1. I analyse how governments employed technologies of ‘performance management’ including techniques such as ‘accountable management’ and ‘entrepreneurial government’, derived from business, as a means to regulate the activities of this expanded network that was to operate, on the government’s behalf, as a homelessness service system. These techniques were employed both to regulate the ‘performance’ of each organisation providing services and to mould non-government services to form the service system. I argue that these changes did enable the government to exert much greater control over the planning and operation of both individual services and of this service system, while at the same time constructing each service as more autonomous and business-like, with responsibility for managing its own risks. While the changes arguably brought certain improvements to service delivery for homeless people, there is evidence that the impact was not always to improve the overall assistance that homeless people received. In particular, the shift to becoming a ‘provider’ of a service purchased on the basis of ‘unit costing’ and measured by ‘outputs’, has encouraged services to conceptualise homeless people as clients with individual need to be addressed rather than as people affected by deeper structural issues such as poverty or unemployment. These changes, together with changes described in Chapter 1, also introduced multiple and competing conceptualisations of non-government organisations involved in assisting homeless people. These multiple conceptualisations create significant tension within government efforts to deliver homelessness services at arms length and produce competing assessments of the role and task of homelessness services.

Chapter 3 analyses how, from the mid-1990s, this homelessness service system was required to use the technology of ‘case management’ to shape homeless people to more closely fit with the advanced liberal goals of self-reliance and independence. The extension of the ethos of ‘management’ to the task of shaping homeless people through ‘individual case management’ was consistent with the intention to move responsibility

for welfare away from the state. Instead, services were to take responsibility for working to activate individual homeless people, in order to increase their self-reliance and independence. Case management aimed at ‘empowering’ homeless people (National Case Management Working Group 1997) by seeking to have them govern themselves *through their own* freedoms. I argue that these ‘freedoms’ are a specific form of regulated freedom, or ‘empowerment’ to change the self to more nearly accord with the self-reliance conceptualised as necessary by advanced liberal rationalities. In this way, homeless people are enjoined to manage their own risks within, and guided by, a ‘community’ comprised of an array of non-government entities. I argue that the introduction of case management has had both positive and significantly negative effects including, in some cases, the exclusion of some ‘high risk’ homeless people from services. Further, I argue that the introduction of case management as a policy response to homelessness produced a focus on the individual characteristics of homeless people, and thus contributed to changing the conceptualisation of homelessness itself towards these individual characteristics and away from broader contextual issues such as poverty and housing availability. In this way the technology of case management expresses the concerns of advanced liberal reasoning with ‘dependency’ as the source of poverty and homelessness.

The Conclusion points out how these changes occurred as the Australian government, like many other Western liberal governments, addressed a growing problem of homelessness in the context of the critique of the welfare state and an embrace of advanced liberal political rationalities of government, which aimed to enable a competitive market economy to function and to work *through* the regulated freedom of both groups and individuals. I argue that this has been achieved in great part, by means of the shared logic of the two technologies of ‘performance management’ and ‘case management’ aimed at governing homelessness by increasing the responsibility and shaping, albeit at arms length, the activities of organisations and individuals respectively. These two technologies constructed both individual homeless people and homelessness services as aspirants to becoming responsible participants in market activity and collaborators in addressing homelessness, and contributed to the reconceptualisation of ‘homelessness’ as being to a greater extent the result of the individual characteristics of homeless people, and to a lesser extent the result of deeper

contextual issues such as poverty or housing availability. I argue that both technologies exemplify tensions in the goals and techniques of the ‘welfare reform’ agenda. They do not constitute a ‘retreat’ of the welfare state, but rather, an extension of the influence of the state, paradoxically *through* services and homeless people who are encouraged and regulated to be free, independent and self-reliant. They thus exemplify the discursive and institutional formations that shape and inform dominant modes of political reasoning and the ways in which these in turn configure homelessness policy, producing historically specific ideas of homelessness itself.

The Rudd government, elected in December 2007 signalled changes to the discourses on homelessness, reviving the idea that circumstances and events beyond individual control were causal factors in creating homelessness. The government announced a national approach to reducing homelessness, with specific targets and increased financial commitments. These initiatives are still being developed and it is not yet possible to analyse their implementation.

CHAPTER 1. GOVERNING HOMELESSNESS AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

I've always believed, I still believe that these services have operated because they want to provide good quality services for their clients and I think that was the case in the 70s and I think it's the case now. I think what's changed is the policy frameworks under which they operate. [Interviewee 3]

This chapter examines the ways in which 'homelessness' has been constructed as a 'problem of government' in Australia since the 1970s. As signalled in the Introduction, this period has been shaped both by major changes in the specific ways in which homelessness was conceptualised as a problem to be dealt with by government, and by broader political and social transformations taking place across all liberal-democratic welfare states. These broad transformations (as discussed in the Introduction) have been characterised by many commentators (Burchell 1996; Cruikshank 1999; Dean 1999; Higgins & Ramia 2000; Mendes 2003; Moss 2001; Murray 1984; Rose 1999; Rose & Miller 1992; Schooneveldt 2004, p. 4; Shaver 2002) as involving a shift from a model of welfare premised upon the idea that the state had responsibility to make provision for the welfare of its most disadvantaged citizens to one in which those disadvantaged citizens are now themselves to be held responsible for their own welfare and are to be activated to resolve their disadvantaged circumstances.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

In examining the construction of 'homelessness' during this period, this chapter draws upon policy and program documents as well as interview data to argue that although the problem of homelessness came to include an increase in the number of people so defined (and thus an increase in the number of people who could potentially obtain specific homelessness services and benefits), at the same time during this period there was a decrease in the number and capacity of agencies and services which acted to pre-empt the problem of homelessness. This process of contraction in some institutions and agencies together with the expansion in the definition of homelessness entailed a change

in the definition that was applied to some citizens and therefore in how they were dealt with, so that citizens were transferred to the category of homelessness from other social categories. In addition to this, while there was an initial increase in the number of agencies dealing specifically with homelessness, this increase was short-lived. In other words, an *expansion* in the definition of homelessness and broadening of the scope of the ‘problem’ took place at the same time that a significant *contraction* was taking place in the number and functions of available services, agencies, institutions and market opportunities providing alternative avenues than homelessness, together with an ongoing *stasis* in the number and functions of available services, agencies and institutions designed to assist homeless people.

Further, in this chapter I will argue that at the same time that these changes were occurring in definition and service provision related to homelessness, people who were homeless also became subject to the revised ways of thinking about welfare that had developed in liberal democratic states – namely that welfare recipients were to become actively engaged in efforts to overcome their disadvantaged circumstances. I argue that, consistent with these changes, during the 1990s homelessness came to be viewed more as an issue of individual ‘welfare’ or individual ‘problems’ (as had also been the case prior to the 1970s) rather than as being produced by structural forces such as those related to housing provision and the housing market. Similarly, the changed approach to welfare required agencies which assist homeless people to take on increased responsibilities by engaging in ‘social partnerships for building community capacity’ with government departments and other entities. In other words, as governments reduced their direct role, both community organisations and homeless people themselves were to take on additional responsibilities in overcoming homelessness.

Towards the end of the first decade of the new century, the contraction in the availability of opportunities and avenues that might pre-empt homelessness intensified, due firstly to pressures in the housing market and secondly to the effects of broader economic forces known as the global financial crisis, in particular increased unemployment. At the same time, changed government policy reconceptualised homelessness as a mainstream issue related at least partly to structural issues such as poverty and to circumstances beyond individual control. Consistent with this, the

Commonwealth government signalled an *expansion* in the number and functions of services to both provide alternative avenues than homelessness, and to assist homeless people.

To summarise then, this chapter shows how ideas about homelessness were constructed over the research period. It focuses on how, over a major part of the research period, the contradiction between the expansionary logic of homelessness policy and the contractionary logic of institutional transformations, together with the revised welfare context, was understood by policy makers and service providers who devised and executed services for homeless people throughout this period. Chapters 2 and 3 will build upon Chapter 1 to examine in detail *how* these ideas were translated at the level of services and service provision for homeless people.

1972-1983: EXPANSION OF 'HOMELESSNESS' FROM 'SKID ROW' TO 'THE NEW HOMELESS' AND THE CRITIQUE OF WELFARE – THE WHITLAM AND FRASER GOVERNMENTS

The decade from the early 1970s saw the emergence of two key changes in thinking about and responding to social problems, and to homelessness in particular, that were to have a major impact on policy conceptions of homelessness, and on homelessness policies, programs and services. The first change comprised a focus on homelessness as an issue related to social and economic structural factors, an expansion of the policy conception of homelessness – of who would be considered to be homeless in government policy and programs – and a related expansion of the role of government in providing funding for services, fuelled by community pressure, for those who were so defined. The second involved the emergence of changes in thinking about welfare that challenged and critiqued the welfare state and advocated a changed role for governments in facilitating the operation of the economy. These are changes that I have described in the Introduction as changes away from welfare liberalism towards advanced rationalities of liberalism. In responding to homelessness, the decisions of governments were shaped by these two conflicting approaches.

From the 1970s, there was an increasing awareness, both in Australia and internationally, of homelessness as a social issue with structural roots (Avramov 1999; Busch-Geertsema 2001; Fitzpatrick 2005; Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999). This analysis understood homelessness as being generated by a range of underlying social and economic factors that could have far-reaching effects. As a result, the 'skid row' homeless who the churches and other charitable organisations had defined as the homeless were joined by a broad range of other groups within the population. These groups included young people, women, families, children, and the elderly, and came to be known as the 'new homeless' (Adkins et al. 2003; Chamberlain & MacKenzie 1998; Greenhalgh et al. 2004; Hoogland 2001; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1989; Johnson, Gronda & Coutts 2008; National Inquiry Concerning the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness 1993). A fieldwork interviewee who had worked in a large charitable organisation since 1981 confirmed her experience of changes in the homeless population, observing that:

...the biggest changes have been the changes in profile to the client group ... the typical homeless person was generally a man of 50-55 who had an alcohol related problem ... [Interviewee 14]

In 1977 Alan Jordan, at the time a government official responsible for the Homeless Persons Assistance Act (HPAP), which had been established in 1974, aimed at the 'skid row' homeless, reflected on the issue of '...who should be considered to be homeless people...' (Jordan 1977, p. 7) for policy and program purposes:

Depending on how you define the term 'homeless', it could comprise a very large number of people indeed. Not only the skid row sort of homeless people and the women and children who come into women's refuges, but evicted families, itinerant families, seasonal workers and those thousands and thousands of young people who are in circulation around the country at any given time. Not to mention others ... (Jordan 1977, p. 7)

This greater awareness and expanded definition of homelessness that was coming to be accepted at the end of the 1970s can be seen as the culmination of a series of

developments. First, from the 1960s there was an increased community focus on a number of social issues of discrimination and disadvantage. This included pressure about the extent of poverty in Australia despite the post-war prosperity enjoyed by many. This 'rediscovery' of poverty was supported by the work of Professor Ronald Henderson who, in measuring poverty in Melbourne, calculated a 'poverty line' close to the basic wage plus child endowment for two children (Mendes 2003, p. 18). There was increased community pressure on the long term Coalition government to increase benefits and to undertake a national study of poverty. Just prior to the fall of this government in 1972, Prime Minister McMahon announced a national Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (or Henderson Report) conducted by Professor Henderson (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1976; Mendes 2003, p. 18). An interviewee linked the change in awareness of homelessness to an awareness of poverty more generally, as a result of the Henderson Report:

... the Henderson inquiry rediscovered poverty in Australia and discovered that despite all our wonderful social housing systems and our home ownership, there were large proportions of the population that were excluded. They were older people, younger people, people with disabilities; they were people who ultimately find themselves now in the SAAP sector. [Interviewee 13]

At the same time Indigenous Australians mounted campaigns against dispossession and disadvantage resulting from successive government policies and the women's movement campaigned against discrimination and male dominance. The growing agitation of excluded groups such as these and some of the welfare organisations, together with the movement against the war in Vietnam and other changes in the social and political landscape contributed to the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972 (Lloyd & Reid 1974).

Second, the policies and actions of the new Labor government (1972-5) reflected and in fact encouraged the community concern about poverty, disadvantage and discrimination. The Whitlam government was elected with policies including that of promoting equality. Gough Whitlam's 1972 policy speech, 'It's Time for Leadership' expressed the new government's aims: '- to promote equality - to involve the people of

Australia in the decision-making processes of our land - and to liberate the talents and uplift the horizons of the Australian people' (ALP Policy Speech, 1972, p. 5, quoted in Lloyd & Reid 1974, p. 211). The Whitlam government's early actions signalled its intention to address issues affecting groups whose needs had not been addressed. Four days after the election an interim ministry announced the re-opening of the equal pay case for women, and the next day granting of mining leases on Aboriginal reserve lands was halted (Lloyd & Reid 1974, p. 23). The government's reforms, such as free tertiary education, Medibank and increased benefits and welfare services (Mendes 2003) extended the scope of the welfare state that had been established over the first half of the century (Dickey 1980; Garton 1990; Hayward 1996; Jones 1980; Kewley 1969; Roe 1976; Smyth 1994). These reforms involved substantial increases in social policy expenditure, including in housing, health, education and child care (Mendes 2003). The Whitlam government endorsed the recommendations of its Social Welfare Commission that social welfare should not be limited to a residual or safety net, or an adjunct to the economy to support societal functioning. Rather, a third position on the role of social welfare is described as follows:

Society is responsible for the well being of all its members both through the provision of universal services, education, health, transport, communications, and selective services, welfare, housing, pensions, counselling services and the like. Social welfare rather than an afterthought becomes a positive agent for change ... Social policy is therefore intended to bring about improvement in the standard and quality of life for all individuals and to ensure a redistribution of resources within society (Social Welfare Commission 1975, p. 13).

Further, the government encouraged community pressure by asking citizens to become involved in its decision-making. In outlining the proposed policy on Open Government Mr Whitlam requested input from the Australian people: 'We want them always to help us as a government to make the decisions and to make the right decisions' (ALP Policy Speech, 1972, p. 9, quoted in Lloyd & Reid 1974, p. 212). Various groups including women and welfare groups responded by making demands on the government.

Until the 1970s the provision of services to homeless people had taken place mainly through large centres run by traditional charities such as the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society and the various City Missions with little direct government assistance (Chesterman 1988, p.7). The mid-1970s saw three major developments that were to have long-term effects on the construction of homelessness as a problem for government. One was the enactment of the Homeless Persons Assistance Act in 1974 (*Homeless Persons Assistance Act 1974*), with the first grants to (primarily charitable) services made in 1975. The second was the opening in 1974 of the first women's refuge, Elsie, in Glebe, after a group of women squatted in two vacant properties (Gander 2006, p. 12), followed in 1975 by the Labor government funding of twelve women's refuges as well as the opening of the first youth refuge, Young People's Refuge in Chippendale and other youth refuges funded on an 'experimental' basis (Coffey 2006, p. 24). The third development was economic change from the mid-1970s which led to new problems of long-term unemployment and poverty particularly among the unskilled (Mendes 2003, pp. 22-25). As a result of the changes in these three areas, governments took a greater role in funding services for homeless people. In addition both services and the profile of the people who used them became much more diverse.

The HPAP was established by the Labor government after pressure by people from Victorian homelessness services on both political parties during the election led to the establishment of a Working Party on Homeless Men and Women (Jordan 1994, p. 114; Working Party on Homeless Men and Women 1973). The focus on the extent of poverty in Australia from the 1960s had raised the issue of homelessness, in particular among alcoholic men, although others were affected as well, for example, recently arrived migrants who had difficulty in securing housing, and people in both city and rural areas who were experiencing extreme poverty. The Working Party's recommendations, such as subsidies to night shelters, hostels and other services for the homeless were subsequently supported by the Henderson Report (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1976, pp. 295, 329). The Henderson Report also acknowledged Australia's housing problems and pointed out a need for government planning '... to underpin private provision in order to discharge their responsibility to ensure that no one misses out' (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1976, p. 4).

More broadly, the Henderson Report identified substantial poverty in Australia and affirmed that: 'Poverty is not just a personal attribute; it arises out of the organisation of society' (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1976, p. 2). In particular it identified a number of disadvantaged groups such as the aged, migrants, Aboriginal people, large and single parent families, single females, the sick and invalid, the unemployed and women. Three key principles influenced its recommendations: the right to a basic level of wellbeing and respect for individual independence and dignity, government intervention, with special consideration for disadvantaged groups to underpin equal opportunity, and need as the primary criteria for assistance.

The HPAP reflected this approach by seeking to make two significant changes to past understandings of assistance to the homeless by challenging the 'improving' and 'deserving' aspects of some of the charitable services as indicated in the HPAP guidelines:

Main emphasis will be given to assisting homeless people where they are and as they are, rather than changing them. The preference will be for projects accessible to and immediately valuable to homeless people in greatest and most immediate need (Department of Social Security 1976, Sect 2.5-2.8).

Firstly, these guidelines show how the HPAP challenged the selective approach that had been the hallmark of the evangelical Victorian charities, which focussed on those people who were considered to be 'deserving' and excluded those who were viewed as being somehow responsible for their situation, such as alcoholics and others with chronic problems. The emphasis on need as the primary criterion for assistance affirmed that the priority was to assist the most destitute, consistent with the principles set out in the Henderson report and a greater emphasis on government responsibility for social problems, social provision through entitlement and a rejection of selective approaches based on the theories of individual deficit which had prevailed up until this time.

Secondly, these early HPAP Guidelines funded only approaches focused on helping people as they were, rather than 'improving' or reforming them. The Guidelines expressly excluded attempts at prevention, rehabilitation or promotion of lasting

behavioural change, in order to avoid stigma or coercion and because of a view that 'therapeutic programs' were expensive and had a 'very low' rate of success. Instead, the Program Guidelines aimed to meet homeless people's survival needs and help them to improve their situation, by regaining 'confidence and self-respect', and offering 'realistic opportunities' (Department of Social Security 1976, Sect 2.7). The exclusion of rehabilitation from the HPAP constituted a move away from conceptualisations of homelessness as individual deficit associated with the 'improving' aspects of the charitable approach.

The HPAP can thus be viewed as an attempt to force changes upon those charities operating from the punitive Victorian approach with its emphasis on improvement and selectivity, so that they would operate in a manner more consistent with social government. This appears to have had only limited success initially: a review of the HPAP services in 1978 found that contrary to the guidelines, homeless people were provided with 'spiritual group activities' and 'therapeutic group activities' in many centres (Department of Social Security 1978, p.37). Further, staff were more influenced by the traditional charitable understanding of individual deficit than social models of poverty and entitlement associated with the welfare state:

Most respondents appeared to think of the basic difficulties of their clients as in their own natures, if not necessarily within their power of conscious choice. ... There was a notable absence of statements implying that homelessness and the problems of homeless people were caused by social and economic factors in the larger society, or by arbitrary assignment to deviant roles. Although such explanations have been influential in academic theory and professional ideology, the working theories of these particular practitioners seemed to be individualistic if not voluntary (Department of Social Security 1978, p. 10-11).

On the other hand, the move to prohibit funding for rehabilitation combined with the nature of the grants available meant that services did not receive funding to provide anything other than the most basic help. Grants were available for specified costs of purchasing, renting and equipping premises for a 'homeless persons assistance centre', as well as for half the salaries of social workers or social welfare workers in an effort to

encourage charities to employ some qualified staff. A set amount fixed by regulation was also paid for meals and accommodation provided (*Homeless Persons Assistance Act 1974*). The funding formula fitted with the idea that the main purpose of funding was to provide the physical accommodation, rather than non-physical support or assistance.

Due to the focus of funding under the HPAP, few new services were initially funded; rather most of the money went into maintenance, expansion and improvement of the existing activities of existing organisations. These were the non-profit and religious groups who generally operated traditional night shelters providing beds for alcoholics and itinerants. A departmental officer confirmed the narrow scope envisaged by the Program, noting that it was thought of:

...pretty much as being confined to the skid row sort of homeless people, i.e., single, chronically homeless adults. It was thought of pretty much as a topping up operation. What we had in our minds was that organizations in the field of assisting that kind of homeless person were grossly understaffed, undercapitalised, overstressed. It was possibly the most backward area of social welfare activity in most parts of the country, in that things that had come to be accepted as standard in other social welfare activities had never been introduced because of lack of resources' (Jordan 1977, p.2).

The HPAP can be viewed both as an attempt to include what this departmental officer referred to as a 'backward' area in the welfare state's response to poverty, and as a development which did not really change the role of the charities in many ways. The traditional charitable approach was largely retained, and primary responsibility remained with the charities, with the government 'topping up'. As a result the ethos of 'charity' remained the organising principle of the work of many of the HPAP funded services.

At the same time that HPAP funding was being extended to the charitable services, a much greater diversity was being introduced to the area of homelessness provision, through the establishment of two groups of community based refuges. The feminist and

youth services were based on the assumption that those using them were entitled to assistance. These services, particularly the feminist refuges, arose from explicitly political movements engaging in a critique of society and the family; seeking social change and liberation of oppressed groups; and advocating for the rights of women and children, including the right to live free from domestic violence. They offered a political focus and way of working. This interviewee comment describes how different the approach of the new services was from those that had existed prior to this time:

... initially women were very surprised to find that there were services being created because they were new ... initially it was like oh my gosh this service exists and we didn't know about it. Oh its new - and the excitement of watching women feel more – entitled – that's the word that I was actually looking for – to receiving services. So initially it was this thing oh it's a charitable thing, that we were do gooders, and then it was the thing of no, we're entitled and that was part of the community development work we were doing, which was about, you're entitled to actually be provided for and to have safe accommodation and to be able to leave home, and all that. [Interviewee 1]

From the late 1960s the emerging second wave of feminism had begun to highlight discrimination against women and, subsequently, the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault. The intention of feminists in setting up Elsie and the other early refuges was 'to expose the dark underside of patriarchy's attitudes to women in marriage' by providing a place for battered women to go (Johnson 1980, p. 1). Before the establishment of women's refuges, had not been viewed as homeless, and there had been few options as described by this interviewee who subsequently worked in women's refuges:

I came to Australia in 1972 and about nine months after I'd been here, had occasion to want to leave a violent marriage and ended up in the middle of Sydney with three young children thinking where do I go, what do I do.... People relied on family, friends. Some women would rely on the church and often that was a send back situation – you made your bed, lie on it. There really were very few places you could actually go.... what was available was usually run by the

churches and the judgements that those women in fact were put under, if they actually used those services. And it was so patriarchal obviously. It was almost an interrogation type process; they were often judged; there were often comments that were made and often they were made to feel the perpetrator, not the victim. [Interviewee 19]

The response from women was emphatic – in the first 6 weeks following the opening of Elsie, it had already accommodated 48 women and 35 children (Gander 2006, p. 12). Voluntary and donated resources could not meet this demand.

For many feminists, the decision to accept funding from the state meant dealing with ‘a pillar in the structural oppression of women’, but in doing so they calculated that ‘if the refuges could retain their political autonomy and agendas, the transfer of resources to overtly feminist services could compromise the state even more’ (McFerran 1990, p. 191). The Labor government supported funding of refuges, and feminists initially approached the International Women’s Year Secretariat established in 1975 (McFerran 1990). The Secretariat sought instead to place refuge funding permanently with the Department of Social Security (DSS), which already administered the HPAP. This proposal required compromise on all sides. In attempting to accommodate this arrangement feminists ‘reformulated the issues of domestic violence in the language of the “homeless persons” legislation’ (Johnson 1980, p. 1), arguing that victims of domestic violence were homeless because they were forced to remain in intolerable situations. However, in the end the placement of refuge funding with DSS did not proceed. The DSS was ‘hostile’ to hosting a refuge program and did not appear supportive of the refuges’ feminist approach (McFerran 1990). A former departmental officer also suggests that the limits to the recurrent funding available under the HPAP presented an obstacle as they were inadequate for the needs of refuges (Jordan 1977, p. 5).

A resolution was reached in mid 1975, when the government, under electoral pressure and courting the women’s vote, established a national program which funded an initial twelve women’s refuges through the Community Health Program under the Health Commission (McFerran 1990). The refuge program guidelines were based on the

original feminist models, which contrasted with the charitable hostels to offer ‘a non-institutionalized and self-help environment, run by consumers and supporters of the refuge in a collective and consensual system’ as well as to educate the community as part of a strategy to end domestic violence (McFerran 1990).

At the same time there had been a conceptual change as a result of the experiences of operating women’s refuges. Feminists recognised that until alternatives to dependence on men were brought into existence for women and children, ‘all women, whether we know it or not, are essentially homeless and dispossessed’ (Johnson 1980, p. 16). They had employed the language of homelessness to illuminate the devastation of domestic violence and had also witnessed the literal homelessness of women who left violent marriages. They had, however, resisted the reduction of domestic violence to merely a need for accommodation, and would continue to do so. Feminists viewed refuges as a means to raise the issue of domestic violence and eventually bring about its end. They understood that the link between domestic violence and homelessness occurred because legislative and law enforcement arrangements did not support other options for women to remain safely at home (McFerran 2007).

From the mid-1970s, homelessness came to be seen as an increasing problem for young people, partly linked to the increase in youth unemployment. A focus on the rights of young people, which paralleled aspects of feminism and asserted young people’s right to escape family situations that were oppressive, stifling, violent or otherwise abusive also contributed to a demand among young people for alternatives (Coffey 2006). These issues were linked: the changes in the youth labour market had reduced the opportunities for young people to leave home and live independently.

Early youth refuges operated from a ‘house parents’ model offering ‘love and restoration to family’ but this approach was soon supplanted in many services by a ‘youth worker’ model which was consistent with ‘very strong critiques of the family as it was then socially constructed...’ (Coffey 2006, p. 24) and to ‘understanding how young people are oppressed in our society...’ (Coffey 2006, p. 25). Like women’s refuges, many of the youth refuges linked youth homelessness to social issues rather than individual or moral issues, and operated from a philosophy of entitlement rather

than the traditional selective approach. Initially youth refuges were funded under a range of State government programs, and some were funded through the HPAP.

An outcome of these developments was that by the time that the Whitlam Labor government was controversially replaced by the Fraser Coalition government at the end of 1975, the policy notion of 'homelessness' as it had previously been understood was under challenge to both recognise the involvement of structural factors and to include a greatly expanded number of groups within the population, initially as a result of community pressure. As described in the Introduction, changes in thinking about homelessness internationally supported this challenge. At the same time, however, there were other, contradictory currents of thinking about the welfare state gaining traction amongst policy-makers and politicians across western liberal democracies. Mendes argues that these were driven in large part by the work of the Austrian-school economist, Friedrich Hayek and one of his 'disciples' in the US, Milton Friedman (Mendes 2003, pp. 31-3).

In 1944 *The Road to Serfdom* was published (Hayek 1944). Hayek argued forcefully against central economic planning. Hayek was writing at the time when Nazism and Soviet Communism under Stalin had engulfed much of Europe. At the time of publication Hayek's audience was a broadly liberal one – against fascism and communism. For Hayek, centralised economic planning would put a state and its society on the road to serfdom because this would in turn lead eventually to totally centralised political control of society and state – totalitarianism. He did not espouse a complete laissez-faire attitude, but rather argued 'in favour of making the best possible use of the forces of competition as a means of co-ordinating human efforts' (Hayek 1944, p. 39). However, in the 1970s his arguments found a new audience amongst advocates of free-markets and Hayek himself promoted this revised understanding of his original thesis. In 1974 he won the Nobel prize (Nobelprize.org) for economics, and his argument about the dangers of state planning as a constraint on freedom became economic orthodoxy. Two years later in 1976 Milton Friedman, a fellow advocate of the primacy of market competition and the dismantling of the provisions of the welfare state or 'big government', also won the Nobel prize for economics (Nobelprize.org). His work, *Free to Choose: a Personal Statement* (Friedman & Friedman 1980), co-authored

with Rose Friedman, argued that unregulated capitalism was necessary for human freedom, and warned against the dangers of what they termed an 'overgoverned' society (Friedman & Friedman 1980, p. 309). *Free to choose* commenced as a ten part US television program and then became the bestseller non-fiction book of 1980 (Friedman 1976, 2005).

Governments that were persuaded by the analysis of centralised planning and the importance of free markets were elected in the UK in 1979 and the US in 1980. In Australia, criticism of the welfare state was advanced by various proponents, initially through the media, and subsequently, by the early 1980s, within the Coalition Government (Mendes 2003). More broadly, commentators and political participants from both the left and the right criticised the welfare state and bureaucracy, with the left viewing the welfare state as a technology of social control that did not significantly alter the overall structure of society or the distribution of wealth (Graycar 1983, p. 2; Rose 1999, pp. 140-1).

The Fraser government's approach was affected **both** by the critique of the welfare state **and** by community demand for extension of its benefits (Mendes 2003, p. 22). It cut benefits, reduced universal provisions and embraced a residualist philosophy, where social assistance is targeted to those considered to be in most need. Cuts included the dismantling of universal health insurance and the Social Welfare Commission as well as various reductions in provisions for unemployed people and invalid pensioners. Further, in the context of rising unemployment among the younger and older unskilled, the government engaged in considerable publicity and activity attacking the welfare state and welfare recipients, particularly in relation to alleged dole fraud (Mendes 2003, pp. 24-5). Despite this public program aimed at expenditure reduction, the Fraser government also introduced new measures including Family Allowances, the Family Income Supplement, Community Youth Support Schemes for young unemployed people and the establishment of a Social Welfare Research Centre. In addition, it increased income support eligibility and provisions in the areas of the aged, children with disabilities and supporting parents (Mendes 2003, p. 23-4).

In the face of continuing community pressure about homelessness, the Fraser government increased funding for services for homeless people under the HPAP. While the HPAP had initially focussed on the 'skid row' homeless, the Program later developed to begin recognising changes in the homeless population, such as people made homeless by economic changes. The 1983 guidelines noted that while funding would be maintained for the chronically homeless, the program would also concentrate on other groups, including homeless individuals and families in a range of circumstances (Department of Social Security 1983, p. 15). While some youth services had been funded under HPAP and by some State governments, in 1979 the Commonwealth and States established a three year pilot Youth Services Scheme (YSS), later extended to 5 years, to provide emergency accommodation, referral and information to 'runaways' and 'street kids' (Chesterman 1988, p. 7; Coffey 2006, p. 24). This decision, which paralleled the separate funding for women's refuges (although less generously), reflected the understanding that young people in refuges '...required a higher level of supervision, counselling and support ...' (Report of the National Committee for the Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme 1983, p.16) than that provided to HPAP services. The government also established a Commonwealth Family Support Services Scheme, a new scheme targeting families, which included some accommodation projects (Chesterman 1988, pp. 7-8), and thereby further expanded the targeting of homelessness services to families.

The Fraser government's response to women's refuges was more complex. It both recognised the electoral mood of support for women's refuges, and found that the refuges' principles of self-help struck a chord with Liberal Party philosophy. From 1977 to 1979, in marked contrast to other areas of spending, the government dramatically expanded the funding so that the number of refuges increased from nineteen to ninety-nine (McFerran 1990, p. 194). On the other hand, it did not limit its funding to feminist models, but approved refuge funding to church and charitable groups who had previously been unsupportive of women leaving violent marriages. Some of these groups operated refuges with a 'feminism of protectionism', in that their primary role was to provide women with temporary protection from their husbands and encourage the reunification of women with their husbands if possible (Theobald 2008). At the same time, from 1976 the Fraser government passed refuge funding to the states in

Federal block grants and sought an increasing proportion of the funds from the states. This led to both reductions in the funding levels of new and existing refuges, in particular in Queensland and Western Australia, where conservative state governments refused to make up the funding gap. In New South Wales, the state government made up the Commonwealth funding gap (McFerran 1990, p. 194-6). In 1981 the Commonwealth passed all responsibility for refuge funding to the states, placing further pressure on refuges in some states (McFerran 1990, p. 198).

The initial establishment of women's and youth refuges came about as a result of community pressure on government to provide funding and services. Within several years this led to a very significant expansion in service providers. For example, within ten years of the first women's refuge being established in 1974, there were more than 160 in Australia (Rosenman 2006). The emergence of new programs and services shifted the focus of services for the homeless from the large centres run by traditional charities to small-scale shelters run by community groups (Chesterman 1988, p. 8). The two strands of provision had very different histories and philosophical backgrounds: the traditional charities were mostly church-based, while many of the new women's and youth services developed from social movements. There is evidence that there was some diversity within each tradition, with one interviewee commenting on the philosophical differences and '*separate*' [Interviewee 2] networking of the charitable and community agencies in the women's sector, particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s, and another commenting on church and community activists working together in the youth sector [Interview 23]. The charitable and community approaches did broadly assist different populations. Despite the move by charities to start operating some women's and youth services, they initially continued a strong focus on accommodating the chronically homeless, mostly men, while the new services targeted women and children escaping domestic violence and young people.

The fieldwork interviewees who had been involved with women's and youth refuges generally described these services as being established by groups of concerned community members who sought government funding. The following comments indicate the kind of local activity and pressure that was exercised by the diverse

participants of the many local community-based groups who formed the basis of the new services:

... the social worker with the Department of Social Security said there was a great need in this area for a women's refuge because she saw at Social Security how many women were assaulted and needed assistance so she formed a committee and the committee then applied for funding with the Department of Health and that's how we got our first grant to open this centre ...the committee was drawn from interested women... a lawyer, ... the local member at the time, he was very, very supportive ...and ... a police officer, an inspector at the time...it was men too... [Interviewee 16]

This service way back in 1978 came about with predominantly some people from a couple of the churches and some community activists who were saying there's these young people around, they need a service. A very small house was obtained through [the local council] and they got some money - I think the scheme was called YSS ... [Interviewee 23]

... it was a case of a group of local women seeing a need that evolved ... nothing was happening for single women so just a local committee of people and it appeared to me that there were a mixture of workers, local people and probably women who'd had similar experiences getting together, setting up a committee and saying let's try and get some money out of the government and then writing letters. [Interviewee 20]

... there was a group set up in this area, they were the community nurses, the social worker from the hospital, a group of women who started to lobby for the refuge ... We were given a derelict premises ... People had squatted on the premises. There was faeces everywhere ... we started to work as a collective. We devised a plan ... clean the house and order things and get the phone line connected and stuff like that ... when we opened up, we filled up virtually immediately. [Interviewee 12]

Jordan noted the level of pressure that had built up in relation to expanding the number of women's refuges, so that there was:

...a continuing wave of interest in women's refuges and the sort of problems that women's refuges are concerned with around the country, and new refuges were opening and new groups were appearing that were interested in opening refuges if they could find finance (Jordan 1977, p. 5).

Despite the increase in the number of services, the pressure to expand services continued. Unemployment had continued to rise under the Fraser government (Mendes 2003, p. 24). Changes were also occurring in traditional areas of low income housing in Australian cities. For example, one interviewee [Interviewee 21] with a history of working with organisations assisting tenants described a process of '*gentrification*' from the early 1980s where '*what you saw throughout the whole of Sydney's inner west was the displacement of the inner city working class private tenant communities*', involving in some cases the eviction of '*a whole street at once*' by institutional landlords. In 1982, evaluations of the YSS and of women's refuges were recommending that there was a need for more services to be funded (Perry, Waterford & Carr 1982; Report of the National Committee for the Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme 1983), thereby adding support to the community pressure for an expanded response.

At the same time that these pressures to expand services were intensifying, an opposing pressure to reduce welfare spending was developing in Australia. There was growing dissatisfaction by supporters of small government within the Liberal Party about the discrepancy between the Fraser Government's rhetoric and actions. In the early 1980s a Liberal group of backbenchers was set up to support free market ideas in rebellion against the Fraser government's approach. The group campaigned for changes, which came to be understood as 'economic rationalism'. These changes included the sale of significant public assets and the privatisation or free-marketisation of others, and a reduction in the size of the state both in terms of the extent to which the state was prepared to tax business and industry, and to protect them. Cuts to welfare spending were thus designed to ensure an efficient level of (free-market-like) competition

between agencies as well as a more efficient targeting of those potential recipients of welfare as being only 'the truly needy' (Mendes 2003, pp. 33-4).

1983-1996: THE SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAAP) AND 'ACTIVE' CITIZENSHIP – THE HAWKE-KEATING GOVERNMENTS

Following the defeat of the Fraser government the Labor Hawke/Keating governments (1983-96) attempted to respond to the conflicting pressures caused by the critique of the welfare state and the demand for its expansion. These governments juggled the competing forces by combining two approaches and espousing a goal of increased social justice within a more deregulated economy (Mendes 2003, pp. 25-6). Hawke described the central objective of his government's social justice strategy as being:

... to develop a fairer, more prosperous and more just society for every Australian. The strategy is directed at expanding choices and opportunities for people so that they are able to participate more fully as citizens in economic, political and social life ...' (Bob Hawke, quoted in Mendes 2003, p. 30)

Additional provisions included the re-introduction of universal health insurance, increased expenditure on public housing and child care and a Home and Community Care Program for the aged and disabled. In 1984 the newly elected Hawke Labor government introduced the Women's Emergency Services Program (WESP), which aimed to improve the geographic spread of services, the access of special needs groups and wages and conditions in women's refuges (Chesterman 1988, p. 7). WESP not only brought funding for women's refuges back to the national level, but also included advice and support services such as rape crisis and incest centres, supporting the concerns of feminists that 'the issue of violence against women was not simply a matter of homelessness and that the solution to the problem involved more than just the provision of emergency accommodation' (Hopkins & McGregor 1991, p. 20). In 1985 the WESP services became part of the new Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (1985), which will be discussed in more detail below.

At the same time as advocating social justice, the government continued the public criticism of welfare recipients initiated by the previous Fraser Government and increased the monitoring of recipients. The term ‘welfare fraud’ gained currency at this time, and was accompanied by increased ‘...control, surveillance and review...’ of those receiving social security benefits (Jamrozik 2001, p. 65). In 1986 the Hawke government linked the free-market paradigm of economic activity to that of social life more broadly as this concerned the recipients of welfare by proposing (unsuccessfully as it turned out) that young unemployed people be required to work for the dole and reducing their level of benefit, arguably contributing to the increase in youth homelessness (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1989, p. 160; Mendes 2003, p. 105).

The shift in Australian social policy thinking at this time – the idea that welfare recipients’ activity and participation in overcoming their situation was now crucial – constituted a significant shift away from the previous assumptions of the welfare state (Shaver 2002, pp. 334-5). These changes can be seen as the beginning of an approach which shifted the emphasis of social policy away from the welfare state notion of entitlement to welfare as a result of circumstance and towards a greater emphasis on individual responsibility as a component of the receipt of assistance. This approach was to strengthen in subsequent years, but the early changes occurred under the Hawke and to a greater extent, the Keating governments, and can be seen in both the areas of income support and in its responses to homelessness.

In the area of income support, the Hawke Government established a Social Security Review which was conducted between 1986 and 1989, and which recommended a more ‘active’ role for income support. This Review promoted ‘activity’ as a virtue following the ‘active society’ concept of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Active measures were those ‘...which encourage individuals to strive towards changes in circumstance or environment to improve their prospects of social and economic integration in the longer term...to take an active part in measures to rectify their current disadvantage...’ (Shaver 2002, p. 335). Initially the Labor government pursued the shift to ‘active’ assistance by introducing an activity test for unemployment benefits involving registering with an employment service and recording

job finding activities (Summers, Woodward & Parkin 2002, p. 467). In this way, social policy came to have a role in assisting labour market adjustments at a time of change in the focus of the economy. This was a first step in the refocussing of social policy to a new 'active' or entrepreneurial notion of citizenship.

Introducing SAAP

In the context of these shifts in social policy at the start of the 1980s the Australian response to homelessness was complex and fragmented, with a diverse range of programs at both Commonwealth and State levels for the chronically homeless, women and children escaping domestic violence, young people and others (Chesterman 1988, pp.7-8). The Commonwealth's response to this fragmentation of the field was to commission, in 1982, a Review of Crisis Accommodation, which resulted in 1985 in the introduction of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The Review of Crisis Accommodation found that the existing arrangements had no logical basis, were not meeting needs, were uncoordinated and inadequately funded, and that the effectiveness of crisis accommodation arrangements was constrained by the lack of affordable housing. It recommended that the existing programs be replaced by new legislation with a five year Commonwealth/State Agreement for joint funding, and administration by States and Territories (Chesterman 1988, p. 8). The Program drew together existing services and provided for the establishment of additional services using a cost-shared arrangement between Commonwealth and State governments, under a series of five-year agreements supported by legislation. Services and service models were divided between three broad sub-programs: a General Supported Accommodation Program, a Women's Emergency Services Sub-Program and a Youth Supported Accommodation Program, reflecting the existing models. SAAP was to be Australia's major policy and program response to homelessness for over two decades, until reforms that would be made by the Rudd Labor government in 2009. Over this time SAAP expanded from 500 funded services to 1,300 services receiving an annual total of \$333 million each year and assisting 161,200 people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness (Australian Government 2008e, p. 31).

The SAAP Act 1985, which underpinned SAAP I, the first Commonwealth/State Agreement, had as its objective:

...the provision by non-government organisations or local governments with financial assistance from the Commonwealth and States, of a range of supported accommodation services and related support services to assist men, women, young people and their dependants who are permanently homeless or temporarily homeless as a result of crisis, and who need support to move toward independent living, where possible and appropriate (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1985*).

An official pamphlet describing the Program expanded on the legislation, stating that the philosophy underpinning SAAP was that ‘... assistance should be provided to all people requiring it in a way that encourages their independence by promoting self-help’ (Department of Community Services 1986).

The introduction of SAAP had several policy implications for ‘homelessness’ in addition to rationalising the previous uncoordinated arrangements. Firstly, SAAP drew homeless people some way into the welfare state’s provision. SAAP went much further than the HPAP towards providing a commitment to addressing homelessness by Commonwealth and State governments. Unlike previous arrangements SAAP aimed to provide assistance to all those population groups now defined as homeless (many of them as a result of the community activism of the 1970s). Where the HPAP had offered minimal resources to help the ‘skid row’ homeless (Department of Social Security 1976), SAAP aimed to offer assistance to ‘all people requiring it’ (Department of Community Services 1986).

Through SAAP the welfare state extended its stated charter to assist this increased population of homeless people. A Review of SAAP in 1988 lists the achievements of the Program in its initial years, in particular that SAAP had provided ‘legitimacy at a National level for a program of Supported Accommodation’ and that it had established ‘the right to shelter and support through open access’ (Chesterman 1988, pp. 17-18). The report noted the benefit that all homeless clients could refer themselves to SAAP

rather than ‘going through an elaborate process of assessment and referral’, and that many had already done so (Chesterman 1988, p. 18). The claims of SAAP to offer services to all who needed help was legitimised by the fact that its establishment saw a marked increase in the total level of funding from both Federal and State governments for services for homeless people, as well as predictability of funding, an increase in the number of services and an expanded range of service types. While a lack of comparable data means that the increase in funding that occurred *with* the introduction of SAAP is not available, the first three years of the Program saw recurrent funds increase from \$43m to \$68.7m (Chesterman 1988, pp. 19, 21).

Secondly, at the same time as SAAP extended some entitlements to homeless people, it tentatively took on some aspects of the revised ways of thinking about welfare underway in other liberal democratic states – namely that welfare recipients were to become actively engaged in efforts to overcome their own disadvantaged circumstances. In so doing, it began to change the emphasis of the policy conceptualisation of homelessness from one based on an understanding of homelessness as being produced by a lack of accommodation, to one based on an understanding of homelessness as being produced by a need for support. The legislation stated that SAAP’s assistance was for homeless people ‘who need support to move toward independent living, where possible and appropriate’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1985*). In one sense this signalled a clear shift from the HPAP which sought to assist ‘homeless people where they are and as they are, rather than changing them’ (Department of Social Security 1976, Section 2.6). In another important way, however, the SAAP legislation seemed to re-state the state’s obligations to those so disadvantaged. The 1986 SAAP pamphlet took the notion of activity and self-improvement further, suggesting that SAAP would assist people ‘...in a way that encourages their independence by promoting self-help’ (Department of Community Services 1986). The first Review of SAAP in 1988 noted the shift away from ‘passive’ provision. It reported that one of SAAP’s key achievements was that it focussed ‘attention on users and their needs’, in that ‘The very definition of the program, with its emphasis on independent living where possible and appropriate, directs services away from the passive provision of a bed and meal to an involvement in the needs of users’ (Chesterman 1988, p. 18).

Thirdly, SAAP drove together the diverse services and different traditions of provision that had developed to focus on the chronically homeless, as well as acutely homeless people such as women escaping domestic violence and young people. In drawing these diverse services together, the formation of SAAP changed the conceptualisation of the composition of Australian homelessness itself. A fieldwork interviewee who had been involved since the mid seventies described the impact of SAAP as follows:

... homeless responses were primarily that paradigm of the older homeless men, rough sleeper, and those were the majority of the responses, you get the introduction of the other agencies at the same time as we were beginning to discover excluded population groups: older people, younger people, sole parents, DV became important and so on. So you've created a new homelessness population out of those new groups, and that basically became your 3-part SAAP system. [Interviewee 13]

The women's refuges however, were resistant to being included in SAAP as '... they did not want to be labelled as "accommodation" services, and would prefer a "national women's services programme" under a "women's ministry" ...' (McFerran 1990, p. 201). The women's refuges had briefly achieved a national women's services program when WESP had been established in 1984. They were concerned that if they were part of SAAP the issue of domestic violence and the broader concern with social change would lose its profile within a wider homelessness program. The 1988 Review of SAAP noted that the sub-program structure of SAAP may have been aimed to protect the funding of women's and youth services and to recognise political sensitivities (Chesterman 1988, p. 48), and that even several years later at the time of the Review '...many WESP services would still resist identification with SAAP' (Chesterman 1988, p. 17). Fieldwork interviews indicate that there was vigorous negotiation about how types of services were funded and how SAAP was comprised, and that the outcome of those negotiations was contingent rather than inevitable:

When the SAAP was introduced, before it was made legislation, I was part of that committee from the women's refuge movement that did all the negotiations ... And that was a very important time because up until then, Health couldn't cope with

the women's refuge movement. They got rid of the funding and gave it to DOCS which were Youth and Community I think then ... DOCS had a pretty hard time with us too because the funding was always Federal so we always had it earmarked and we were very, very suspicious of SAAP because we felt that we were being marginalised and pushed but of course it didn't happen that way. We fought it tooth and nail. They wanted to do a one-year funding [arrangement] and we wanted five year funding. I mean it was just a terrible time but it was probably if I think back to it, it was probably a very exciting time for women and women's rights and all of those things. So when SAAP funding finally came in and we worked it, we fought then to have it remain Federal because we thought as soon as the Feds handed the lot of it over ... if you give it over to the States – and in Queensland Bjelke Peterson was a shocker. It was dreadful what they did. We said you hand it over and the Greiner Government, my god, they would have just used it, if it hadn't have been earmarked. So that's why we fought all those years so hard. [Interviewee 16]

The comments made in 1977 by Alan Jordan of the Department of Social Security, and quoted at the beginning of this chapter, about the very large number and diverse backgrounds of people who might be included in definitions of homelessness, were followed by remarks on the need to prioritise resource allocation because of fiscal constraints:

... we certainly can't foresee in the next few years enough resources being available to cover that whole range ... So there is the question of where our priorities should lie... (Jordan 1977, p. 8)

While SAAP was available to everyone, it did prioritise service types through the nature of the already existing services as well as the sub-program structure and these factors, arguably, affected the Australian policy conceptualisation of homelessness. The reconceptualisation of the three groups – those traditionally assisted by the charitable services, young people and women escaping domestic violence - as forming a homeless population, albeit a varied one, transcended the previous concepts. For example, SAAP formalised the new notion that women escaping domestic violence were homeless. The

initial sub-program arrangement also supported a particular conceptualisation of homelessness. The 1988 Review recommended greater flexibility in service development to recognise ‘the emerging needs of other target groups’ (Chesterman 1988, p. 48), such as families and single women, and the revised SAAP legislation of 1989 that underpinned the second SAAP Agreement, referred to as SAAP II¹ removed reference to the sub-programs and identified five target groups: young people; women and women and children who are homeless and/or in crisis as a result of domestic violence; families; including single parent families; single men; and single women (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*). The definition of homelessness thereby became increasingly wide, in contrast to the ‘skid row’ conceptualisation contained in the HPAP guidelines of only fifteen years earlier.

Finally, by forming one homeless population and one umbrella for service providers, SAAP made both people who use services and the services themselves more amenable to government technique. SAAP sought, with considerable success over time, to form a functioning network of these agencies assisting diverse groups and with divergent philosophical traditions, and to exercise tighter government control over each service in this network. As the changed approaches to welfare became more established, the program and services to homeless people would be moulded to fit with the new priorities. The government of services in this way and the responses of non-government organisations to the changed expectations of their role will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, and the changes in assistance to people using services, in particular the later implementation of case management, will be discussed in Chapter 3. Services had diverse responses to the changes that had occurred in the preceding decades. When interviews for this research were conducted in 2004, some interviewees supported the changes as having been successful in producing a more coherent network to respond to homelessness. Other interviewees, particularly interviewees from women’s and youth services expressed the view that the changes resulting from this process resulted in a reduced focus within services on economic and social issues and problems since the pre SAAP days. Interviewees considered this to be a loss, even if they acknowledged other benefits of SAAP. Interviewees described the perspective they believed had been lost in

¹ The SAAP agreements between the Commonwealth and the States were revised approximately each five years and were referred to by number. New legislation was introduced in 1985, 1989 and 1994.

terms such as '*recognition of the systemic responsibility for situations people find themselves in*' [Interviewee 1], '*social context*' [Interviewee 1], '*social change*' [Interviewee 13], '*community development*' [Interviewees 1,7, 23] and '*a bigger picture*' [Interviewee 6]. Similarly, these interviewees described a change in the attitudes and activities of homelessness workers in terms of '*de-politicisation*' [Interviewee 20], or as a loss of '*fire in the belly*' [Interviewee 2], '*passion*' [Interviewees 5, 16] and '*activism*' [Interviewees 7, 23].

At the same time, the new arrangements that forced the three sectors together also opened opportunities for new alliances among service providers, and new possibilities for responding to government policies:

... I don't think services did feel that there was a security of funding, so we were always thinking that we were about to be closed, whereas now services have created peak organisations so that has meant that there is more combined power and that that has more impact on policy as well. [Interviewee 1]

For example, the formation in 1998 of the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations (AFHO) was forced by the Commonwealth Government, which withdrew funding for separate peak bodies for the three sectors. The organisation has been known as Homelessness Australia since 2007, and advocates nationally about homelessness (Homelessness Australia 2008).

The post-1980s process of reduction of welfare state provision occurred unevenly, and somewhat contradictorily, homelessness services expanded during SAAP's first decade (although subsequently growth slowed markedly). In 1985 when SAAP was established there were 500 funded services in operation, and by 1987 there were 718. By June 1997 the number of services had increased to 1,183, but at 2002/03 this had only increased to 1282 (Chesterman 1988, p. 15; Erebus Consulting Partners 2004b, pp. 2, 39). Similarly, between 1989-90 and 1992-3 recurrent SAAP expenditure grew from \$113.5m to 156.6m (Bisset, Campbell & Goodall 1999, p. 22). It has been suggested that the focus on growth during the period of SAAP II (1989-1994) slowed or delayed the process of

‘...orienting the service system to the individual needs of clients...’ (Bisset, Campbell & Goodall 1999, p. 21).

Emphasising ‘support’

As growth in expenditure on SAAP slowed, the focus on the individual homeless person increased, and the overarching priorities of SAAP became more consistent with those changes taking place in social policy and administration more broadly. After the 1988 review of the Program, the SAAP Act of 1989 marked a new emphasis on the purpose of ‘support’ to achieve the transition to ‘independent living’. The former legislation had contained the qualifier that independent living was the goal ‘where possible and appropriate’. The revised legislation contained a clear statement concerning the need for transition to ‘other alternatives’ for those not achieving independent living. These were backed up further with a statement that clearly placed a time limit on the use of SAAP :

... the objective of this agreement is the provision ... of transitional supported accommodation services and related support services to people who are homeless and in crisis, to help them move towards independent living, where appropriate, or other alternatives such as long-term supported housing, as soon as possible’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*).

As noted above, SAAP II moved from the previous sub-program arrangement to a concept of target groups, thus further melding SAAP’s components. These and other changes such as the encouragement of more diverse service models including outreach indicate the shift to a more individualised approach linked to the specific situation and needs of each homeless person, and less emphasis on providing crisis accommodation (Bisset, Campbell & Goodall 1999, p. 21; Lindsay 1993 , pp. 44-64).

The social policy context for the introduction of SAAP III in 1994 included the Keating government’s *Working Nation* reforms of 1994, which extended the ‘active society’ approach of the Social Security Review of the previous decade. This occurred in the context of an accord with the trade unions through which union agreement to deregulation was tied to a guarantee of minimum wages and continued social protection

(Shaver 2002). The *Working Nation* reforms included the introduction of case management for long term unemployed and a change from the conception of the male breadwinner to treat both partners as separate individuals who were each required to seek employment. *Working Nation* also included greater monitoring of work testing compliance and other behavioural requirements including the introduction of 'reciprocal obligations' requiring unemployed young people to participate in training or community services (Shaver 2002, p. 335). These moves were the beginnings of a shift away from entitlement for the unemployed to conditional welfare based on self-improvement. Shaver argues that the focus on activity 'identifies citizenship less with membership of a social community than with participation in it, paradigmatically as an employed worker' (Shaver 2002, p. 335). The mechanisms of introducing new requirements, increasing monitoring and individual case management provided a means of assistance, a technique for the conduct of conduct that fitted the requirement for individual reform and self-help. *Working Nation* provided the foundation for the more extensive *Mutual Obligation* Policy, which would later be introduced by the Howard government and extended to other groups (Mendes 2003, p. 108). Some of the ideas and techniques of *Working Nation* were also to be incorporated in the responses that were being developed to homelessness during this period.

The new SAAP Act (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*), which governed SAAP III (1994-99), sought to increase the focus on support as the response to homelessness, by introducing 'case management' as the means to assist people to 'redress their circumstances' (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, pp. 2, 8), and to place a greater emphasis on linkages between SAAP services and other agencies. Funding was allocated for 'reform to improve the quality of services' but not to expand the numbers of people assisted (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004b). Areas of reform were to include a national data collection; a research program and information strategy; implementation of case management, assessment and referral to link clients and services; innovative service provision for children; and development of flexible responses to the needs of various target groups (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004b, p. 4). The overall aim of SAAP as stated in the 1994 legislation for SAAP III was restated as follows:

... to provide transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services, in order to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Within this aim the goals are:

- a) to resolve crisis; and
- b) to re-establish family links where appropriate; and
- c) to re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, p. 5).

The 1994 legislation also included, for the first time, a Preamble which recognised ‘the need to address social inequalities and to achieve a reduction in poverty and the amelioration of the consequences of poverty for individuals’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, p. 1). The Preamble lists relevant international agreements to which Australia was a party, and states that legislation relating to homeless people should include a focus on both support to meet individual needs and on homeless people’s ‘right to an equitable share of the community’s resources’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, p. 2). As events unfolded, however, the focus on ‘individual needs’ was to play a much greater role in the development of responses to homelessness over the period that followed than the concerns with social inequalities.

By the time that the Hawke-Keating period concluded in 1996, the conflict between the demand for the expansion of the welfare state and the critique of welfare had shifted. The period of significant increase in homelessness services had ended and a new focus on each individual homeless person had clearly commenced. This corresponded with a shift in emphasis from homelessness as predominantly an issue of accommodation, to an emphasis on homelessness as a need for support.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTS

At the same time that the definition of homelessness was widening to include groups of ‘new homeless’ and specific homelessness programs were being expanded, formalised and subsequently adjusted to focus on independent living, several other changes were

occurring that were influenced by the critique of ‘big government’ and the emphasis on market competition. State and Commonwealth government departments began incorporating these ideas into government activity generally, including by directing services to become more competitive (Considine 2001). This process as it affected homelessness services is analysed further in Chapter 2. In addition, governments began to reduce their direct involvement in the provision of some services, and to look to the private and non-government sectors as potential providers of services.

One effect of these changes reported by workers in homelessness services was to fracture the provision of services – making it difficult to ensure that clients received appropriate forms of care and levels of service:

... for anything successful to be able to shift and change, the holes in the other service provision bits like the health, the mental health, the drug and alcohol, the access to affordable housing have got to be patched up because realistically we, from a service provider’s perspective, can only do so much... [Interviewee 5]

A specific instance of the reduction of direct government provision that impacted on homelessness was the ‘deinstitutionalisation’ or closing down of state government institutions, which had provided congregate care for people with mental health problems and disabilities and for children and young people unable to live at home. Although this approach had widespread sectoral and community support due to the Dickensian nature of many of the institutions, the funds saved as a result of deinstitutionalisation were not directed into community care. As a result, many people who would otherwise have been institutionalised have experienced reduced avenues of assistance and ongoing housing instability and homelessness (Bostock & Gleeson 2004; Cashmore & Paxman 1996; National Inquiry Concerning the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness 1993; Western Sydney Housing Information and Resource Network Incorporated 2001). This outcome served to further increase pressure on SAAP services and to further expand the population of homeless people:

...if you look at the incidence of people now coming into SAAP services with mental illness. It's huge, it is huge. In the eighties, and this isn't to do with Richmond (Richmond 1983) because I'm a big supporter of Richmond but it's the fact that Richmond wasn't implemented, basically ... there's been a fallout on the homeless sector and it's just been ongoing. [Interviewee 5]

... we are seeing young people who are 12 and 13 where in 1985 we saw them but they would be immediately picked up by the department [Interviewee 23]

... people with mental illness ... I don't believe their primary problem is homelessness, their primary issue is that they have a situation where with extra support they may not have been homeless in the first place. ... the same with young people who used to be accommodated at [institutions] ... there have been some real negative consequences - people who were in the care of the state should not end up in homelessness services. [Interviewee 23]

... the homelessness population that's emerged as we have removed any alternative pathways that used to be taken up through institutions ... that population is a new population ... [Interviewee 13]

Not only were services for the homeless at once grappling with the effects of a newly corporatised sector (in which there were fewer public agencies and yet more private and non-government organisations now all competing to provide the most cost effective and efficient services) *and* the effects of deinstitutionalisation – a third structural change also came to impact on homelessness services.

Major changes had been taking place in the provision of public housing since the 1970s. Public housing under the 1945 Commonwealth State Housing Agreement had been provided on the basis of entitlement, but only for traditional working families. In the early 1970s the Whitlam government increased funding for public housing while strengthening the means test, but in 1978 the Fraser government reduced public housing funding and by the early 1980s funding had fallen to very low levels (Hayward 1996).

The Hawke government increased public housing funding considerably between 1983 and 1984 but then reduced spending from 1986/7 as part of a broader reduction in government expenditure (Hayward 1996). In the 1980s the eligibility criteria for public housing were expanded to include households other than traditional families, such as sole parent families, single people, young people, same sex couples and share households. On the other hand, while these criteria expanded, State governments sought to progressively target allocations of housing to applicants assessed as having ever-greater degrees of disadvantage (Hayward 1996). As a result of this combination of reduced Commonwealth funding levels and the decreasing value of income-based rent, by the early 1990s public housing had not only become welfare housing, but it had also developed ever-lengthening waiting lists (Hayward 1996). Agencies found it harder to place people in public housing, as the following comment from a women's refuge worker indicates:

... that's when housing started to dry up, probably 1992, for women and children victims of domestic violence. And since then it's just become harder and harder. So even the policies that we have been able to negotiate with the Department of Housing pertaining to women have never, ever, ever been upheld, not really.
[Interviewee 16]

This trend continued, with Commonwealth Government funding for the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement falling by over 30% in real terms between 1996 and 2008 (Australian Government 2008e, p. 37).

Public housing became so difficult to access, even for the most disadvantaged, that people staying in homeless shelters faced lengthy waiting times, offers of housing only in areas far from supports or even complete rejection of their application for public housing. The situation in 2004 within the NSW Department of Housing was therefore described as critical by one Departmental interviewee:

... the Housing Department is going broke, basically, we're making a loss each year, and at this stage we don't actually have any commitment from the [state] government that we have community commitments if you like, we're supposedly

running as an outer government fund raising agency. We're supposed to be covering our costs. We get income, and our outgoings are supposed to be covered by that income without any understanding of our community service obligations. [Interviewee 4]

In addition, housing in the private market became more unaffordable and unavailable (Australian Government 2008e; Real Estate Institute of Australia 10 December 2007, 28 May 2008). This means that suitable housing became completely out of reach for some people, and placed others in a constantly precarious position. Interviewees highlighted these housing problems:

There needs to be far more accommodation built. Physical. It's just not enough. Or strategies that actually make affordable accommodation. When you look at the rental market in Sydney now – it's just not possible even on rental subsidies for many people to live in areas where they want. Where they need to, where their supports are, where their networks are. [Interviewee 5]

There is undoubtedly a number of people in the private rental market, either they're in tenancies or boarding houses, that are struggling to keep their heads above water. Those are some of the same people that are on public housing waiting lists ... I think a far greater number of people are at risk of homelessness these days than perhaps there were ten years, fifteen years ago, more people in the private rental market who are hanging on by the skin of their teeth ... if you've got private renters, or fee payers of whatever sort that are up paying sixty to seventy percent of disposable income in housing costs, particularly in many parts of Sydney and some regional cities in New South Wales, their exposure is just enormous. [Interviewee 11]

A strong theme in the fieldwork was the lack of affordable housing as both a cause of homelessness and an obstacle for people leaving SAAP agencies. Successive SAAP evaluations have made similar points, highlighting the lack of both public and private affordable housing or 'exit points' from SAAP which prevent SAAP from finding long term housing for homeless people (Chesterman 1988, p. 36; Erebus Consulting Partners

2004b, p. 100; Lindsay 1993, p. 60; National Evaluation Team 1999, p. 105). This situation has continued to worsen (Australian Government 2008e; Real Estate Institute of Australia 10 December 2007, 28 May 2008). In addition, homelessness services and organisations have, on a continuing basis, raised the problem of the lack of public and other affordable housing (see, for example, Australian Government 2008b; Council to Homeless Persons 1999a, 2004).

Overall, during the decades preceding this research there was a contraction and a privatisation of the services provided by the welfare state. This removed avenues of assistance with the result that some people become homeless who otherwise would not have done so, and so were transferred to the category of homelessness from other social categories. In addition the contraction removed avenues of assistance for some people including those who had become homeless, to obtain or maintain housing.

1996-2007: *MUTUAL OBLIGATION* AND THE MCCLURE REPORT – THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT

The transformations to those welfare institutions and ideas about welfare signaled by the Fraser government and then enacted during the Hawke-Keating years were consolidated and extended under the Howard Government. During the Howard government's term the shift to the privatisation of welfare provision continued apace. The changes in provision that occurred during this time were intended not only to promote 'activity', but had the more ambitious aim of 'preventing dependency'.

The *Working Nation* reforms introduced by the Keating government in 1994 were reconfigured by the Howard Government into '*Mutual Obligation*'. The *Mutual Obligation* approach was based on the argument that receipt of welfare entitlements caused dependency, as put forward by US commentators such as Charles Murray (1984) who argued that welfare state rights and entitlements acted as a disincentive for poor people to improve their own lives, and Lawrence Mead (1997) who advocated a 'new paternalism' under which welfare programs would be based on a social contract and recipients would be supervised with a combination of 'help and hassle' to ensure that they conformed to specific obligations designed to enforce behaviour seen to be in both

the social and individual interest. In this it can be seen as not simply an extension of *Working Nation* but a negative reframing of the goal of ‘activity’ in terms of a critique of ‘passive welfare’ and ‘welfare dependency’ as leading to social pathologies (Shaver 2002, pp. 335-6).

The *Mutual Obligation* policy was introduced in Australia in 1997. *Mutual Obligation* promoted a focus on those in ‘genuine’ need (Schooneveldt 2004, p. 157). At its introduction the Howard government also withdrew some of the labour market programs associated with *Working Nation*. In 1998 Austudy was replaced with the Youth Allowance, but with a means test on the parental income, thus moving greater responsibility in this area from government to families (Summers, Woodward & Parkin 2002, p. 469). In describing *Mutual Obligation* to the Australia Unlimited Roundtable in 1999 Howard explained that:

...it is the case that – to the extent that it is within their capacity to do so – those in receipt of such assistance should give something back to society in return, and in the process improve their own prospects for self-reliance. (Schooneveldt 2004, p. 157)

In 1999 the Howard government commissioned a review of Australia’s welfare system. The Terms of Reference of this review included advising on options for ‘preventing and reducing dependency’, in line with reform principles such as establishing better incentives for people receiving social security payments, creating opportunities for self-reliance and capacity-building and ‘expecting people on income support to help themselves and contribute to society through increased social and economic participation in a framework of Mutual Obligation’, and (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 62). The review was undertaken by a reference group chaired by Patrick McClure, Chief Executive Officer of Mission Australia, and became known as the McClure Report.

The McClure report sought to respond to the entrenched unemployment and disadvantage that had resulted from changes in economic and demographic conditions over past decades, and viewed the goal of welfare reform as minimising social and

economic exclusion by helping people participate economically and socially. The report located the concept of *Mutual Obligation* within reciprocal obligations extending across the whole community, and in the context of rights balanced by responsibilities. It reframed 'income support' as 'participation support' and emphasised that the system should ensure that people were 'actively engaged socially and economically' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 3) in order to 'minimise social and economic exclusion' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 4). The proposed reforms were to have the following features: individualised service delivery, a simpler income support structure, improved incentives and financial assistance, mutual obligations, and social partnerships (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 6). Individualised service delivery would require greater 'linkages between services' including non-employment services such as housing and would also include 'greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention to improve people's capacity for self-reliance' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 9).

While the main focus of the McClure report was on 'participation' and income support, it implied changes to services in other areas of social provision. In fact, full implementation of the report's approach would mean that the focus of these other areas of social provision would be on the removal of barriers to participation. For example, the report suggested that 'high-level brokers may need to help address a person's housing needs as part of the assistance provided to improve their capacity to participate' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 15). The report emphasised the involvement of not only government but also of business and communities to create opportunities for people who face barriers to social and economic participation (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 32).

More broadly, the report emphasised that government, business, not-for-profit organisations and communities should work together in 'community capacity building through social partnerships' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 45), to accumulate human, financial and social capital in disadvantaged communities. The report defined social capital as 'the reciprocal relationships, shared values and trust, which help keep societies together and enable collective action' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 32).

Taking their cue from the McClure Report the Howard Government introduced various measures including *Mutual Obligation* activity requirements extended incrementally to various categories of unemployed people, sole parents and people with disabilities. Government ministers and the Prime Minister himself were energetic exponents of *Mutual Obligation* and during their four terms in office they wasted no opportunity to publicly promote their ideas. For example, then Treasurer, Peter Costello made the following comments in an address to the Sydney Institute on 16 July 2003:

This is the benefit of Mutual Obligation. Take a work for the dole project. In return for income support a person engages in a work project. The project produces, hopefully, some valuable infrastructure. But the person who has engaged in the activity has more than just income support. They have the experience of meaningful work, social contact, and hopefully have developed their work skills.

This is why reliance on welfare can damage communities: A person who receives income support without engaging in the social activity of work misses all the side benefits of that activity, and the positive benefits of self-reliance. This is why we should be heightening mutual obligation for people of working age (Costello 2003).

These changes introduced by the Howard government involved a major shift from entitlement to obligation or ‘contractualisation’, as well as increased penalties for ‘breaches’. They occurred in a wider context of disciplinary measures directed towards the unemployed, including the introduction of a work for the dole scheme with a focus on attributes of the individual jobseeker and crackdowns on alleged welfare fraud including a ‘dob in a bludger’ hotline (Mendes 2003, p. 26). The punitive aspects of income support compliance control were strengthened leading to increased numbers of breaches of Administrative or Activity Test requirements being issued, with associated disciplinary measures, so that the loss of benefits for third time activity breaches could be higher than the penalty issued for many criminal offences (Schooneveldt 2004, p. 158). A study of the effects of breaches found that, depending on the location, between

21% and 50% of people surveyed had to move into less desirable accommodation as a result of being breached, with significant numbers becoming homeless (Schooneveldt 2004, pp. 162-3). Subsequently, disciplinary measures were strengthened with welfare payments reform which quarantines the income support payments of specific groups of people, in particular Indigenous Australians, and directs their income support payments to specific expenses (*Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Payment Reform) Act 2007* ; Australian Government 2008d).

Mutual Obligation was the subject of controversy. The McClure report itself documented feedback on its approach at Interim Report stage, and the main themes of feedback included a concern that McClure emphasised the obligations of the unemployed without a balanced emphasis on the obligations of other parties, and that the extent of the conditions on income support diminished citizenship. Feedback also included concern that many in the community were overstretched, thus limiting the potential for partnerships without government support (Department of Community Services 2000, pp. 33, 46). Some commentators have supported the criticisms of welfare as creating dependency (Pearson 2000b, 2000c; Sullivan 2000). Other researchers have questioned the effects of the mutual obligation contract and argued that it is coercive and undermines the relationship between citizen and state. For example, some have argued that the changes violate the equality of citizenship by abandoning social protection (Ramia 2002) or replacing the notion of citizens as sovereign individuals by citizens as subjects of paternal supervision (Shaver 2002). Similarly, Moss (2001) has argued that there are difficulties in applying the notion of contract to *Mutual Obligation*, as the unemployed have not freely entered a contract and the effects of breaches of contract are disproportionate for the two sides of the contract. Again, the marketplace analogy does not fit well with the situation of the unemployed or other poor people who have few options and lack market power. Some commentators (eg. Higgins & Ramia 2000 p. 139) have noted that liberal ideas about individual freedom and autonomy may mean little for people whose circumstances do not provide real options and that biological factors such as childhood, sickness and old age mean that society must provide services so that the autonomy of other individuals, mainly women, is not undermined by disproportionate caring responsibilities.

Other commentators (Parker & Fopp 2005) have analysed *Mutual Obligation* as a controlling and coercive policy which exerts increased power over unemployed people through greater scrutiny and surveillance as well as through a process of modifying their own behaviour. This analysis draws on Foucault's concepts of technologies of power, 'which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the subject' and technologies of the self 'which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being' (Foucault 1988, p 18). Parker and Fopp argue that the Howard government enacted its political philosophy on welfare by means of these technologies, through the *Mutual Obligation* policy.

During this period the previous growth in SAAP slowed and then flattened, and the focus, while not adopting the punitive approach of income support reform, was fine tuned to sharpen the concentration on the management of individuals. Whereas total expenditure from the beginning of SAAP I to the 1991/1992 financial year had increased 100.83%, over the next three years to 1994/1995 the rate of increase slowed to 20.73% and over the 4 years to 1998/1999 slowed again to 7.85% in real terms (National Evaluation Team 1999, pp. 217-9). Commonwealth funding for the SAAP IV period (2000-2005) did not increase in real terms, with state governments complaining that the Commonwealth contribution was not even enough to meet increased costs (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004b, p. 171-6). Similarly, the SAAP V Agreement of 2005 provided increases that were insufficient to keep up with inflation (Senior 2006).

The changes to homelessness services over this period were broadly consistent with the McClure Report's focus. In particular, there was an increased emphasis on an 'individualised' form of service, delivered by entities which operated through 'social partnerships' that would 'build community capacity' in order to overcome social exclusion by helping people to participate (Department of Community Services 2000). These two areas of 'individualised' service and 'community capacity building' are discussed in more detail below.

‘Individualised’ focus

Homelessness was now to be conceptualised in policy at national level² more in terms of the characteristics of individual homeless people and individual self-management rather than provision by governments, markets and other entities and forces. In other words, there had been a change over time in the dominant policy representation of homelessness to emphasise what the Henderson report had referred to over two decades earlier as ‘a personal attribute’ rather than ‘the organisation of society’ (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1976, p. 2). This change may also be described as emphasising the ‘individual’ rather than the ‘structural’ factors referred to by Neale (1997) as discussed in the literature review for this research.

It is clear that homelessness services continued to be highly critical of the government’s lack of investment in public housing and to raise the issue of affordable housing as a structural cause of homelessness. This is a strong theme, for example in responses from homelessness organisations to the subsequent Rudd government’s Green Paper on homelessness (Australian Government 2008b), as well as in the fieldwork for this research. Nevertheless, there is also evidence of an uneven shift within some homelessness services to give much greater weight to individual change or even reformation as a response to homelessness. In my assessment the vigorous debate which I described in the Prologue – over whether a homelessness service should charge a bond of \$1,000 with the aim of making those using the service more self-reliant – is one example of this process in action. Debate on these issues is also, for example, contained in an issue of Parity titled *The Changing Face and Causes of Homelessness* (Council to Homeless Persons 2002). One interviewee described this shift by saying that homelessness service providers had come to view themselves:

... more on the welfare side than the housing side ... more focusing on what they see as the causes of homelessness being individual problems rather than

² The South Australian government did challenge this approach from 2002 by introducing policy change at State level that aimed to provide housing as the first step, in particular for those sleeping rough (Council to Homeless Persons 2008), although national objectives for SAAP remained focussed on the goal of ‘self-reliance’.

structural problems in the housing market, or the housing system and how it works. [Interviewee 21]

SAAP III in 1994 had commenced this approach and it was to be strengthened under SAAP IV in 2000. These changes reflected a concern with a service delivery that was ‘individualised’ both in the sense of being ‘responsive’ to the individual, and simultaneously in the sense of seeking the solution to homelessness in changes within the individual. This, then, made sense of my perplexing realisation that, in the late 1990s, the causes of homelessness seemed to have changed. The enactment of the individual approach in the form of case management is the subject of Chapter 3. My discussion, in the Introduction, of literature about homelessness also notes a parallel emphasis in research on attempting to identify in ever-increasing detail, ‘individual’ factors relating to homelessness.

This increasingly individualised focus had developed at the same time as the dramatic reduction in public housing described earlier in this chapter. In other words, as housing became less available, ‘homelessness’ was increasingly conceptualised as being about issues that could be addressed at an individual level – issues other than housing. One interviewee who had had a longstanding interest and involvement in housing issues raised this question of the relationship between housing and homelessness:

Interestingly, the bit I don’t know, the bit I’d be really keen to know more about, is the conceptualisation of housing within the homelessness sector – by the time I started focusing on it and I guess certainly from the 90s there was a significant puzzle if you came from housing and you were talking to people who had something to do with homelessness. From the housing point of view homelessness is the absence of housing. When you had a conversation or went to [homelessness] conferences, housing was an add on as an issue – it was really hard to get a useful discourse about housing and homelessness – it seems to be almost a defining thing but in fact the discourse was not about that. The discourse was not about an absence of housing and how you get people housed ... [Interviewee 13]

This interviewee thought that part of the reason was the homelessness sector's:

... movement origins because the antecedents of it in fact were nothing about housing ... the political agenda of the refuge movement, certainly the very early refuge movement was not to even create safety or to house or provide pathways to housing, they were to create an alternative to the family so that people weren't trapped in families, with families constructed as an unsafe place ...

[Interviewee 13]

On the other hand, Fopp (2002) argues that the increase in focus on each individual homeless person resulted from an adaptation of the SAAP Program in response to the shortage of housing and the resulting lack of accommodation for people hoping to exit from homelessness services. Fopp analyses this individual focus in terms of notions of gaze, surveillance and normalisation, drawing on Foucault's concepts of technologies of power and the self. In Chapter 3 I will argue that the individual focus of case management does, indeed, involve coercion among other attributes, and I agree with Fopp that Foucault's concepts of technologies of power and the self do describe these aspects of the individual focus.

However I argue that while the housing shortage did indeed cause people to remain in homelessness services for longer than otherwise necessary, and, while the 'movement' influence discussed by the interviewee quoted above did raise issues other than housing per se as being related to and indeed causing homelessness, it was the 'welfare reform' influence which characterised welfare need including homelessness as 'dependency' requiring individual transformation, and which was dominant in separating the issue of housing from the conceptualisation of homelessness.

SAAP III's focus on the individual and case management, self-reliance and independence was continued under SAAP IV, which covered the period 2000-2005. Some additional techniques were developed to extend *Mutual Obligation* throughout SAAP. A significant development in the SAAP IV Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories was that, for the first time, the concern to prevent welfare dependency and foster activity and enterprise was

explicitly extended to the homeless, with SAAP explicitly enlisted in this endeavour. The role of SAAP in ‘delivering outcomes for homeless people and those affected by domestic violence’ was defined this way:

- **preventing dependency** by supporting individuals and families to secure their own economic and social participation to the greatest degree possible;
- **providing assistance** in times of need, recognising that life-cycles of some will include periods when assistance will be necessary and appropriate; and
- **promoting participation** in work, education and training and other aspects of life (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005a, Section 4, bold in original).

The document went on to state that SAAP would ‘include intervention at the earliest point of crisis as a key feature in the service response to minimise ongoing dependency on chronic and acute services within SAAP and beyond’ (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005a, Section 4).

A National Strategic Plan for SAAP IV was produced and distributed to services at the same time as the Memorandum of Understanding. It nominated four national outcomes for SAAP IV:

1. contribute to the reduction of homelessness
 2. Promote self-reliance, choice and independence
 3. Crisis responses that respond effectively to changing patterns of need
 4. Increase partnerships with other service systems to meet needs
- (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005b, p. 3).

The strategic priorities for the SAAP V agreement, made for the period 2005-2010, were pre-crisis intervention for people at imminent risk of homelessness, post-crisis transition for clients with ‘multiple or complex support needs’ who were exiting SAAP services and better linkages between SAAP services and other agencies (Australian

Government 2005). The agreement continued to reflect the McClure Report's approach, including by continuing the emphasis on individual case management. The agreement listed a series of principles for implementation of SAAP V which included a new framing of the theme of self-reliance in terms of 'resilience', expressed as a principle of 'client independence and resilience maximised', to be achieved by 'establishing appropriate connections with the range of social supports and enhancing opportunities for participation' (Australian Government 2005, p. 12). The document did not include a further explanation of resilience.

The 'presumed' effects of SAAP V were set out in a Program Logic (Australian Government 2005, pp. 43-4) which formed part of the Agreement and identified inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes of SAAP V which displays the rationality of *Mutual Obligation*. The intended outcomes were presented at several levels, with 'self-reliance and independence for people who were homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness', based on the SAAP legislation (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*), as the first level. The second level listed two outcomes: 'people are integrated into their community' and 'people have increased self-sufficiency and self-reliance'. The third level listed four outcomes: 'family links are strengthened', 'people have increased capacity for social inclusion', 'people have increased financial security' and 'people have increased personal and lifeskills capabilities' (Australian Government 2005, p. 44). These further levels of outcomes contained various elements that introduced concepts that were less closely connected to the legislation and which emphasised themes of responsibilisation, activity and entrepreneurship for homeless people. Self-reliance and independence were already listed as intended outcomes in the legislation. The legislation also referred to 'integration into the community' and re-establishing 'family links where appropriate', a goal that was broadened under the Program Logic to read: 'family links are strengthened'. The other outcomes of self-sufficiency, increased capacity for social inclusion, increased financial security and increased personal and lifeskills capabilities were newly stated and not drawn directly from the legislation. Together they presented an outline of the transformation of the homeless person, described in terms such as 'risk', 'dependency' and 'complex need', into the active, enterprising citizen who has engaged in self-improving activity to increase their skills and capacities so that they would not experience social exclusion or dependence.

Community capacity building through social partnerships to overcome exclusion

The McClure Report's requirement for 'social partners' to work together in 'community capacity building through social partnerships' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 45) was reflected in the SAAP V Agreement, which draws repeatedly on the concept of 'social partnerships' (Australian Government 2005). This built on the emphasis on 'strengthening the links between service sectors' contained in the 1994 SAAP Act (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, p. 7). Interviewees expressed mixed responses about the operation of these partnerships, in particular partnerships with government, and about the notion of community capacity building.

I argue that despite having some positive effects, the emphasis on social partnerships and 'additional responsibilities for the whole community' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 4) served to shift the focus of responsibility for welfare provision away from governments, in the broader context of the contraction of the welfare state. Some interviewees spoke highly of the emphasis on partnerships:

SAAP IV has been fantastic around the whole thing of partnerships and linkages ... its forced ... services to get out of their comfort zone and link in with other services. [Interviewee 2]

Other interviewees, however, assessed the emphasis on partnerships in the light of government withdrawal from direct welfare state service provision and failure to increase funding for services delivered through non-government organisations. These interviewees questioned the value of this new emphasis:

... the whole buzz thing about working in partnerships ... basically it was a political move saying well you're not going to get any more money so you've all got to learn how to interlink and work together. Now this has proved effective with some organisations, particularly where organisations have joined, that have had similar philosophies ... But I don't see it having worked necessarily on the bigger picture level. [Interviewee 7]

I get furious when we continue to talk about SAAP having links, and government departments having links, you have to have more than a link. We've got fabulous links. It doesn't necessarily mean that someone gets a better mental health service or gets a house quicker. It's about how we turn that into action, and there are government policies that contradict each other about how we do this. So you have a policy that says you have to have open access into SAAP ... At the same time you have the Department of Housing having legislation saying that they don't have to have people in public housing ... I don't understand how you can have a government department with all the resources that should be applied to it having that sort of legislation and at the same time having SAAP which doesn't have unlimited resources having to pick it up and I think those sorts of policies have to be less contradictory ... [Interviewee 23]

These criticisms were consistent with the experience of other interviewees who experienced practical difficulties in getting government departments to live up to the partnership rhetoric:

... my understanding of collaboration and partnerships is a very different thing than what the reality is. You're not going to get a government department to do a partnership with you or collaborate with you –they may think they are but it'd always be on their terms. You do what we want you to do and if we can we might be able to help you out. [Interviewee 7]

Further, I argue that the notion of 'community capacity building' contains two notions of 'community', in tension with each other as well as with conceptions based on the historical origins of services as either independent charities or community-based activists. As described above, the conceptualisation of community activity contained in the 'social partnerships' seems to assume sophisticated 'partners' who are able to stand as substitute for the welfare state and enter into equal relationships with government bodies. On the other hand, much of the rhetoric associated with welfare reform conceives of community as a natural and 'extra-political' zone (Rose 1999, p. 167). This second conceptualisation characterises community in terms of small, local and

voluntary activities, to be given a hand up by Government with minimal one off grants. The notion of community as natural underlies programs and activities developed by both the Commonwealth and States that were aimed at making communities 'stronger'. For example, the Howard Government's policy initiative, 'The Stronger Families and Communities Strategy', announced in 2000, outlined an approach to social issues consistent with its philosophy on the role of the state as supportive of community with minimal government resources. The Department's website advised that the Strategy's funding for community support, Local Answers, was available for '...local, small-scale, time limited projects...' and that projects are '... to build capacity in communities and are *not* intended for ongoing funding' (Department of Families Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2007). This conception of community activity was expressed by the then Treasurer, Peter Costello:

On the principle of do no harm, the government should be careful not to usurp the voluntary sector. It should not take away those things which people can and want to do for themselves. But where it can support the voluntary sector, without smothering it, it should do so (Costello 2003).

These conceptualisations are not only in tension with each other, they also challenge those conceptions of community services and groups that are based on the historical origins of homelessness services, as either independent charities or community-based activists. Interviewees saw a difference between historical conceptions of community and the injunction to form social partnerships. For example, a worker involved in the early refuge movement and subsequently in a housing agency saw a stark contrast between the ideas about community involvement that had invigorated the refuge movement and the current notions of community capacity building central to *Mutual Obligation*:

There was an exchange of information [between services] and because the political times were really, really different then, I guess we didn't see it as work.
[Interviewee 9]

whereas the same worker's experience now is:

I think our head space and how we look at it have just changed because I should be honest - I've been very critical of some support agencies and the partnerships that we have, and when it doesn't work what happens and who gets lumped with the client, and because we're the housing agency we're the ones that have the legal relationship with the client, we're the ones that get dumped with it. But I've given it a lot of thought lately and I've really changed my focus on it, and I think the tension that is created between the support provider, who has to protect their turf these days because of that whole government trend of separating housing management and support, and the flavour of the month being housing associations, and I think it's the government policy that has created that tension, and has created the agenda to make us work in opposition to each other. When in fact we're all about the same thing. [Interviewee 9]

Another interviewee made a similar comparison between the 1970s and the present, pointing out the differences between capacity building and community development from the perspective of youth refugees:

Community development, I think the mindset comes from the initial thing where back in the late 80s there was the sense of the cause ... dealing with issues of youth homelessness and youth poverty bundled together, and you wanted to enable the community to be able to collectively respond, and the government did, and actually do something for young people. Capacity building turns it round the other way, because it doesn't come from the ground up. Capacity building is a directive from government, which is seeking capacity in the community and the organisations to fulfil the functions of the program. So in SAAP, capacity building is about they want to capacity build SAAP, and not about the broader issue of homelessness. [Interviewee 7]

Despite this lack of clarity, SAAP legislation and agreements viewed 'the community' as the destination for homeless people leaving services, and, by implication, as the location for the resolution of their problems and disadvantages. The 1994 SAAP legislation's (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*) focus on 'integration into

the community’ underwent some subtle changes in the translation to the 2005 SAAP V Agreement, and the shift more clearly exhibits the transition from the services of the welfare state to the self-management of advanced liberal communities (as defined in the Introduction). The 1994 SAAP Act specified that ‘integration into the community’ would be achieved ‘by increasing access to’ a range of opportunities, entitlements and services including employment, education and training, disability and rehabilitation services, children’s support services, income support and other opportunities and resources (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*). This legislative basis relates to a concept derived from 1970’s welfare reform, and described by Rose as ‘... a network of professional institutions and services for social citizens that was spread across the territory of their lives’ (Rose 1999, p. 172). As illustrated by the case of public housing, many of these institutions and services have been radically reduced or transformed over the recent decades, so that the task of integrating people into the community came to face internal contradictions.

The Program Logic that formed part of the SAAP V Agreement (Australian Government 2005, pp. 43-4) listed delivery of a range of such services as outputs (although interestingly it listed only employment services rather than actual employment). However, the outcome relating to community was subtly reworded as ‘people are integrated into their community’. This outcome was not directly connected in the Program Logic to the provision of services as in the legislation: rather, it was connected to other outcomes, and only through these to the provision of services. The welfare state nexus between entitlements or services and social citizenship was thus changed to enable the insertion of a series of intermediate notions such as ‘people have increased capacity for social inclusion’ and ‘people with complex needs receive appropriate support’, which provided the more individualised conceptualisation. In addition the notion of ‘their community’ in the outcome referred to above, reflected the change from welfare state-derived notions of access or entitlement as described in the previous paragraph, to the advanced liberal plurality, which envisaged multiple responsibilising communities focussed on increasing individual capacity. These are the ‘social partnerships’ of the McClure report, which were to assist individuals to ‘participate economically and socially’ (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 3).

Comments made by interviewees from a variety of backgrounds suggested that many were struggling in practice with this complex and contradictory role of the community as designated by governments. A number of fieldwork interviewees addressed the lack of social supports for people leaving SAAP. Some, as discussed earlier in this chapter, argued that SAAP has been extended since its inception to address problems arising from the void left by the withdrawal of the welfare state and the post welfare state changes to mental health and other institutions, public housing, income support and other services. While SAAP is to pursue 'integration into the community' for homeless people, some fieldwork interviewees questioned how this was to occur, as an interviewee from a youth service explained:

... homeless people come from some form of community ...The role of SAAP is to help them re-establish those links. I think that's really problematic because if they are already marginalised, and there are family problems or systemic problems that exist, somehow they have been cut off from that family or community, how are they going to go back and how can they go back and do they want to go back and are they going back into the environments that were dysfunctional in the first place ... If not, if they can't return for some reason, what independent options exist separate from SAAP? Its not realistic to expect the service system to meet their ongoing needs, so how can they be met ... The problem's not SAAP, the problem is the other end of SAAP, where you haven't got social and community housing and structures that are going to be taking these people that are coming through SAAP. [Interviewee 22]

The fieldwork interviews reveal a series of tensions between the experiences and expectations of services in the homelessness field and the conceptions of community in government policy. Firstly, there are tensions between the practical need in the fragmented homelessness field for collaboration and the reality of 'social partnerships' in the context of government withdrawal from key areas of social provision. Secondly, there is a set of tensions between the conceptualisation of the community as natural, its conceptualisation as requiring capacity building through partnerships with government and its historical charitable and activist origins. Homelessness services report practical

difficulties in meeting government objectives that homeless ‘people are integrated into their community’.

FROM 2007: ‘MAINSTREAM AUSTRALIANS WHO HAD BEEN KNOCKED SIDEWAYS BY UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES’ – THE RUDD GOVERNMENT

While welfare reform had formed a key part of the Howard Government’s agenda, homelessness and indeed, housing, had not. This changed when Kevin Rudd, Leader of the Australia Labor Party visited a homeless shelter one week before the Federal election on 1 December 2007, and told all Labor MPs to do likewise (Cooke & Saunders 2007). In his 1998 maiden speech he had already referred to his own childhood experience of homelessness following the sudden death of his father, linking the issue of homelessness to ‘the provision of decent public housing to the poor’ (Rudd 1998) and he continued to include references to this experience in his public profile (for example, The Australian Prime Ministers Centre 2008).

Once elected, the new Government made a further series of announcements and statements signalling changes in the response to homelessness. While a detailed analysis of the development and implementation of this new approach is outside the scope of this thesis and will only become possible as events unfold, an initial analysis of the statements and plans of government in this new period is possible. I argue that these announcements and statements indicate major changes in both the conceptualisation of homelessness and the role of government in relation to homelessness. Firstly, the new government’s approach to homelessness envisages a conceptualisation of homelessness that clearly places greater emphasis on structural factors such as housing and economic situation. Secondly, the new approach involves an end to the previous period of contraction in government services and activities to address homelessness and a greater role for governments in addressing homelessness.

On 28 January 2008 the Prime Minister, referring to homelessness as ‘dead wrong’ (*Prime Minister of Australia 2008a*), circulated a brief document *Homelessness: A New Approach* (Australian Government 2008a), stating the Government’s intention to reduce

homelessness. He confirmed the Government's intention to fulfil an election pledge to allocate \$150 million to build more crisis accommodation. This commitment was formally announced on 13 May 2008 by the Minister for Housing, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, as a Commonwealth allocation of \$150 million, to be matched by state and territory governments, to build 600 new homes for the homeless over five years (Plibersek 2008). In addition, the Prime Minister foreshadowed that a Green Paper would be produced as the basis for consultation on a national action plan on homelessness, to be followed by a White Paper setting out the new plan (Prime Minister of Australia 2008a).

In launching the Green Paper (Australian Government 2008e) on 22 May 2008, Rudd highlighted the situations of people he had met at homelessness services, describing one man as having 'found himself homeless after being knocked off his feet by financial and personal events beyond his control' and others as 'mainstream Australians who had been knocked sideways by unexpected circumstances' (Prime Minister of Australia 2008b). In contrast to the previous 'individualised' focus of the dominant policy representation of homelessness, these descriptions emphasise events and circumstances characterised as both powerful and clearly beyond individual control. It should be noted that these comments were made after the US mortgage crisis of the second half of 2007 but prior to the stockmarket crashes and dramatic public emergence of the global financial crisis in late 2008 (Ellis 2009).

On 29 November 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) announced a new National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) to replace SAAP, public housing, community housing and other programs previously funded under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Additional funding was announced under the NAHA including National Partnership payments involving joint Commonwealth and State funding of \$800 million for homelessness over five years, \$1.94 billion for remote indigenous housing over ten years and \$400 million for social housing over two years. The Communiqué announcing this funding stated that the National Partnership on homelessness aimed 'to address individual and structural causes of homelessness' (Council of Australian Governments 2008), a statement which again can be viewed as signalling a shift away from the previous increasingly individual emphasis.

On 21 December 2008, the Government released its White Paper *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness* (Australian Government 2008c), which set out a twelve year reform agenda for reducing homelessness incorporating the funding already announced. These funding commitments were subsequently augmented through the economic stimulus package of 3 February 2009 with the announcement that the Commonwealth government would construct 20,000 new social housing dwellings and fund maintenance of 2,500 vacant and otherwise unusable social houses. The economic stimulus measures were referred to as ‘nation building investment’ (Prime Minister of Australia 2009). In a more general article in early 2009 Rudd criticised what he referred to as the ‘neo-liberal economic philosophy’ derived from Hayek (Rudd 2009, p. 22), which he linked with ‘reduced investment in key public goods’ by the Howard government (Rudd 2009, p. 28). He argued in favour of a greater role for governments in offsetting ‘the inevitable inequalities of the market with a commitment to fairness for all’ (Rudd 2009, p. 21).

The White Paper, like the Prime Minister’s various comments, promoted a different conception of homelessness from the descriptions of the previous decade or two, which had focussed more on seeking the causes and solutions of homelessness within the individual. The document framed homelessness in terms such as: ‘Homelessness can affect anyone’ and ‘Homelessness can happen to anyone’ (Australian Government 2008c, pp. viii, 14). The White Paper thus conceptualised homelessness as potentially occurring independently of individual attributes and differences. The document emphasised structural issues of housing shortage and long-term disadvantage, job loss and domestic violence as key causes of homelessness (Australian Government 2008c, pp. vii, 2, 6-9). It forecasted ‘a growth in populations at risk of homelessness’ (Australian Government 2008c, p. 11). Further, the White Paper’s reforms were to occur within a ‘framework of social inclusion to tackle disadvantage’ (Australian Government 2008c, p. 19). While this framework of social inclusion appears on the surface to echo the McClure Report’s concern with social exclusion (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 5) the change in the context of how homelessness is conceptualised shifts the nature of exclusion/inclusion away from emphasising individual factors to also emphasise structural factors.

This change in context can also be seen as affecting the relations between those involved in governing homelessness. The White Paper referred to homelessness as ‘everyone’s responsibility’ and envisaged that ending homelessness would require ‘sustained long-term effort from ‘all levels of government, business, the not-for-profit sector and the community’ (Australian Government 2008c, pp. iii, vii). The government of homelessness is therefore characterised as a collaborative and increasingly inclusive complex of public institutions, business, not-for profit organisations and others. This conceptualisation had already become visible through the McClure report’s *Mutual Obligation* approach to welfare reform, which envisages social obligations that apply to everyone, so that business, government and community organisations should work together to address disadvantage (Department of Community Services 2000). However as discussed earlier in this chapter, the McClure report’s ‘social partnerships’ occurred in a context of welfare state contraction, and thus functioned to shift responsibility for welfare services away from government. The announcement of the adoption by the Rudd government of greater responsibility in the area of homelessness may be seen as shifting this balance. The further development and implementation of the White Paper and related policies will determine whether this is the case in practice.

The White Paper set goals including halving overall homelessness and offering supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020. The response envisaged three strategies: prevention through ‘tackling the structural drivers of homelessness’ (Australian Government 2008c, p. ix); improving mainstream and specialist homelessness services as well as collaboration between the two; and taking action to break the cycle of homelessness both through specialist housing and support and through an increased supply of affordable housing. It is clear from these strategies that the new approach was intended to involve a clear break from the previous reliance on case management and short-term accommodation, to a broader range of actions. This was described as ‘*tighter* controls placed on the achievement of improved outcomes for homeless Australians and *looser* controls on inputs, allowing state and territory governments and community organisations who are closer to clients to specify the design of services that work’ (Australian Government 2008c, p. 16).

At the time of writing this thesis, the approach set out in the White Paper is in the early stages and it is not yet possible to assess how it will be implemented. However, as noted in the Introduction, research which analyses similar approaches of other governments, such as that of the British government, indicates that implementation of new policies is shaped by multiple discourses and constraints and may involve unintended outcomes. For example, in Britain, even where a consensus existed between government, researchers and non-government organisations that both ‘structural’ and ‘individual’ factors were involved in creating homelessness, there was a ‘cultural lag’ (Pleace 2000, p. 591) in service development. This resulted, for example, in the UK Rough Sleepers Initiative being undermined by persistent negative individual problematisations of homelessness as deviance, which were not consistent with the official policy (Pleace 2000). Pleace views the challenge as designing services to meet the heterogenous needs of homeless people, including those sleeping rough, so that services are not geared to a ‘non-existent “typical” person’ (Pleace 2000, p. 592). Similarly, research in Dublin showed that overemphasis on ‘individual’ factors has excluded ‘challenging’ clients from homelessness services (Phelan & Norris 2008). In another example, research concerning the Rough Sleepers Initiative found that in the context of an accommodation shortage, those homeless people with less severe problems were unable to access emergency accommodation (May, Cloke & Johnsen 2005). In practice, and despite intentions to the contrary, policies based on the discourse of social exclusion/exclusion have tended to focus more on individual characteristics of homeless people (Horsell 2006; Pleace 2000; Pleace & Quilgars 2003).

CONCLUSION

In Chapter 1 I have examined the ways in which homelessness has been constructed as a problem of government in Australia since the 1970s. Prior to the research period the dominant definition of homelessness was that of ‘skid row’ homeless, or older, alcoholic men. Assistance for homeless people was provided by charitable organisations under a regime that tended to attribute homelessness to individual deficit, and to view homelessness as a condition either requiring personal moral improvement or as amenable to alleviation rather than improvement. Those other groups who later became

defined as homeless were at this time conceptualised in other ways and, in some cases, accommodated through other avenues including the family and other social institutions.

From the 1970s a range of other groups, including young people, women, families, children, and the elderly, came to be conceptualised as being homeless. Initially this broadening of the definition of homelessness was understood as having occurred as a result of political, social and economic changes such as changes in the employment market and the highlighting of domestic violence and the rights of women, young people and children. The establishment of SAAP in 1985 formalised this broader definition of who comprised the homeless population.

Initially, too, the widening in the definition of homelessness occurred in the context of an expanding welfare state – an expansion that was replaced from the late 1970s by a significant contraction in the number and functions of welfare state services, agencies and institutions which acted to pre-empt the problem of homelessness. This contraction was informed by views that had gained currency among governments in Australia and internationally which supported market competition and opposed ‘big government’. The dismantling of welfare state agencies and activities, in turn, removed opportunities and avenues that would pre-empt ‘homelessness’, and produced a further expansion of ‘homelessness’ to include those no longer able to be assisted by government institutions and services. On the other hand, the number of services specifically for homeless people increased from the 1970s in a context of community pressure. This development can be viewed as an exception to the welfare state contraction, but homelessness services continued to be provided through non-government organisations rather than directly by the state. The growth in homelessness services ceased from the mid-1990s.

In summary, I have argued that during the research period there was an expansion in the definition and scale of homelessness, including a change in the status of some citizens who were transferred to homelessness from other social categories. At the same time there was an overall contraction in the number and functions of services to assist this expanded group.

At the same time as the developments described above, there were other related changes that occurred in government thinking about welfare in liberal democratic states. Social policy became increasingly concerned with the idea that welfare recipients should be actively engaged in efforts to rectify their disadvantage. These ideas began to be introduced into homelessness services from 1985 through the establishment of SAAP, which began to change the emphasis of the policy conceptualisation of homelessness from a lack of accommodation, to a need for support, and to increase the focus on individuals and their needs.

This new orientation became much more clearly established within homelessness services in subsequent years, in particular with the introduction of individual case management from 1995 and in the broader context of the *Mutual Obligation* policy from 1997 and the McClure Report in 2000. Assistance to homeless people became 'individualised', both in the sense of being 'responsive' to the individual, and simultaneously in the sense of seeking the solution to homelessness in changes within the individual. Homelessness thus became conceptualised more in terms of individual characteristics and individual self-management rather than provision by governments, markets and other entities and forces.

In addition, I have argued that the McClure Report's emphasis on 'social partnerships' to build 'community capacity' in order to address 'social exclusion', served to shift the responsibility for welfare provision away from governments, in the context of the contraction of the welfare state. The move away from the welfare state has produced two conceptualisations of the non-government organisations that provide public homelessness services, in addition to conceptions based on the historical origins of services as either independent charities or community-based activists. These are the conceptualisation contained in the McClure Report (Department of Community Services 2000) of non-government organisations as participants, together with government, business, and communities, in 'community capacity building through social partnerships'; and as the products and representatives of the supposed 'naturalness' of the community conceptualised as an 'extra-political' zone. I argue that these conceptualisations are in tension, both conceptually and in practice.

I have argued that the outcome of these changes was that the gap left by the contraction in the activities of the welfare state was to be filled by both community organisations and homeless people themselves taking on additional responsibilities in overcoming homelessness. In a re-configuration of 'political power beyond the state' (Rose & Miller 1992), the government had reduced and changed the provisions of the welfare state, such as public housing and government institutions that had provided care for various groups within the population. On the other hand, consistent with the rationality of advanced liberalism described in the Introduction, direct government activity was increasingly to be replaced or augmented by the greater involvement of a variety of non-government actors or 'social partnerships' in addressing homelessness and, in particular, by the requirement for homeless people to become 'self-reliant' or in other words, to govern themselves.

The Rudd Government, elected in December 2007 has made a series of announcements and statements that indicate not only a changed policy and program approach to homelessness, but also some changes in conceptualisation. This involves a conceptualisation of homelessness that is not focussed only on individual responses and individualised conceptualisations of homelessness, but which includes structural factors. An analysis of how this new approach and changed conceptualisations are understood, translated and implemented by the various participants involved in homelessness responses will become possible as events unfold.

The chapters that follow will examine two aspects of the attempts by governments and others to respond to homelessness, by examining in Chapter 2 the techniques employed to govern homelessness services and by examining in Chapter 3, the techniques employed to govern homeless people themselves.

CHAPTER 2. FROM CHARITY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TO PERFORMANCE: GOVERNING HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

SAAP will be considered to be a purchased service for clients... you have quite different expectations, and so I think this sort of accountability is going to be an increasing issue for the sector. [Interviewee 3]

I believe a return to more helpful, practical notions of help, support, community, connection, belonging need to come over the top of consumer, user, contracting, case management, goals, outcomes, inputs, outputs. I think it's quite sad that that sort of language has overtaken welfare. I say that because in doing that, what happens, it sets welfare up as an industry, then you have people who are employed, then you have practice, then you have professionalism, and its almost like the whole project focuses more on those notions and the entity of the organisation than it does on the person.... While ever we continue down the path of specialisation and the treatment models of people the worry is that we'll treat them as users rather than as people. [Interviewee 22]

In Chapter 1, I described the ways in which 'homelessness' has been conceived and acted upon as a 'problem of government' in Australia since the 1970s. In that Chapter I made reference to the means by which government's responses and programs have been delivered. The government programs that were developed specifically to ameliorate 'homelessness' were not to be delivered directly by government, but rather homelessness was to be governed 'beyond the state' through non-government organisations with a variety of histories and agendas, and through the agency of homeless people themselves. The indirect form of service provision through non-government organisations was consistent not only with the long history of charitable activity for the destitute, but also with an emerging critique of the welfare state and of 'big' government, including the more recent development from the 1970s, of local community services.

In Chapter 2 I look more closely at the establishment of this indirect response, which involved more than the development and expansion of charitable and community organisations to deliver assistance to the increased numbers or people who had been defined as 'homeless'. It also involved a process of regulating the 'performance' of each organisation providing services and building upon and moulding the expanded numbers of services to form a non-government homelessness service system, in order to provide a vehicle through which government objectives could be met. While Chapter 1 includes discussion of the development of the homelessness service system in the context of how homelessness has been conceptualised, Chapter 2 examines this system in the context of how governments were able to control homelessness programs while delivering them at arms length. Chapter 1 shows *that* SAAP was able to form a functioning network to assist a new and expanded homeless population, but Chapter 2 shows *how this network was formed and governed* from the diverse agencies that were recruited for the task.

Chapter 3 will similarly build on Chapters 1 and 2 to examine in more detail the specific requirements by government for service delivery to homeless people by these agencies. In particular, I will examine the introduction of 'case management', which I argue has, since 1995, been the primary means, in the Australian context, of attempting to engage homeless people in actively attempting to overcome their homelessness.

There is a significant body of scholarly research in the fields of public policy, management, political science and social policy which describes and analyses the changes in public policy and administration, both internationally and in Australia, over the period since the 1970s, (Alford & O'Neill 1994; Considine & Painter 1997; Hood 1990, 1991, 1995; Mascarenhas 1996; Zifcac 1994, 1997). In addition there is a body of literature which describes these changes with respect to social policy and provision specifically (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992; Considine 2001). There is also a smaller literature which documents these changes with respect to the provision of public social welfare services through community organisations in particular (Inglis & Rogan 1993; Onyx & McDonald 1997; Rogan 1997). Much of the literature does not refer specifically to homelessness services although some of the literature that focuses on community organisations does provide information on the implementation of changes in SAAP (Onyx & McDonald 1997; Rogan 1997).

In addition there is a considerable volume of SAAP program material and other documents produced by governments and consultants to governments which exemplify rather than analyse the changes in government thinking (eg. Australian Government 2008d; Chesterman 1988; Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005a, 2000-2005b; Erebus Consulting Partners 2004b; NSW Department of Community Services 2001, 2005, 2007).

The literature traces a change in the preoccupations of public administration over the research period to a greater emphasis on performance, and to the use of performance management, audit, competition and other means aimed at achieving performance. Much of the literature that focuses on the specific context of Australian community organisations concentrates on describing the changes rather than on analysing the thinking that informed them. Some of the literature, in particular the literature which covers public or social policy broadly also discusses the political thinking that led to the preoccupation with performance (Considine 2001; Zifcac 1994).

The other source of material about the efforts of governments to achieve ‘performance’ in homelessness services is comment from services themselves, both through the interviews I have conducted and in documents and publications produced by services and their peak bodies (eg. Council to Homeless Persons 1997, 1999b; Gilbert 1998; Marks et al. 2005; Murray 1998; Oberin 1998).

Chapter 2 takes into account the literature and other material in all of the above areas, as well as that literature which draws on Foucault’s work on governmentality, taking the discussion of political thinking further by specifically addressing the dilemmas of governments in attempting to ‘govern at a distance’ (Dean 1999; Power 1997; Rose 1999; Rose & Miller 1992) by seeking ways to regulate the performance of services delivered through non-government actors, as is the case with Australian homelessness services. This approach to ‘governmentality’ informs the chapter’s analysis of the regulation of homelessness services in the light of government thinking on how to both deliver assistance to homeless people through ‘independent’ non-government agencies while at the same time governing the way these services operated.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

In this chapter I will argue that, as Australian governments (along with other modern liberal democratic governments in recent decades) moved away from direct public provision of social and welfare services generally (Considine 2001; Dean 1999), they viewed the existing non-government services for homeless people as the basis on which to build a network which would provide expanded services at arms length from government. The focus of governments in relation to these homelessness services provided at arms length concentrated first on developing and expanding the number and range of services offered, and then on implementing what, following Mitchell Dean (1999, p. 168) I have called ‘technologies of performance’ – a set of new accountability techniques to measure whether the non-government organisations that manage such services on behalf of government were meeting government objectives. This pursuit of ‘performance’ in homelessness services has led to governments implementing a range of techniques relating both to the requirements of the financial relationship between government and services, as well as to the activities of services themselves. ‘Performance’ management and the techniques associated with it were imported from business, in the form of approaches such as ‘accountable management’ and ‘entrepreneurial government’. ‘Performance’ displaced other methods of assessing and improving the work of services.

The fieldwork for the research indicated that interviewees thought that these changes had brought both benefits and consequences that they viewed as negative. In this Chapter I argue that the implementation of the technologies of ‘performance’ did establish greater government requirements and controls over homelessness services, and did have considerable success in standardising diverse organisations and forming them into a service network. In addition, while the implementation of ‘performance’ enabled governments to exert this increased control over planning of the service network and over the operation of each individual service, it simultaneously constructed each service as more responsible, autonomous and business-like. The changes arguably brought certain improvements in service delivery to homeless people, although it is not clear

that the impact of the changes was always to improve the overall assistance that people received.

Further, these changes introduced additional competing conceptualisations of non-government organisations providing homelessness services to those that were already discussed in Chapter 1. Overall, these multiple and inconsistent conceptualisations of non-government organisations are associated with competing conceptualisations and assessments of the establishment of a system of homelessness services, of how the work of services might be judged or improved and even of the very task of homelessness services. These competing conceptualisations and assessments bring a constant tension and instability in government efforts to deliver homelessness programs at arms length while still exerting control over a 'service system'.

A 'PLETHORA' OF FUNDING SOURCES AND SERVICES

In Chapter 1, I described how, prior to the establishment of SAAP, a 'plethora' (Chesterman 1988, p. 5) of Commonwealth and state funding sources had developed to deliver funding to a diverse mix of non-government organisations that provided accommodation and other services for the increasing numbers of people who were homeless, and for women escaping domestic violence. These services had not been established by governments but by non-government organisations that took the initiative and sought government funding to support their commitment to activities and projects where they identified a need. These organisations sought funding not only in order to provide help for people who needed accommodation, but also because of religious and charitable motives, and/or community activist motives, such as exposing issues of domestic violence, youth rights and poverty. Many of the services that were established to provide assistance to people who were homeless or escaping domestic violence thus also sought some kind of social change. Both these organisations and the older charities viewed themselves as independent organisations and not simply an extension of government. Governments had responded to community pressure, not by developing direct government services, but by providing grants to assist non-government organisations to provide them.

Further, as I have described in Chapter 1, the Whitlam Labor Government had not only taken a proactive policy approach to expanding the funding of both traditional and new community social welfare services, it had also encouraged community groups and organisations to take the initiative. Citizens were to become actively involved in planning, establishing and operating a range of community services, as noted by interviewees discussing services established during this period. For example:

There was a need there and so people were very politically active and created services, and it was all about the Whitlam years and the whole push for I guess community responsibility and community involvement and building communities.

When governments attempted to rationalise these services and take greater control over their activities, they were therefore dealing with groups that had not only received some encouragement from government, but had also sought to effect change. Many were critical of government and also of welfare services generally. I will argue that the attempts to rationalise and control services challenged the motivations and organisational approaches of these groups. I will therefore briefly consider these motivations and approaches.

Interviewees from the religious and charitable organisations described the traditional charitable approach in terms that described both the intention to help people in need, such as ‘hospitality’ and ‘the provision of food and making sure there is enough around’ [Interviewee 15], and at the same time in terms of a ‘punitive attitude’ and as ‘very hand out’ and ‘very minimal, very basic’ [Interviewee 14]. At the same time, charities were ‘one of the lobbyists behind a welfare state response in Australia’ [Interviewee 17]. A full discussion of the origins of charitable approaches is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, one interviewee described the rationale behind these seemingly mixed responses in terms of the religious origins of much charitable response:

I think what you had was a lot of people who had very good intentions ... They started out actually wanting to administer to the spiritual needs of people, but found that they would get a deaf ear because of the - the presenting human need,

and tragedy before them had to be dealt with also. And the Christian worldview supported the view that you don't leave people to suffer if you can do something to assist. [Interviewee 17]

The approach of these charitable services was challenged from the 1970s by the push for the expansion of community services at local level, which involved a critique of the established professions and institutions and a call for community services rather than welfare services. This community model of service provision can be traced to a 1960's critique of both direct government services and charitable welfare provision as bureaucratic, institutionalised, alienating, paternalistic, and offering only a 'band-aid' (Nyland 1993, p. 126).

Under this critique, professional social work was viewed as dehumanising and disempowering. The analysis saw the community development approach to welfare and the growth of local community services as offering a preventative and supportive form of service delivery. The expansion of community services in the 1970s, including the early women's and youth refuges, was broadly founded on the rejection of professional social work and institutional and bureaucratic forms, and a support of local action, responsiveness, sensitivity and empowerment in the sense of consumer control and skills development (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992, pp. 133-5; Nyland 1993, p. 126). This analysis is expressed by former Melbourne women's refuge workers:

[W]e saw ourselves as opposed to the 'welfare' state that we were going to create a different kind of assistance, where women were treated as sisters – as equals – and not as objects of social work ...

...[it] deliberately contradicted the social work client scenario that was going on at the time where women were basically being told what to do in a fairly strict social work framework as opposed to being given the options, being listened to at length for the first time perhaps and being encouraged to make decisions of their own that would actually meet their need ... that was the philosophy behind it. It was very deliberately non-professional... I mean it was quite openly said,

this is not a professional service, these are not professional women, we are women helping women, this is equal (quoted in Theobald 2008, pp. 22-3).

In many of the feminist services, this egalitarian ethos was also reflected in a collective management structure, which emphasised empowerment and involvement, rather than the traditional hierarchical structure of the charities:

... it was about the idea of sharing power, sharing expertise... and it was also about having the flexibility to be involved in different areas of the work, believing that that was part of the wholistic provision of service as well, that if you didn't work with people on the ground you then were disconnected, it was hard to do community development work because it wasn't based on the consultation process of the service... [Interviewee 1]

The 1970s and 1980s also saw the establishment of a range of other small community groups that were concerned in varying ways with issues of housing and homelessness and that were influenced by a similar philosophy to that of the women's and youth refuges. These were funded by different levels of government and included services such as community information centres and tenants unions. One interviewee who had worked at several of these services saw their defining approach as being a concern with 'equity' and 'redistributive justice' [Interviewee 24], and explained that these services saw their work in more terms of 'everyone's got the right to decent housing or there's rights under the Tenancy Act or women need information to leave a bad relationship' so that 'people weren't as kind of othered and described as homeless... it wasn't quite as us and them as I think it became' [Interviewee 24]. Although these services were small, they were generally strongly linked to the local area where they worked:

... they'd been almost voluntary or community action sort of things before, and had community boards, it really was a community sector. It wasn't just a way to differentiate it from direct government provision of services ... they were drawn from people who were in the area and had at some stage required the use of those services. [Interviewee 24]

While the traditional charitable organisations did not take on all of the changed approaches to service delivery, they were not unaffected by the new ideas. In the late 1960s many existing Australian charitable organisations, to some extent, ‘... altered their view of governments and their own contribution to the welfare state ... to argue that remedial efforts were not enough’ and that a community development approach was required (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992, p. 133).

Chapter 1 describes the process by which these existing charities and new community groups exerted political pressure to expand the funded services for homeless people during this period. They formed a committee or a collective, developed a proposal and submitted it to the Commonwealth or a state government: *‘you saw a need, you put submissions in, you got funded’* [Interviewee 19]. Initially there were few services and, as an interviewee put it: *‘You could put in a submission for a service and you could truly, really say, well there isn’t one within a fifty-mile radius’* [Interviewee 19].

Departmental controls on funded services were not formalised. At least some departmental officers saw their role as one of visiting the service in person and even of providing practical assistance:

...we would ... do all the negotiating with the funding bodies, whoever they were at that stage. They also had a very different approach. It was very hands on. They would come and visit... We had one... she’d drop in and give us stale bread, and you know her heart’s in the right place, but you know... [Interviewee 9]

By the mid-1980s, governments had funded a diversity of services to address the problem of homelessness, but their control over many aspects of these services, and thus over the overall response, was limited. The establishment of SAAP was the beginning of a change in this informal approach. SAAP signalled the beginning of the government introducing ‘*real expectations*’ about how services were to operate, as described by a women’s refuge worker in response to a question about how services in 1979 were different from how they are in the present:

...a lot less overseeing by the Department, I think that in those days you were lucky if you knew your CPO's [Community Program Officer's] name, my theory was we didn't get enough money for them to care, so they let you do the best that you could without annoying you. The beginning of SAAP changed that of course, and there's real expectations from the Department from that time to now about what we do... [Interviewee 6]

THE INTRODUCTION OF SAAP AND 'PERFORMANCE' THROUGH EXPANSION AND EFFICIENCY

In describing the rationale for introducing the SAAP Act in 1985, Senator the Hon. Don Grimes, then Minister for Community Services in the Hawke Labor government, referred to the problem, as the government saw it, with the previous arrangements in the following terms:

There was no overall planning, programs were uncoordinated and were unnecessarily complex. This meant that needs were not being met (Grimes 1985).

Senator Grimes' description of homelessness programs and the government's response were consistent with the broader concerns of the Hawke government, described in Chapter 1, to both implement its social program while addressing criticism of the welfare state. The new government, which had been elected in 1983, hoped to address both sets of pressures by being more efficient and selective (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992; Zifcac 1994).

The Hawke government, along with other Western governments during this period aimed to improve 'performance' by gaining greater control over public administration. The reforms have been referred to as 'managerialism', 'corporate governance', 'new public management' or 'accountable management', (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992; Considine 1990, 2001; Considine & Painter 1997; Hood 1990, 1991, 1995; Zifcac 1994). Accountable management is a term borrowed from General Motors, which

judged the performance of groups of staff by measuring their outputs against factors such as cost (Zifcac 1994, p. 12). This new 'managerialist' approach was based on a critique of bureaucracy as in need of financial discipline, as preoccupied with procedure over performance and as inadequately fitted for the tasks of modern government. The new approach envisaged improved performance through strengthened management, better planning, clearer objectives and greater financial efficiency (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992; Zifcac 1994).

The Australian reforms were introduced with bipartisan support and were, at least initially, driven by 'a technocratic concern for more effective administration' (Zifcac 1994, p. 19) on the part of the Hawke Labor government, compared with the more controversial program of the British Conservative Thatcher government elected in 1979 with an ideological commitment to control and reduce the civil service. From 1984 the Hawke government implemented reforms of the public service based on this 'managerialist' approach and the concern to improve 'performance'. The Hawke government's initial set of measures aimed to increase government control in public administration and strengthen competition and merit in selection, including by requiring equal employment opportunity. The government aimed at strengthening management, or 'management for results' (Zifcac 1994, p. 93), in order to simultaneously give ministers greater responsibility for management and greater accountability for performance (Mascarenhas 1996, p. 221). This was to be achieved through a cycle of planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The planning stage involved the development of a corporate plan with objectives, targets and performance indicators to relate inputs to outputs. Budget allocations were to be linked to programme objectives, so that budgets were presented by programme rather than by item. Implementation was to be monitored through the use of performance indicators and management information systems, and was to be followed by evaluation before the next planning phase (Zifcac 1994).

Overall, for non-government social welfare organisations that received public funds, the changes in government involved two themes that reflected this broader government approach. One was a new pressure for services to treat clients equally and to widen their client access and service delivery criteria (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992, pp. 121-

2). The other, increasingly dominant, theme was ‘a drive to squeeze more from existing resources’, by exerting ‘tighter controls’ on non-government agencies (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992, p. 119).

SAAP itself, while providing additional funds to increase services, was, from the start, concerned with improving ‘performance’ by increasing efficiency and accountability in the homelessness response that Senator Grimes had criticised as being unplanned, uncoordinated and complex. This response was to enable co-ordinated government control over what services were established and the way these services operated, rather than the previous arrangement where the distribution of the service response had been reliant on the initiative of non-government organisations. The intention was to create a rationalised national response to the growing problem of homelessness. As described in Chapter 1, the previous mixture of Commonwealth and state programs was brought together under one umbrella, with joint funding from both levels of government. The Program was to be administered by the states and territories to assist co-ordination with other relevant programs of state governments (Chesterman 1988, p. 8). This also meant that all services communicated with state administrations about funding and government requirements of funded bodies, rather than potentially with both levels of government.

Senator Grimes noted these twin aims of firstly, expansion and access, and secondly, efficiency and control in his second reading speech for the SAAP legislation, as well as a third aim, of facilitating the involvement of services in providing advice to government:

The aims of the Program are: Firstly, to provide improved and more equitable funding of approved services, to fund new services in areas of high need, and to move towards improved wages and conditions for the workers; secondly, to move progressively during the program to improve the assessment of the need for services, and to distribute funds on the basis of improved assessment within each State and Territory; and thirdly, to facilitate the involvement of service providers in advising on program needs and priorities (Grimes 1985).

Three years after the establishment of SAAP, a review of the program (Chesterman 1988) found that progress had been made in relation to the first two aims, although the outcome in relation to the third aim is not so clear. Firstly, the Review found that, as discussed in Chapter 1, SAAP had expanded the response to homelessness. Data was not available, however, on whether new services had been placed in high need areas. The Program had upgraded wages and working conditions through increased staff numbers, higher wage rates and a greater emphasis on staff training. Pay levels remained poor despite the increases that occurred with and immediately prior to the introduction of SAAP (Lindsay 1993, p. 76). A comment from an interviewee who had worked in a women's refuge indicates the low pay levels:

... we were all working on crap money, and it was really being done for the love, and the commitment to the cause... And then we got improved funding ... And I instantly went off the dole as soon as we got that pay. It was a big risk but again, in those days, it was a bit of a case of Rafferty's Rules. [Interviewee 2]

Secondly, SAAP had taken a number of measures directed at efficiency. It had rationalised existing programs, enabled the establishment of a national standardised data base, to 'allow for planning and monitoring outcomes' (Chesterman 1988, p. 27), moved away from submission-based funding to '...attempting to allocate resources on the basis of indicators of need for services' (Chesterman 1988, p. 27) and allowed for assessment of relative State and Territory needs.

The third aim mentioned in Senator Grimes' speech was the involvement of service providers. The Review noted that there had been some consultation with service providers in SAAP planning and priority setting through various advisory mechanisms in each State and Territory. However it also pointed out that there was confusion over SAAP consultation and advisory processes, with government administrators using the term 'consultation' to refer to information sharing, and service providers expecting consultation to involve them in some process of participation in joint decision-making (Chesterman 1988, pp. 29, 125-138). In fact, planning and priority setting did not turn out to be the major work focus of the advisory committees, with committees appearing to be '...overwhelmed by information sharing and administrative functions'

(Chesterman 1988, p. 127). As I described above, the 1970s had seen a focus on, in the words of one interviewee quoted above, '*community responsibility and community involvement*' [Interviewee 9] in the development of services, and many of the services that would become part of SAAP had been established in this atmosphere and with expectations of policy involvement. However under the Hawke and Keating governments' managerialist approach, consultation with community-based organisations was viewed within the aim of strengthened management and planning. The emphasis of consultation was therefore on performance indicators and quantitative outcomes, rather than on community involvement or empowerment (Sawer & Jupp 1996). The SAAP services' goal of involvement was not fulfilled, and the Review noted a 'widespread dissatisfaction because of false expectations of the process of consultation' (Chesterman 1988, p. 124b). It is clear that the 'third aim' of involvement had more to do with the second aim of efficiency and control than the first aim of expansion and access.

The introduction of SAAP therefore enabled a consolidated approach to the development and expansion of homelessness services to assist an increased homeless population. This set the scene for the work that was to follow to improve the 'performance' of this response and to shape it to enable planning by governments and the implementation of government objectives.

CHANGES TO SAAP – 'PERFORMANCE' THROUGH PLANNING AND CONTROL

Over the Hawke government's term, economic conditions had deteriorated and the push for market solutions had gained a new dominance. As a result the emphasis shifted from the democratic and equity agendas to a focus on the attainment of managerial efficiency by means of private sector management techniques, and to fiscal restraint rather than accountability (Zifcac 1994).

For non-government welfare services generally, these changes constituted the start of a shift away from the previous practice of providing grants to organisations for their activities and core costs, to funding 'specific services to designated clients' (Beilharz,

Considine & Watts 1992, p. 120). The new approach was a change from the notion of community and charitable bodies as organisations with agendas that were independent of government, to a new arrangement where government determined objectives and service agreements, and monitored performance. The work of such organisations began to be characterised in terms of 'outcomes' related to government policy, resulting in a shift to the introduction of performance measures and the measurement of the 'unit cost' of service provision. There was a new expectation that increased funding to expand services would be cheaper due to economies of scale. Meeting the demands of the government's new funding and accountability conditions required community agencies to take on the new management approach and make similar organisational changes to those already undertaken by government departments. This process of organisational restructure began in the late 1980s (Beilharz, Considine & Watts 1992, p. 121-2).

Consistent with these directions, the SAAP Act was amended in 1989, following the Review of the previous year. The provisions of the new Act together with budgetary decisions involved a change from the previous focus on improving 'performance' by increasing expenditure and the number of services, to a focus on improving 'performance' by building a homelessness service system that was responsive to government. This aim was to be achieved both by *forming the service system* itself, as well as by giving governments greater *control over the activities of each service* within that system.

At both the level of the overall service system and that of the individual service, 'performance' was to be achieved through efficiency, control and planning. The new Act more strongly reflected the new managerialist approach to public administration. Further, the themes of efficiency and control dominate those of expansion and access. The legislation described the task of providing accommodation and support to people who were homeless in terms that were very different to those of the 1985 Act: plans and planning, user rights, client information, assessment and referral systems, rational and equitable, priority setting, service agreements, monitoring and review, performance, management, accountability, service standards and data. This change was so dramatic that, for example, the word 'plan' and its derivatives do not appear at all in the 1985 Act

but do appear 26 times in the 1989 Act (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1985* ; *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*).

The government wished, under the new SAAP legislation, to be able to ‘plan and fund services on a rational and equitable basis’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*, p. 10). Despite this intention, planning of the overall system was not initially as successful as the task of controlling the activities of each service.

Forming a homelessness service system

The 1989 SAAP legislation included a new focus on ensuring the Program did not overlap with other programs of government, and that funds were allocated on a needs basis with reference to agreed priorities and target groups. Under the legislation the Commonwealth was to set the national priorities and objectives and to monitor and evaluate the Program at national level. A Commonwealth/State plan was to be developed each year, including an assessment of matters such as existing service provision and distribution and unmet need. States were to monitor and review services and overall program performance in the State, and to assess the effectiveness of different models of service delivery. Funding was to be made available for ‘research, training, data collection and analysis, service reviews, program evaluation and consultation’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*, p. 11). Nevertheless an evaluation of the Program in 1993 was equivocal about the success of these processes in meeting their aims, noting that State plans were deficient in some important respects, and in particular, had ‘... made little progress in the identification of unmet need’ (Lindsay 1993, p. 130) and relied too much on ‘information obtained informally’ rather than on ‘reliable data’ (Lindsay 1993).

Service providers and other relevant interest groups were to be involved in planning and priority setting for the program. The work of the state based advisory committees, through which service providers could participate, was to include ‘... priorities for consideration in the development of the Commonwealth/State Plan ... unmet need [and] ... program level accountability processes, service standards and performance indicators, data needs and evaluation measures’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*,

p. 14). Despite this provision in the Act, consultation with service providers continued to receive little support from government departments, with the 1993 evaluation of the Program finding that the advisory committees had not been established in some states for a number of years after the 1989 Act and were established but did not operate in others (Lindsay 1993, p. 125-8).

Regulating service ‘performance’

The 1989 SAAP Act signaled the intention of governments to gain greater control over the activities and thereby the ‘performance’ of each service, and in the process, to make these activities more standardised. This process envisaged each service as a component in the larger system. This was achieved through a number of interlinked techniques, in particular through the provision in the legislation to ‘develop and implement service agreements with all funded services’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*, p. 10) instead of the global funding that had previously been provided. Service agreements provided a tool by which governments could move beyond assisting independent non-government organisations to provide services, and instead, to determine service activities, thus enabling state governments to require services to take on a number of the concerns of accountable management. These service agreements interacted with other techniques, such as ‘program level accountability processes, service standards, and performance indicators, data needs and evaluation measures’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*, p. 14). Together, these techniques enabled the use of other techniques to control activities within services, in particular a set of changes to the management and staffing arrangements for services, referred to by interviewees as ‘professionalisation’. In addition, the increase in control over each service included a greater specification of the way services were to assist people, in the form of a new emphasis on the transition to ‘independent living’. This last area of change constituted the beginning of the shift in later legislation to individual case management, which will be examined in detail in Chapter 3. Overall, these changes had considerable success in meeting government objectives.

Service agreements provided a technique to increase and standardise the monitoring of service activities. Services were now to measure ‘performance’ through a new focus on

outputs, reflected in an emphasis on data collection, standards and indicators, rather than simply providing funds (inputs). Each State was to 'provide the Commonwealth with agreed program and non-identifying information to monitor achievement of objectives and agreed program priorities...' (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*, pp. 14-15). This provision involved services in collecting specified data on clients for service and program monitoring purposes. The state-based data approach was replaced by a national data collection in 1996.

The increasing emphasis on quantitative data as a measure of the effectiveness of services' work met with mixed reactions from services. While there was acceptance of the need for information to be available about their work, they questioned the limitations of the quantitative emphasis prioritised by the new approach. The reliance on quantitative data was to increase over subsequent years, and these issues are discussed in some detail later in this chapter.

The changed expectations of services were also supported by SAAP Service Standards which were foreshadowed in the new legislation (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*, p. 14) and developed by State administrations during the 1990s (for example, Supported Accommodation Assistance Program 1992; Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Standards Working Party 1998). These Service Standards covered all aspects of a service's activities, from the agency management and accountability matters described above, to service provision and documentation, human resource management and workplace safety.

Each SAAP service was now required through the service agreements, standards and departmental information and training, to implement managerialist approaches within their operations, preparing service policies and procedures, establishing objectives and management plans, targeting clients, determining their own qualitative and quantitative standards and indicators, monitoring their own performance and undertaking their own planning. State governments became more involved in training service staff and Management Committees in management and financial accountability. While not all these concerns are spelt out explicitly in the legislation, they had formed recommendations of the previous Review (Chesterman 1988, pp. 95, 97-8, 105-6).

The fieldwork interviewees for this research used the term ‘professionalisation’ to refer to a further broad area of change in homelessness services which encompassed changes to service management, the training and employment conditions of workers, and changed ways of working with homeless people themselves. Interviewees overwhelmingly nominated ‘professionalisation’ as one of the most significant changes that had occurred within homelessness services. The changes to service management and staff arrangements associated with ‘professionalisation’ were foreshadowed in the 1988 and 1993 Evaluations of SAAP (Chesterman 1988; Lindsay 1993). The 1993 Evaluation, for example, clearly spelt out the connection envisaged between the recommended changes and improving ‘performance’ as measured through outcomes, by stating that: ‘Assistance to SAAP workers to help them improve their performance is ... likely to be reflected quite directly in improved outcomes for users’ (Lindsay 1993, p. 76).

Literature on professionalism defines the term in such a way that those working in homelessness services such as social workers, welfare workers and youth workers would be considered to be para-professionals rather than professionals. The term ‘professional’ is used in the literature to refer to those with a legal entitlement to practice, maintained through a professional association, as well as ‘altruism, ethical practice, autonomy, specialist education and control of access to a unique body of knowledge’ (Bessant 2004, p. 27). As described earlier in this chapter ‘professionalism’ was criticised during the 1960s and 1970s as disempowering, as failing to meet its claims of value-neutral authority and as being an instrument of class, gender, race or other domination. On the other hand during the 1970s some groups such as nurses and social workers sought government endorsement of professional status for their areas of work (Bessant 2004).

The process referred to as ‘professionalisation’ in homelessness services operated to standardise services in the three areas of service management, staffing and relations with people using services. The changes formed part of the interlinking set of techniques that affected and regulated the activities of services.

Firstly, the 1988 SAAP Review argued for greater management accountability in SAAP while supporting the existence of a variety of management structures (Chesterman 1988, p. 104-110). It noted that collectives had the advantage of involving workers and drawing on their knowledge, but expressed concern that staff-only collectives might blur accountability, not represent the community and cause difficulties or delays in decision-making. On the other hand, the review noted reservations about the management of many religious and charitable organisations in that their committees might not reflect the community or workers, and decision-making may be too distant and hierarchical to reflect needs. While the Review's concerns did not necessarily preclude collective management, over time service management was standardised so that most of the feminist and youth services that were run by collectives moved to a co-ordinator model. This seems to have occurred partly because to varying degrees State departments discouraged collectives. One interviewee explained that: *'government actually forced that change, and... started saying we're not going to fund you if you're a collective...'* [Interviewee 2] To the extent that this occurred, it represents a new level of government control over, not merely the services funded by government, but the internal workings of non-government organisations. On the other hand, other interviewees recalled the change as having been initiated within services themselves: *'It is not a collective now...It was actually looked at and it seemed that it wasn't working as a collective... The impetus came from inside...'* [Interviewee 19] A small number of women's refuges still operate successfully as collectives.

A range of strategies had been introduced since 1989 to 'enhance the capacity of community based organisations to manage services' (Lindsay 1993, p. 75), including standards, management support, funding of administrators and amalgamation of organisations. The 'requirements and expectations' of community based management committees had 'grown substantially' (Lindsay 1993, pp. 74), and some were struggling to meet their management responsibilities:

... about 1997 or 1998, the SAAP Standards came into being. The volunteerism and initial energy that had propelled the sector had started to wane, and more management committees were starting to fall apart, some significant governance

issues started to emerge... some poorly run services started to wake up to themselves, the ones that didn't ended up disappearing. [Interviewee 7]

These can be seen as steps in a process of transforming non-government organisations at management level into more predictable and responsible components of the homelessness service system that was being built.

A second area of 'professionalisation' was the shaping of the workforce of homelessness services. Following the 1989 legislation, training of existing SAAP service providers and management committees became 'a very important issue' (Lindsay 1993, p. 77), with training being organised and conducted at State or Territory level, although the 1993 National Evaluation found that: 'its nature and resourcing vary widely depending on the priority accorded it' (Lindsay 1993, p. 77). By the next national evaluation in 1999, 'training plans' had been developed in all States and Territories (National Evaluation Team 1999, p. 126), consistent with the overall planning approach. From the 1990's, pre-employment training also became more important in SAAP with more social workers and welfare workers being gradually employed in services. Prior to this time, many staff had no related post-school training and were employed on the basis only of experience, as explained by the following two interviewees, the first from a large charity and the second from a small community based service for women:

Twenty years ago we employed less professional staff, when I started the majority of staff were recovering alcoholics... they'd come up without any education or training, so that was the qualification, you'd been there... [Interviewee 14]

...we actually employed a lot of women on the basis of their experience so if they'd been through domestic violence themselves we would say ok well you've got the job because you understand it...they didn't have the training that was necessary. And it wasn't seen as being necessary. [Interviewee 2]

Fieldwork interviewees reported that in homelessness services there had been a continued shift to replacing life experience with tertiary training as a basis for employment in homelessness services, although such training remains far from universal in services and there is no clear unique body of knowledge, with trained workers being drawn from a range of disciplines. While many interviewees thought increased training was a positive development, some thought that trained staff were from more privileged backgrounds with less insight into the situations of homeless people:

... welfare workers got a bit more so-called professionalised...Whereas the community sector, it was much more working class people, from there and lots of them are still. And I just think it's a different way of understanding that you could be there. It's not many slips of luck and you could be there. Whereas I think if you haven't grown up with that knowledge right in you, I think that's part of it. [Interviewee 24]

While not arising from the legislation, the wages and working conditions of SAAP workers were also viewed as an issue during this period. The 1993 National Evaluation of SAAP described service providers at the establishment of SAAP as 'among the worst in a sector noted for low pay and poor working conditions' and relying heavily on volunteers (Lindsay 1993, p. 76). This was the case among both charitable and community-based services where people were prepared, due to religious, political and other motivations, to provide a service with little or no remuneration:

You need professional skills to work in this industry now. Not just the Christian NGO's but even the women's refuge movement have had volunteers, workers that work longer hours for less pay. There's been a lot of passion has driven the homelessness sector, and I defy anyone to suggest that the women's refuges haven't been just as passionate about their clients... and so it's an industry that got way more for its dollar than it really should have historically... [Interviewee 17]

During the 1990s SAAP services were brought within the state award structures and wages increased considerably, although they never became comparable with salaries for similar roles in government. For example, an Award was introduced in NSW in 1991, while the Award that had been introduced in Victoria was abolished by the Kennett government in 1993 as part of a general abolition of awards in that state, but was later reintroduced (Lindsay 1993, p. 76). The following comments by an interviewee from a large charity described the impact of the introduction of awards:

... prior to the early 90s there were no awards so agencies paid what they liked, so that attributed too to the lack of professional staff in agencies. We had really to take what we could get ... I'm not saying people were so punitive they were horrible to the clients but there was an attitude there that just came from lack of training and skills I think ... [Interviewee 14]

Thirdly, the concerns of accountable management expressed in 'professionalisation' extended to the nature of the relationships between services and the people who used them. Whereas relations had previously been predominantly characterised by 'charity' in the traditional services, or 'equality' in the community-based refuges, they were now to be viewed in terms of 'rights and responsibilities'. The 1989 SAAP Act's requirement for state governments to 'establish a framework for the protection of the rights of users of services' (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1989*, p. 10) was also incorporated into service standards, which included requirements for services to develop statements of client rights and responsibilities, complaints and appeals processes and procedures relating to privacy and confidentiality (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Standards Working Party 1998*, p. 44-54). There was widespread support among interviewees for developments that they saw as linked to fairness and client rights, but also awareness that these changes increased service costs at the same time that governments sought greater 'accountability', and the requirements placed new pressures on services, which had depended to a great extent on volunteer enthusiasm:

By us having processes, procedures, policies for every action that we take it means that we are fairer in our services... it can't be at the whim of a worker.

... the standards from DOCS [the NSW Department of Community Services] started to be a big thing ... we have 5 bedrooms, and as many people as there were beds were in that room – there was no such thing as your own private room... Then what happened, you could only have 5 families, not 10, not 12 – when you think back about it, there's some good things about it, and that's where our costs have gone up too, your stats are down. [Interviewee 6]

Further, this conceptualisation of 'rights' was much more limited than that envisaged by those community services which were concerned about, for example, '*the right to decent housing*' [Interviewee 24] discussed earlier. The requirement for protection of client rights did not constitute any extension of welfare entitlements for homeless people, with no fundamental right to housing or SAAP services being established (Otto 2003, p. 11). Further, grievances concerning the rights of service users were defined within each service's grievance procedure without the option of referral to an external and independent review mechanism, except in NSW (Otto 2003, pp. 11-13). They were framed in terms of client rights and responsibilities within the service (National Case Management Working Group 1997, p. 8.23). The idea of user rights then and SAAP user rights in particular have lacked uniformity and are not legally enforceable. This has led some commentators to the view that the rights available to SAAP clients may more aptly be described as 'privileges' (Otto 2003, p. 16).

Interviewee responses about 'professionalisation' displayed a striking level of ambivalence, with many interviewees describing some aspects of the changes as positive and others as negative or potentially negative. Over half of all interviewees specifically volunteered expressions of ambivalence about 'professionalisation', even though the interview questions asked were general and not particularly focussed on this issue. A smaller group of interviewees spoke of 'professionalisation' as being entirely positive.

Interviewees linked 'professionalisation' with how the task of working in services was conceptualised. Many thought that 'professionalisation' was positive in that it had brought greater consistency and fairness to service delivery. Some spoke of

‘professionalisation’ in terms of a ‘*practice*’ [Interviewee 7] that was respectful, responsive and non-judgemental, involving more ‘*appropriate relationships*’ [Interviewee 23] with those using services. Others saw ‘professionalisation’ as a process of formalisation, such as making appointments rather than operating on a ‘drop in’ basis, and many of those who raised the issues of formalisation thought that this change had brought both benefits and losses. Some went further than this, and described ‘professionalisation’ in terms of a move towards regimentation or processing people using services. Some saw ‘professionalisation’ as involving a shift away from a focus on self-help, mutual support, community development and a concern with political issues. Many interviewees who described ‘professionalisation’ viewed it as being linked to the administrative and management changes that had affected SAAP, including accountability, bureaucratisation, case management, policies and procedures, managing services and property, consistency, standards, documentation and protocols. Some interviewees also referred to the introduction of tighter occupational health and safety practices as an indicator of increased professionalism. Interviewees from diverse services supported aspects of ‘professionalisation’ but perceived a tension between some of the changes and the humanity of service provision:

I really like how professional housing associations are these days. I really like how we’ve got policies and procedures, because that makes sure that we’re always transparent, but probably in another five years time it might be a different answer. I hope that we don’t continue to go down the path of thinking... we’re really clear about the boundaries and what we can and can’t do. But the fact of the matter is, people don’t run their lives like that, and it’s really easy for us to say “it’s five o’clock I’m going home and I’ll fix that up tomorrow morning”, and often it just isn’t like that, and I have a sneaking suspicion that we will have to really think about where we’re going so we don’t lose that focus of our flexibility that we have with the people that we work with, and are we buying into the government’s agenda? [Interviewee 9]

I think we have to be professional, and I believe we are a very professional organisation now. Some staff find that difficult because they say we are losing our values and our commitment to clients. I don’t believe that we are, but I think

with increasing professionalism there's a danger of becoming too regimented and some people are going to fall through the cracks because they don't actually fit in these boxes. [Interviewee 9]

... it's been professionalised, the whole youth work, but also just the general community services area. And while I'm not saying that's bad - there's been some very wonderful and important improvements in that – one of the downsides I think the relationships with the people that were needing the services have changed, and I believe that that's detrimental. [Interviewee 23]

Others spoke about a tension between 'professionalisation' and the original egalitarian ethos of refuges. This interviewee claims 'some understanding of the issues' [Interviewee 6] but her rejection of professionalism implies the rejection of paternalism or expertise in the lives of others:

I'll do the best that's available for each individual woman, which to me doesn't say I'm professional. I'm doing a good job... I'm not particularly happy with being a professional domestic violence worker. I'm a grass roots worker who has some understanding of the issues women and children face with regard to DV, I certainly know after 20-odd years what they face and what I should be doing to meet those needs. [Interviewee 6]

There were also comments about a tension between political activity and 'professionalisation' in the sense of maintaining a service provision schedule:

Professional is used amongst refuge workers who really don't see the value of going on a Family Law campaign because they're professionals running a service. You've got to meet this woman at nine o'clock, like why can't you say: how are you today (you've spoken to her yesterday) I'm going away to Canberra about the Family Law campaign, which is vital, because we'll be stuck with the results for the next ten bloody years, and I won't be around for three days... [Interviewee 6]

I think there's things gained from it because I think it does make it professional, so it protects workers. You probably don't burn out in the same way as you might have once. But it takes out a lot of that: we're all women here, we've all got issues, we've all got problems, it happens to be you at the moment but we'll all work together. I think some of that gets lost. [Interviewee 19]

A concern that runs through interviewees' ambivalence about professionalism is that, although they may be pleased to have improved pay and conditions, and although they wanted to do 'a good job' [Interviewee 6], as the worker above described it, there were strong concerns expressed by very diverse interviewees that professionalism was not sufficient to achieve this. Some of the interviewees who expressed this view had been part of the community development critique of the established professions and had continued these views, but the view was much more widely held than this. Their concerns are about those aspects of 'professionalisation' that place the measures of 'performance' over providing the best assistance. While many interviewees spoke about 'professionalisation', their comments indicate that the concern is not about wages, training or qualifications but a concern that 'professionalisation' involved an overemphasis on a rigid approach or schedule and a blindness to broader policy issues – that the emphasis on efficiency as a measure of 'performance' was not entirely consistent with their task of assisting people. These issues will be discussed further, later in this chapter.

'WE PURCHASE A SET OF AGREED RESULTS': 'PERFORMANCE' THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL GOVERNMENT

The concerns with managerialism and performance that became dominant in Australia and other Western countries during the 1980s were further developed in the 1990s with a more fundamental rethinking of the public sector as well as its relationship with community agencies that receive government funds. While these changes were enacted differently in different countries and different areas of government in each country, all reflected the reconceptualisation of government activity in terms of enterprise and the economic market (Considine 2001; Dean 1999). These changes in governance were broadly based on what might be viewed as a later phase of the New Public Management

approach (Hood 1991, 1995), and on public choice theory (Hood 1991; Mendes 2003; Osborne & Gaebler 1992). This 'entrepreneurial' approach, like managerialism, was influenced by critiques of bureaucratic government, but it took the prescription for public management further, pursuing the goal of 'performance' by applying a business model to government, emphasising results and competition, and viewing citizens as customers who make market choices (Osborne & Gaebler 1992). The emphasis on 'results' acted to intensify the reliance on measurement of outputs and outcomes of services delivered by non-government organisations.

The entrepreneurial approach was articulated for a wide audience in the bestselling book *Re-inventing government: how the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector* by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (Osborne & Gaebler 1992). The book was influential at state and federal government levels (Brennan 1998). Osborne and Gaebler acknowledged differences between government and business but advocated the importing of business principles into government and government-related activity:

Most entrepreneurial governments promote *competition* between service providers. They *empower* citizens by pushing control out of the bureaucracy, into the community. They measure the performance of their agencies, focussing not on inputs, but on *outcomes*. They are driven by their goals – their *missions* – not by their rules and regulations. They redefine their clients as *customers* and offer them choices – between schools, between housing options. They *prevent* problems before they emerge, rather than simply offering services afterward. They put their energies into *earning* money, not simply spending it. They *decentralize* authority, embracing participatory management. They prefer *market* mechanisms to bureaucratic mechanisms. And they focus not simply on providing public services, but on *catalysing* all sectors – public, private, and voluntary – into action to solve their community's problems (Osborne & Gaebler 1992, p. 19-20).

Western governments including Australia began to adopt policies that were influenced by the new thinking on 'entrepreneurial' government. Mark Considine has referred to this shift as the 'enterprising of the state' (Considine 2001, p. 1). This process of

‘enterprising’ challenges the liberal tradition of the separation of public from private power, by seeking to exercise expanded areas of public provision through private actors, thus ‘ordering the lives of citizens outside the direct control of state agencies’ (Considine 2001, p. 1). Further, the nature of the relationship between government and private provider was now to be defined by ‘chains of contracts and brokered exchanges between self-enterprising actors’ (Considine 2001, p. 2) rather than in terms such as democratic theory, rights or, as was previously the case with services for people who were homeless, in terms of philanthropy or grants in response to community submission (Considine 2001; Lyons 1997b).

There were a number of key techniques invoked by western governments, including in Australia, for implementing these aims (Considine 2001, pp. 10-14). Performance management continued to be used to increase control and cut costs by focussing on the measurement of outputs. Secondly, a range of entrepreneurial activities were used, in particular the pursuit of innovative responses to problems and the ‘contracting out’ of services which had either been delivered by the public service or on a funding model. Thirdly, the strategy of separating the roles of principal and agent, in the form of the policy making and service delivery functions of government, also referred to as dividing ‘steering’ from ‘rowing’ (Osborne & Gaebler 1992) meant that governments could move away from program administration to focus on ‘purchasing’ services from a range of service ‘providers’. Fourth, this purchasing role could be activated by governments enabling a number of agents or providers to tender for each set of service outputs. Service delivery organisations could thereby become part of ‘quasi-markets’ through which the competitive contracting out could be enacted. Finally, the new entrepreneurial approach included not only new techniques of management but also techniques for the role, responsibility and activity of subjects (Considine 2001; Rose 1989). These included a set of mechanisms related to consumer sovereignty, such as giving clients more choice in services provided, as well as opportunities for consultation or customer satisfaction feedback. Citizen responsibility is also expressed in measures requiring those using government services to contribute more, both financially and by providing part of their own service. Such responsibility may be supported by sanctions, as advocated by Mead’s (1997) new paternalism.

In Australia the changes in government occurred at both Commonwealth and state levels. The Greiner Liberal government elected in 1988 in NSW was the first of the state governments which aimed to bring business style competition and privatisation into the public sector, reshaping the state as 'NSW Inc' (Funnell & Cooper 1998, p. 103). From 1992 the Kennett government in Victoria took this approach to reshaping public administration further, and was dubbed 'the contract state' (Alford & O'Neill 1994). The approach taken in Victoria included reducing the public sector and focussing its activities on the role of making policy and 'purchasing' services, rather than 'providing' them. Public service employment was to be based on contract. Government service delivery functions were to be 'contracted out' (privatised) or performed by separate government agencies. Contractual (purchaser-provider) relationships were established between core departments and those delivering services, specifying service delivery outputs. According to the new thinking, service-deliverers were to be subject to competition if possible (Alford & O'Neill 1994), with the Kennett government's promotion of: 'contestability, competitive neutrality, client choice and consumer empowerment' (O'Neill 1997, p. 136).

In addition, the Kennett government cut government funding to many social welfare and community organisations (Rogan 1996, 1997), as described by an interviewee: *'Kennett just immediately started to de-fund and he was very, very blunt and out there, that bleeding heart social workers were a part of the thing that had brought the state to its knees. And this was just going to be cleaned up, no doubt about it...'* [Interviewee 24]. The interviewee noted that in particular the *'organising points between the agencies'* [Interview 24] lost either all of their funding (eg the Regional Housing Councils) or part of their funding (eg the Victorian Council of Social Service and Victorian Shelter), thus weakening the sector consistent with its reduced role as a 'provider', where the government's attitude was *'you guys deliver the services, don't worry, we'll do the thinking'* [Interviewee 24]. Victorian SAAP services were reviewed in 1994 and the Kennett government exercised its muscle as purchaser to implement *'forced amalgamations'* [Interviewee 24]. This successfully met the government's objective of reducing the number of SAAP agencies, and also reduced the community links of remaining agencies:

They had to amalgamate with other nearish by services or with, say, the hospital if they were in a rural area or a community health centre, something that meant there were less contracts, was what it was always, always about. So they didn't remove the ... services from the areas but they cut, in many cases, that really close link with the communities that had said, we've expressed a need and then written a funding application and been the committee ever since. [Interviewee 24]

At Commonwealth level, between 1994 and 1997, firstly the Keating government and then the Howard government restructured the public Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). An increasing proportion of the previously government-operated employment assistance services was contracted to private sector and not for profit sector providers (Considine 2001). In 1995 Commonwealth and State governments adopted a National Competition Policy, to enable and encourage competition in Australia, based on the recommendations of the Report of the Independent Committee of Inquiry into Competition Policy in Australia (1993), or Hilmer Report. In the area of homelessness, Australian governments had not provided services directly and so there was no process of privatisation as was the case with employment services. However, as shown in Chapter 1, the contraction in certain welfare state provisions meant that some groups of citizens were transferred to 'homelessness' from other social categories, so that, in effect, assistance to these citizens came to be transferred from government to non-government agencies.

The entrepreneurial 'reinvention' of government was aimed not only at government itself, but also at government's relations with non-government organisations. The Strategic Plan for the new SAAP legislation introduced in 1994 (National Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Coordination and Development Committee 1996) indicated the consolidation of the entrepreneurial approach to 'performance' through techniques relating to planning, performance management and the measurement of outcomes. These included 'national outcome standards', outcome-based service funding, improved management of services, improved strategic planning and 'data collection, analysis and research linked directly to strategic planning, management and performance' (quoted in National Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

Coordination and Development Committee 1996, p. 3). In 1995 an Inquiry into Charitable Organisations by the Industry Commission recommended that future selection of agencies to receive government funding be determined by open competitive tender linked to defined outputs (Ernst 1998; Industry Commission 1995; Rogan 1996). At the same time the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) commenced a program of reform of health and health-related community services founded on the new government preferred model of funding which separated purchasers and providers of services (Rogan 1996).

State governments embraced the entrepreneurial approach in their relations with non-government organisations including homelessness services. While there were state variations, all state governments viewed non-government organisations as ‘providers’ of ‘results’ or ‘outputs’, which were purchased by governments by means of contract, in a way that aimed to parallel a purchase from private enterprise. A departmental interviewee explained in relation to SAAP: *‘we don’t any longer fund services, the new word is purchase. When we purchase services, we actually purchase a set of agreed results’* [Interviewee 3]. This approach, as Nikolas Rose has put it, obliged non-government organisations, together with other social services, educational institutions and the like, to ‘organize their activities as if they were little businesses’ (1999, p. 152). The focus on purchasing specific results from businesses rather than funding organisations or services led some State governments to be reluctant to fund what they saw as organisational costs, ‘believing that the agency itself is responsible for all but the administrative costs immediately related to the service the government is purchasing’ (Robbins 1997, p. 76).

A number of states used or attempted to use competitive tendering for existing services provided by non-profit organisations, including homelessness services. For example, in 1992 the NSW government attempted to introduce competitive tendering to funding of community services but did not do so after criticism from the community sector (Rogan 1997). In South Australia in 1993 the SAAP youth sector undertook a cooperative restructuring in response to the introduction of an award. The process involved competitive tendering of existing services and a subsequent reduction in the number of agencies involved (Robbins 1997, p. 86). In 1994, the Victorian government also

introduced compulsory competitive tendering to local government activity, including human services operated through local government such as meals on wheels, aged and disability services, although many councils managed to defer competitive tendering of human services (Rogan 1997; Woods 1995). In 1997 the Victorian government restructured the provision of accommodation through many SAAP services, separating the housing and support roles and selecting new Transitional Housing Managers to provide the housing component via competitive tender (Council to Homeless Persons 1997). These new organisations were encouraged to act in an entrepreneurial capacity, with the result that they developed uneven responses which were later found to be inconsistent with co-ordinated service delivery (Theobald 2009). The Victorian Department of Human Services did not, however, introduce overall compulsory competitive tendering for existing services which it funded, including SAAP (O'Neill 1997).

Competitive fixed price tendering of new or restructured community services operated by non-profit organisations became widespread during the 1990s. Despite the instances described above, however, the competitive tendering of existing community services, including SAAP services, operated by non-government agencies remained the exception to government practice nationally (Onyx & McDonald 1997), although existing health and related services, including some which worked closely with SAAP services were exposed to tender in Victoria (Egan & Hoatson 1999; Hardiman 1998). For many community services operated by non-government organisations the main direct change resulting from the 'entrepreneurial' approach to government was the shift from a 'submission model' of funding to a 'planning model' where instead of responding to submissions for funding from the community, governments would determine in advance where services were needed, and invite non-government organisations to provide the services, sometimes in conjunction with a collaborative planning process involving the non-government sector. Even so, the entrepreneurial approach was to have a major impact on both the formation of a homelessness service system and on controlling the activities of each service.

Forming a homelessness service system

The introduction of the purchaser-provider system has been one of the major techniques for forming a service system, and can be seen as the culmination of an increasing role for government in determining priorities for funding. While the Kennett government in Victoria had used forced amalgamations to achieve its objectives for a SAAP service system, most states have used a more incremental approach. In NSW, for example, a Departmental interviewee there thought the purchaser-provider system promised better planning and control over the type and distribution of services, as well as more standardised funding levels:

... the trouble is we have a service system where service viability is really a huge problem for us, we don't have a lot of the services in the right place, and we have major differences between the way services are funded. That was because they tended to be based on a submission model ... the amount of money you got was what you could negotiate ... So services are now actually funded through a really, really formalized expression of interest process, so you can't any longer get funding through DOCS by putting a submission up ... its usually got to be to address a priority that was developed through a transparent community planning process. [Interviewee 3]

Non-government interviewees also noted both the problems with ad hoc service funding and location. For example, one interviewee spoke of *'a skewed service system, compared to where clients actually are'* [Interviewee 11] and thought there was not an *'equitable allocation of resource'* [Interviewee 11]. Interviewees from diverse services said that many services were only partially funded. An interviewee from a large charity attributed this to the: *'... existing commitment to homelessness by the major charities...'* [Interviewee 17] Another interviewee described inadequate funding of youth refuges: *'For a 24-hour service you should be able to have two workers on board. At the moment, the worker sleeping overnight is not paid for it'* [Interviewee 7]. An interviewee from a women's refuge spoke about inadequate funding in a domestic violence service in a remote area with a high indigenous population:

... the funding out there is disgusting, the isolation of the worker, she uses her own vehicle, she's a sole worker, she is indigenous, the refuge itself is not an indigenous only service, it's a mainstream service, she's on call 24/7 ...

[Interviewee 12]

The shift from the submission model to the purchaser-provider model not only enabled governments to have more control over the establishment of services, it also greatly reduced the previous role of non-government organisations in identifying and acting on community needs as they saw them. Under the submission model, the government's decision to fund an organisation to provide services had occurred in response to an approach from the organisation, possibly combined with wider community pressure. The submission might fall under an existing program, which constituted an expression of government priorities, or it might occur outside of existing programs. The government would decide which submissions would be approved. Community organisations would, however, determine the range of applications received and thereby which services might be funded and where they might be located (Lyons 1997b, p. 9).

The purchaser-provider model, on the other hand, vests much more power in the government. This model is based on aspects of 'public choice theory' and 'agency theory' (Alford & O'Neill 1994; Jensen & Meckling 1976). These approaches assume that actors maximise their self-interest and construct the government as the 'principal', who specifies what is required, and the non-government organisation as an 'agent', who is engaged to produce it. The agency model assumes that principals and agents have conflicting interests and so it is necessary to structure relationships to ensure that agents meet their obligations. Principals and agents, or purchasers and providers need to be kept separate in order to avoid the 'capture' of government decision-making by interest groups of services and beneficiaries (Alford & O'Neill 1994, p. 17; Lederman 1995; Mendes 2001; Zifcac 1997). Under the purchaser-provider approach, therefore, the relationship between the government and non-government organisations is changed from one of co-operation between two sectors with both exercising some power and independence, to one where the non-government organisation is an agent of the government. The locus of power has thus moved away from the community sector to

the government, with the non-profit organisations losing independence (Lyons 1997a; Marks et al. 2005, p. 23; Nyland 1993, p. 135).

At the same time that governments embraced this competitive purchaser-provider model, there has been an increasing if uneven embrace by state governments of a range of co-operative planning processes, for example in South Australian and NSW as discussed above. This approach is consistent with the McClure report's broader strategy of 'community capacity building through social partnerships' (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 45), which is discussed in Chapter 1. Such partnerships echo business partnerships or joint ventures and are generally formalised by a memorandum of understanding. While some governments, such as the Kennett government in Victoria emphasised the competitive or market aspects of the purchaser-provider construction, others have promoted the 'partnership' model that retains a greater concern with maintaining the service system (Department of Community Services & Partnerships and Communities Directorate 2001).

These competitive and co-operative approaches both involve attempts by government to mould the role of non-government organisations and their relationship to government. These roles are contradictory but at the same time, under the entrepreneurial approach, are viewed as being necessary to the development of a service system designed to imitate the market. One of the departmental interviewees discussed this tension and the solution adopted generally by government departments, which was to split their office into two teams. While the departmental interviewee found that having two teams resolved things for the department, these comments do not provide a solution for the tension experienced by community organisations:

So you have, on one hand, partnering, which involves a concept of equals, but on the other hand you have this – we're giving you funding, you've got to tell us what you do and how you do it. And yeah, there'll be a tension between the two approaches. We found in the office for example, we've split into two quite distinct areas... We used to have regional staff that had to do both of those things – incredibly difficult, you can't be an organisation's friend one day, and beat them up about some performance issue the other day.... So we've decided

quite clearly, that you have teams that do this role, and you have teams that do that role... that's what we're implementing, and we'll see how it goes. But for us it made the job much clearer. [Interviewee 4]

Interviewees thought that the 'entrepreneurial' planning processes had mixed results. For example, a departmental interviewee thought that: *'The one attempt [at planning under the purchaser-provider system in NSW at the time of this interview] we've had in SAAP, again that was high quality down to goddammed awful...'* [Interviewee 3]. Interviewees from non-government agencies thought that there had been some improvements in service distribution and viability, but that there were still problems, including those raised at the beginning of this section. One interviewee nominated obstacles to rationalisation as both '*vested interest*' [Interviewee 13], a concept associated with a competitive approach, and service '*diversity*' [Interviewee 13], associated with small community groups, as obstacles to a more co-operative planning approach:

...we've seen a period where there's been restructures to create more viable models through amalgamation, through closure of single worker services, strategies like that, but there's been resistance to it particularly in NSW, in SA it was easy, a smaller sector able to come together work it out, NSW people are clinging, it's a bigger sector, you can't solve it easily and people have a vested interest, well they say we want diversity. [Interviewee 13]

As these comments show, there were mixed views on the optimum composition of a homelessness service system. Even where amalgamations have not been forced, small local agencies have been under pressure to amalgamate or otherwise move to economies of scale (Nyland 1993, p. 135). The trend to fewer and larger community sector service providers has been intended by governments as a way of rationalising provision (O'Neill 1997, p. 127), and the competitive purchaser-provider process has had some success in meeting these objectives. However, some interviewees did not view the operation of this quasi-market as entirely positive, and the strategy has been subject to concerns by some about a loss of '*diversity*' and of services' connection to the local community in which they operate. Some interviewees saw the changes as being incompatible with

what they described as the positive contributions of small organisations that had been established as expressions of a local community. For example, one interviewee commented that:

... there's still small [organisations] but not many. And every now and again some new character comes in saying, oh we've got to mop up all these small SAAP organisations, what do you mean 300, how ridiculous, we need eight. Yeah, right. And not realising how many indigenous co-ops have got SAAP programs and are you going to take them off them and mainstream that money? Are you going to say one organisation has to deliver it for all those far flung communities, well they've got no idea what they're talking about. [Interviewee 24]

Interviewees as well as other commentators have reported that the competitive purchaser-provider process favours the large, usually church or charitable organisations, which have greater capacity to respond to tenders. Some interviewees with backgrounds in community organisations were very critical of the growth in the number of services operated by big charities. One interviewee characterised charities as being '*... prepared to put out twice as much, at least on paper, and pay their staff half as much*' [Interviewee 20]. Another interviewee was critical of what they saw as the shift away from small community services focussed on equality, to '*big, pumped up non-government organisations*' headed by '*great and good men*' who '*push [themselves] forward*' while at the same time using charitable discourses to distance themselves from the '*abject mob of homeless people*' [Interviewee 24] that they claimed to be assisting. The competitive process has not placed value on what interviewees saw as the strengths of small organisations, such as their flexible and responsive and innovative approach (Marks et al. 2005). In addition, some commentators have noted that, like competitive tendering generally, the use of outputs (which will be discussed below) tends to favour larger organisations (Council to Homeless Persons 1999b, p. 3; Marks et al. 2005, p. 23; O'Neill 1997, p. 132). Over time these factors have led to the loss of small community based services, so that the community services field has become less diverse, less community-based and more charitable (Council to Homeless Persons 1999b; Melville & Nyland 1997; Rogan 1997). As one interviewee explained:

... you're competing ... between different models; you are also competing between different philosophies. So here we would be, for example, looking at a concept of a feminist based service competing against the monies that go into the charities... [Interviewee 19]

Regulating service 'performance'

The application of a business model to homelessness services conceptualised each non-government organisation providing homelessness services as a contractually distinct business-like entity, while simultaneously intensifying existing controls on the 'performance' of each service as a component of the homelessness service system. This emphasis on devolving through contractual arrangements combined with performance management mirrored a similar process between the Commonwealth and the states. The Memorandum of Understanding for SAAP IV, introduced in 2000, committed to increasing 'performance' (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005a, Section 5). Under SAAP IV, the Commonwealth devolved more responsibility for program management to the States and Territories 'in exchange for greater accountability' (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004a, p. 4).

The reframing of homelessness services as entrepreneurial entities in a competitive quasi-market required strengthened methods to manage their activities in detail through 'accountability' while retaining the separation of purchaser and provider. The orientation of this type of 'accountability' was not derived from the human services but from business, or as Nikolas Rose describes it, 'the terms of that accountability were not professional but those of accounting' (1999, p. 152). 'Accountability' involved both the strengthening of existing techniques to control the 'performance' of services, as well as the introduction of some new techniques. There was a continuation of the use of existing mechanisms such as service standards, performance indicators, data and the management and staffing changes referred to as 'professionalisation'. In addition, under the purchaser-provider approach, service agreements became more contractual and the 'accountability' requirements were progressively increased. The emphasis was on 'outputs', or quantitative data to describe services' 'performance' in assisting homeless

people. To these techniques was added a greater use, as in other areas of modern society, of techniques of 'risk' and 'audit' (Beck 1992; Power 1997).

Despite the discourse of competitive, contract-based autonomy, this process of purchasing 'results' envisaged a reduced level of independence for non-government organisations. Services would be both responsible for the risk of service provision and at the same time constituted as 'franchise operations' (Farrar 1993, p. 142). As 'providers', organisations were merely vehicles for the delivery of government programs. Under this new arrangement the relationship between services and governments changed so that governments determined objectives and service contracts, and monitored performance. Government contracts require that providers supply a limited, measurable set of services, as opposed to the sector's historical role of responding to their understanding of human need (Farrar 1993, p. 144), whether from a charitable or a community-based ethos.

Commentators have suggested that the service agreements and contracts used by governments for purchaser-provider relations were not true legally binding contracts, and that governments were unwilling to embrace a full market model because under a formal contract both parties would be accountable to an independent authority, thus increasing the power of community organisations and reducing that of governments (Lyons 1997a, pp. 208-9; O'Neill 1997, pp. 127-9). An interviewee made a similar point:

I'm a strong believer in accountability. My criticism is that the accountability is still one way... and that pisses me off no end – they should be accountable to us, as well, and that does not happen. [Interviewee 2]

Governments successfully utilised contracts to devolve responsibility to services while balancing this by increasing accountability. The contracts used under the purchaser-provider arrangements contained much more detailed specification of government requirements than the previous service agreements, often in the form of quantitative 'outputs' such as numbers of clients or episodes of service (Alford & O'Neill 1994;

Onyx & McDonald 1997), in comparison with previous approaches to reporting which were both less onerous and more qualitative (Lyons 1997b, p. 10-11).

The use of quantitative data as the basis for SAAP service accountability has continued to increase since the late 1990s. The 'accountability framework' for SAAP IV (2000-2005), against which the performance of the Program was to be measured, was based on a set of 12 core performance indicators (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005b). The National Evaluation of SAAP IV indicates that service providers expressed serious reservations about the accountability framework. The Evaluation reported that the peak body, the Australian Federation of Homeless Organisations (AFHO) 'supports the view that the current framework has too many performance indicators and suggests that they are primarily designed to report to the Productivity Commission' (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004b).³ Providers reported that the data used in the accountability process 'does not provide a good idea of what they do', that 'the temptation to simplify accountability to measurable outcomes could have a deleterious effect on services on the ground' and that 'providers could be tempted to focus their work at the end where they can demonstrate success, rather than needy cases that require intense effort, sometimes for little result' (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004a, p. 10). In addition services and their representatives expressed a concern that accountability not become punitive or be excessive, preferring an approach where services that were struggling be assisted rather than close. While supporting accountability, they called for a greater clarity and a more wholistic view of accountability (Erebus Consulting Partners 2004b, p. 11).

The SAAP V Agreement, which commenced in 2005, included a new and even more detailed Accountability Framework covering the areas of management, performance and strategic priorities. It viewed performance through three 'perspectives': equity, efficiency and effectiveness, the latter comprising client outcomes, appropriateness and quality (Australian Government 2005, p. 13). The quantity of specification and accountability reporting for services increased further under SAAP V, which used a list

³ The Productivity Commission was established in 1998 as a result of the amalgamation of the Industry Commission, Bureau of Industry Economics and Economic Planning Advisory Commission. It provides research and advice to the Australian Government on a range of economic, social and environmental issues relevant to achieving a more productive economy. (www.pc.gov.au)

of 38 detailed performance indicators (Australian Government 2005, p. 34). Both SAAP IV and V showed a shift towards unit costing, where services were provided with a set funding level per client (see, for example, NSW Department of Community Services 2007). The performance indicators for both these SAAP agreements included a 'cost per client' indicator as a measure of efficiency (Australian Government 2005; Department of Health and Family Services 1996).

Both services and commentators have expressed a number of reservations about the implications of too great a reliance on quantitative outputs to measure the human programs of any organisations, arguing that while outputs might offer 'some crude indicators of efficiency', they did not measure effectiveness (Gilbert 1998, p. 13). Service outcomes may be positive while at the same time being more complex than what can be measured by quantitative outputs alone. For example, they may be spread over more than one funding period, may be affected by factors other than the service's input, may be difficult to predict or may be preventative (O'Neill 1997, p. 131). In a women's refuge, for example, '...it is difficult to measure episodes of service, there is often no clear prognosis for a client and there is no common and settled assessment tool (O'Neill 1997, p. 126). Victorian agency workers in January 1998, commenting about the National Data Collection revealed that '...in principle support was tempered with concerns regarding what were perceived as the limitations of the data and whether the data actually recorded what was actually taking place with service providers and users' (Murray 1998). An interviewee from a women's refuge supported these criticisms:

... ministers are very happy to see that x million dollars is getting so many bodies fixed ... The biggest issue for us in productivity terms is that the value of our work is not seen immediately a woman leaves the refuge.... So our success rate, if we want to say it's a success rate, because just coming through the front door and away from a violent partner is a success rate, but if you've got to put more on it, we can't gather that material, it's only our individual knowledge as services of women we keep contact with or you see them in the shopping centre. It can be very, very productive and cost effective to the government in the long term but not in the short term. You get very worried about this emphasis on inputs and outputs and cost of each unit. And I mean that talk is talked, those

words are used: units, inputs, outputs – I really am most offended by it. I'd still be working in business now if I wanted to hear that talk. [Interviewee 6]

A commentator from a women's refuge while again supporting data collection, pointed out how subjective and 'unscientific' the raw data they were collecting was, and called for 'qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation of SAAP' (Oberin 1998). Another interviewee from a women's service also made this point:

... there's been a big push to get away from anecdotal evidence to data...I have a problem about that because we're relying on flawed data ... [Interviewee 2]

The failure of quantitative outputs to accurately reflect the work of services raises concerns that output based measures may be formulaic and risk distorting programs (O'Neill 1997, p. 132). There is evidence that this has occurred with other contracted services concerned about the rate of 'throughput' of clients, for example employment service contractors under the Howard government's Job Network, who selected the most job-ready in their case load to be moved quickly into job search activity, while reducing the effort spent on those seen as 'difficult clients' (Considine 2001, p. 135). There is some interviewee evidence that the focus on outputs in SAAP is influencing some services to move people through faster rather than focussing on the outcomes for those people. The interviewee noted that there has not been a specific directive from government to move people through at a particular rate, but that the focus on outputs itself has led to a climate that encourages such practices:

... the average woman leaves this service after 3 months, and from our point of view she's arrived at basically what she came here for, legal protection, alternative accommodation which isn't always good, but ... what SAAP would like you to do, [is] 6-8 weeks... I have known services that know women cannot go back into the community after 6-8 weeks and they perpetuate what would be seen as refuge hopping, they transfer them somewhere else... What is the point of shifting that woman from this service after 6-8 weeks to another service to another service to another service... with their emotional wellbeing, kids changing schools all the time... [Interviewee 6]

Interestingly, one of the departmental interviewees supported concerns that too great a focus on outputs could distort programs in SAAP. The fieldwork for this research was undertaken shortly before a cost per person, or unit costing formula was introduced for SAAP services in NSW (NSW Department of Community Services 2007):

I have mixed views about it. I think it's kind of oversanitising what is a really complex situation. I think the risk is that you drive people into working with the easier clients as against the more complex clients. I think you take away some of the more innovative flexible reactive parts of your service system. So I think at the end there's got to be some sort of balance between getting an agreed level of service versus tying everything up so tight that people have got no room to do what community services do best. [Interviewee 3]

The use of 'risk' and 'audit' brings a further form of 'accounting' accountability to homelessness services. Audit is now used much more widely than for its original financial purpose, which for homelessness services was the annual auditing of financial statements. For example the NSW Department of Community Services Performance Monitoring Framework for Funded Services, including SAAP services, uses a risk management approach to deciding which 10-20% of services will be subject to a detailed monitoring and review process, and which will use a self-assessment process. Of those undertaking self-assessment, 'a reasonable sample ... should be selected for random audit' (NSW Department of Community Services 2005, p. 4).

The NSW government has used the concept of 'risk' generally in its occupational health and safety requirements, and requires each employer to undertake occupational health and safety risk assessments and risk management, including of clients. As a result of these requirements and a report by the NSW Ombudsman which raised concerns about exclusions of some people by SAAP services, peak bodies obtained state government funding for a client risk assessment tool to be developed for SAAP services (Age Communications in collaboration with Tribe Research 2005). Some commentators (Bessant 2001; 2003) have been critical of such risk discourses where risk is understood as an empirical claim, based on these types of standardised instrumental diagnostic tools

to produce supposedly rational, mathematically calculated and ‘accurate’ readings. Bessant argues that such tools are limiting and inadequate in framing the situations of real people and that they undermine practice as an indeterminate activity that relies on the quality of relationship and understanding of the subjectivity of clients. Some interviewees expressed similar reservations about risk assessment of people using services:

... you’ve got terminology of risk assessment coming into things like common assessment tools. So even at the point of intake with the client ... we should be assessing every client from a risk assessment point of view... that really concerned me, because I thought if my workers start thinking of every client as a risk, I am concerned at how that will make them relate to the clients because if you’re going to approach a client as if you don’t trust them, they already don’t trust you. So I worry about the quality of engagement when that kind of terminology is becoming predominant ... [Interviewee 17]

The techniques of business were not limited to the activities and relations between governments, organisations and staff. The relationship between services and those using them was also to be recast in terms of the economic market under entrepreneurial government. The previous characterisation of these relations in terms of ‘rights and responsibilities’ rather than ‘charity’ or ‘equality’, was extended and further formalised to view these relations as contractual. Further, notions of consumer sovereignty and choice, derived from business, were extended to the provision of welfare service, including homelessness services. For example, the stated ‘aspirations for SAAP IV’ included ‘choice’ for homeless people, along with ‘independence’ and ‘self-reliance’ (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005a).

The individualisation of responsibility in terms of independence and self-reliance and the aspiration of assisting homeless people to become self-reliant members of the economic market was reflected in SAAP by the introduction of individual case management, set out in the revised SAAP legislation of 1994 (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*), to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The shift to viewing relations with services in terms of contract, consumer sovereignty and choice

also served to individualise clients, but in the context of their situation as clients of homelessness services. This change viewed people as entrepreneurs of the self (Rose 1999, p. 164) who exercise choice as consumers in the marketplace of homelessness services rather than as citizens with entitlements. Thus, over the 1980s and 1990s the terminology for homeless people using services changed, firstly to 'clients', and then to the more overtly commercial 'customers' or, particularly in mental health, 'consumers'. Some interviewees thought that the language was at odds with the human focus of services: *'The problem with language is when government or us treats them as consumers, users, it then de-identifies them as people'* [Interviewee 22].

The change to a business-like, contractual relation between services and people who use them shifts the power relations in several ways (Rose 1999, p. 165). The evidence from both the literature and interviewee responses is that, while the entrepreneurial approach may offer certain protections to homeless people, it may fail to deliver the benefits that are promoted in program material. In homelessness services the contractual approach does have a positive potential to construct assistance in terms of rights rather than benevolence so that, for example, homeless people are able to challenge decisions that do not meet services' stated responsibilities (Nichols 1998). On the other hand, it does not resolve issues such as lack of purchasing power of the destitute and lack of service options. The market model assumes that consumers can choose between services, thus enabling competition. The reality, however, is that those seeking welfare assistance have few options from which to choose, and no buying power, making the notion of consumer sovereignty and choice illusory (Kerr & Savelsberg 2001, p. 29). Although people can choose to exit a service, the relationship between services and recipients is very unequal (Higgins & Ramia 2000, pp. 138-9; Kerr & Savelsberg 2001, p. 29; Nichols 1998). This situation is illustrated by the fact that over half of all people seeking accommodation through SAAP services are turned away (Australian Institute for Health and Welfare 2009). The following comment from an interviewee makes this point:

... we've moved from just working with people to having clients and consumers and I don't think that language is helpful. If I was somebody who was wanting to receive a service I'd just rather them know me as a person and treat me as such.

I think it's overly prescriptive, and I think it's a bit of a joke, calling people consumers. I'm a consumer at a shopping centre, because I can choose to go to Harvey Norman or Bing Lee or David Jones' or Grace Brothers depending on who gives me best value for money and best service. Where we don't even have enough services to meet capacity in the accommodation sector, people take what they can get, they're not being given the right of choice, you know they can demand better service, but its not a word that's particularly helpful.
[Interviewee 23]

The characterisation of the homeless person as an individual consumer contracting with services displaces the focus from homelessness and other welfare problems as social issues, and creates a focus on homelessness as an individual problem. The ways in which this change plays out in the lives of homeless individuals will be explored in Chapter 3. The change also impacts on the work of services. The individualisation of problems suppresses agencies' concerns about broader structural issues (Egan & Hoatson 1999; McDonald 2005). Service evaluation through quantitative outputs exerts a pressure on services to deal with what is seen as the individual's problem in an immediate way and to move them on, but it does not encourage services to spend time addressing broader issues which will have an ongoing effect on many people. The comments quoted earlier in this chapter from the women's refuge worker who spoke about the contradiction of not advocating about Family Law issues with long-term implications because of immediate service demands, illustrate this frustration.

Many of the interviewees from community-based organisations were deeply concerned that their political focus was being lost, and that greater attention to the concerns of 'performance' had also involved a lack of attention to broader issues:

... there's a lot of time pressures to get this done and to meet these performance indicators, get this thing in. I think that's had a lot of impact... I think the activism has sort of gone. [Interviewee 20]

Similar concerns have been expressed by other community organisations assisting people who become homeless, such as this Victorian community housing worker:

If these community organisations ... bend to a drive for economic efficiency and survival over and above the needs of their community and service users, they will not meet the needs of anyone ... [they] cannot afford to become aloof and bureaucratic, they cannot afford not to consult with those whose needs have brought them into being, and cannot afford not to work for change and an equitable system (Down 1997).

The totality of the changes to the regulation of services that have occurred with the shift to accountable management and entrepreneurialism in homelessness services has had a profound effect on services, changing the way they used their time. This chapter documents an explosion, since the 1970s, in the quantity and detail of management, administration and accountability tasks that homelessness services undertake. As discussed in Chapter 1, the resources for SAAP services during this period had ceased to grow. While interviewees expressed support for accountability in general, numerous interviewees commented that the effect of the changes that had occurred was to place multiple bureaucratic and administrative demands on services and that this constituted a significant drain on their limited resources and reduced their availability to assist clients. These interviewees were concerned that overpreoccupation with the instruments of management: the appointment, the business plan, the case management plan, the risk assessment, the output has threatened to crowd out the political, social justice and human origins of their services. The bureaucratic demands were a particular challenge for the smaller services which had operated with minimal and unsophisticated governance, and left some services struggling (Lindsay 1993, p. 74; Marks et al. 2005, pp. 18-19; Nyland 1993, p. 135; O'Neill 1997, p. 122-5).

These changes were confirmed both by one of the departmental interviewees as well as by non-government interviewees, some of whom thought that the requirements were disproportionate and were also worried about the use of information as a crude evaluation tool:

... we've gone from the sublime to the ridiculous. We've gone from here where yes we certainly needed some more defined protocols to almost worrying about every single possible thing. [Interviewee 19]

I still have a problem with the collection of too much information...They're stats-mad – unnecessary information ... [Interviewee 6]

Research conducted in South Australia found that some administrators within SAAP services, particularly the larger services, viewed the increased specification as a way to 'get rid of poor operators' and 'an opportunity to demonstrate their professionalism' (Robbins 1997, pp. 87-8). None of the interviewees from large agencies put this view, although two interviewees from small community agencies noted that the increasing specification did lead to the closure of some poorly operating services and some thought that '*... there's been a real professionalism that's come into the services and that is a good thing*' [Interviewee 2].

Some interviewees, however, argued both for accountability by services, but also that some of the accountability requirements were counterproductive, and that there was value in supporting community groups to become accountable. This position is illustrated by the following comments by an interviewee from a youth organisation:

There is an awful lot expected of a new service in this current environment. You've got to have policies and procedures already written, you have to have a whole range of infrastructures in place, yet you have no money, you have to have insurance policies, I don't think there is enough support in the community to be supporting groups to do that, I think some of them are being almost ruled ineligible because they aren't able to meet that criteria – if I think back to the group of people even that I started with in 1985, they wouldn't meet the criteria now... I think some of the administration and accountability, while I would absolutely support people having to be accountable and run well-managed services, some of it is nonsense, some of it is not about how you enhance the service. [Interviewee 23]

The analysis in this chapter of the endeavours of governments to use ‘performance’ to shape homelessness service delivery also demonstrates how the changes resulting from the use of these techniques introduced additional conceptualisations of non-government organisations to those competing conceptualisations already explored in Chapter 1. In that Chapter, I showed how the construction of homelessness as a welfare problem for government has produced three competing conceptualisations of the non-government organisations that provide public homelessness services. These are: firstly, conceptions based on the historical origins of services, as either independent charities or community-based activists; secondly, the conceptualisation contained in the McClure Report (Department of Community Services 2000) of non-government organisations as participants, together with government, business, and communities, in ‘community capacity building through social partnerships’; and thirdly, as the products and representatives of the supposed ‘naturalness’ of the community conceptualised as an ‘extra-political’ zone (Rose 1999, p. 167).

In addition, the implementation of ‘performance’ discussed in Chapter 2 has produced two further conceptualisations of non-government organisations. The first is the conceptualisation of homelessness services as accountable, performance-oriented managers of services. The second conceptualisation is an extension of the first, whereby under entrepreneurial government, organisations became ‘providers’ or entrepreneurial vehicles for the delivery of services on behalf of government.

These five conceptualisations compete with each other in multiple ways, providing a constant tension and instability into government efforts to deliver homelessness programs at arms length while still exerting control over a ‘service system’. Both interviewees and commentators have raised issues concerning these tensions between the various conceptualisations of non-government organisations.

For example, the requirement for community organisations to operate as ‘providers’, conceptualised as small businesses, does not fit easily with the conceptualisation of community activity that has been supported and promoted by governments through initiatives such as ‘The Stronger Families and Communities Strategy’ which envisages community activity as local and natural (Department of Families Community Services

and Indigenous Affairs 2007, p. 133; Nyland 1993). This conceptualisation, although envisaged as natural, is the subject of community capacity building, which forms part of the Mutual Obligation approach, as discussed in Chapter 1. Some interviewees had found that the increase in the bureaucratic requirements for 'performance' created obstacles to community activity, in contrast to government rhetoric about building community capacity. Interviewees commented that encouraging competition between services was not consistent with the government's aim to build a functioning service system, or with the partnerships and co-operation required for community capacity building. They also noted that small services were effectively locked out of the expression of interest process. These are the services that most closely match the conceptualisation of community organisations as naturally occurring, local, grass roots entities.

In addition, the role of 'provider' in a competitive context measured by outputs does not fit easily with the agendas and values of many of the agencies themselves. These agendas and values, as discussed in this chapter and illustrated by the comments of interviewees, include features such as a support for co-operation, community involvement and community development, a concern with the interaction of broad structural and policy issues with individual situations, the prioritising of relationship, human need and human values, a suspicion of over-bureaucratisation, an appreciation of the complexity of human processes and the difficulties in reducing these to quantitative forms, and a first-hand understanding of the obstacles facing homeless people.

Community agencies such as homelessness services are located at the intersection of these contradictory demands between their own aspirations and inconsistent government strategies of competition and community capacity building:

We still believe in this agency and hopefully across the community sector, that we're based on a rights perspective, that people have the right to use our service, and that we should treat people as people not as patients or clients and help engage them in the process of getting their needs met. The whole language of accountability, contestability, competition, all of that's not helpful, particularly the whole competition debate, I think this sector started out working

co-operatively and the co-operation should be the thing that it's built on not on competition, I think that's been a very unhelpful development. I think where we used to share resources much more easily, under competition you now you seek a fee for them or you don't share them because that might give someone else the edge in their tender, a lot of those things are very, very unhelpful, and quite contrary to the other jargon that's used around community capacity building. I truly believe some people just dream up a new idea and the language takes hold, and it doesn't mean very much. [Interviewee 23]

The tension and instability within the endeavour to manage homelessness services at arms length is not only visible in the competing conceptualisations of non-government organisations but also in the production of competing conceptions of the nature of a 'successful' homelessness system and the very task of homelessness services. This is evidenced in the debate about whether the approaches and techniques of business were appropriate for homelessness services' work with people, in particular whether increasing levels of 'performance' measures such as quantitative outputs are able to accurately depict services' activities and gauge whether they are doing 'a good job'. Tension and instability is also visible in the questioning of what is important in doing 'a good job' – whether the business techniques of 'performance' are a good fit for services' work with homeless people:

*It's much more paperwork-based. ... we had less resources years ago, did long hours, but I think there was a difference in how we felt. ...There's a stress, and its about that push, push, push for paperwork ... its wearing, trying to balance that paperwork nightmare with providing a **human** service ... there still needs to be a lot of points watched outside too... but I think that bigger picture's getting smaller and smaller. [Interviewee 6]*

The Rudd Labor government, elected in 2007, signalled in its White Paper on homelessness, a continued emphasis on 'performance', with a strengthening of techniques of 'performance', including further steps in 'professionalisation', the development of national service standards set out in legislation, rather than state-based

standards and a continued focus on ‘outcomes’. In addition, new techniques to improve ‘performance’ are to be introduced, for example a proposed ‘case-mix’ pilot trial to:

... better quantify the actual costs of supporting high-needs clients and test whether additional outcome- based performance payments can improve both employment and housing outcomes for people who are homeless (Australian Government 2008c, p. 41).

The Rudd government’s model appears to place more emphasis on collaboration and shared responsibility with a resulting possibility of some reconceptualisation of the role of non-government organisations but it is not yet possible to assess how this might shape homelessness services in practice.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 has analysed the endeavours of Australian governments since the 1970s to deliver homelessness services at arms length from government, by means of non-government organisations. I argue that this goal was initially pursued through expanding the number and diversity of services. Governments subsequently shifted to pursuing this goal through technologies of ‘performance management’ with the intention of improving the ‘performance’ of this response by seeking to both regulate the ‘performance’ of each organisation providing services and to mould the expanded number of services to form a functioning non-government homelessness service system that could deliver more standardised services. The techniques for improving ‘performance’ that were implemented in homelessness services were driven by ‘accountable management’ and ‘entrepreneurial government’, which were wider reforms in public management derived from business. ‘Performance’ displaced other ways of assessing and improving the work of services and became *the* measure of whether services were doing ‘a good job’.

Chapter 2 shows how the introduction of these techniques brought major changes in the relationship between services and government, and in the way individual services operated. The changes did enable the formation of a homelessness service system

comprising more standardised services, although the ‘rationalisation’ of this system is neither complete nor universally viewed as unproblematic. In addition, the changes were perceived to bring improvements to the delivery of services for homeless people, both at individual service level and in developing a service system, although interviewees demonstrated a lack of consensus among about whether, on balance, the overall impact of the changes was an improvement in the help to people who became homeless.

These changes provided governments with much greater control over the planning, establishment, operation and monitoring both of each individual service and of the homelessness service system that was established. Governments devolved responsibility to services while at the same time increasing accountability. Therefore, although these homelessness services operated at arms length from government they were increasingly merely ‘providers’, or vehicles of government at the same time that they were independent non-government organisations. This independence was not, therefore, the same form of independence that existed for non-government organisations under the previous system, but a form of self-government within the regulated status of ‘provider’.

The change to viewing organisations as ‘providers’ produced additional conceptualisations of non-government organisations to the existing complex of competing conceptualisations already explored in Chapter 1. These multiple and competing conceptualisations of the non-government organisations that provide homelessness services are, in turn, linked to competing conceptualisations of the nature of what it is such organisations are to achieve and how their efforts might be assessed. The strain produced by these competing notions of the nature of the problem of homelessness, the solution and the means of judging success, introduce tension and instability into the government’s project of governing homelessness ‘beyond the state’.

CHAPTER 3. CASE MANAGEMENT: GOVERNING HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

... you don't have a sense of this kind of, everything was difficult and residual and lousy in 1975 and now it's terrific, there was no mention of bullets in this.

[Interviewee 11]

This chapter builds on Chapter 2 to analyse the introduction of case management into SAAP from 1994. 'Case management' was first used in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s for people with mental illnesses following the closure of large mental hospitals, and was subsequently implemented in other countries (Marshall 1998; Mueser et al. 1998). The intention was that a designated person, the 'case manager', would take special responsibility for the client in the community by assessing their needs, ensuring and monitoring the provision of suitable services and maintaining contact with the client (Marshall 1998). In this context a range of case management models has been identified: broker case management, which aims to connect the patient with services and co-ordinate service providers; clinical case management which includes provision of direct services; assertive community treatment (ACT) and other intensive case management models which were developed for patients with more severe problems; the strengths model which emphasised individual strengths rather than pathology; and the rehabilitation model which focussed on individual patients' desires and goals (Mueser et al. 1998).

Case management has been used in the US welfare system as a tool for service co-ordination since the 1970's (Dill 2001). It became integral to 'welfare reform' from the 1980s (Dill 2001), and in this context was viewed as 'a strategy to help families become financially independent of welfare' (Hallingby 1990, p. 3). The concept of case management as a feature of mutual obligation style welfare reforms was promoted by Lawrence Mead who in a series of publications from 1986 espoused the conditional provision of welfare, or 'help and hassle' paternalism, using case management as 'rule enforcement' to address what he saw as clients' tendency to avoid programs (Mead 1997, pp. 62-3). Case management has become a mainstay of welfare and health service delivery in Australia, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the United States

(Gronda 2009). There are diverse models and approaches to case management, and, despite its widespread adoption, there has been a lack of clarity and intellectual scrutiny of the phenomenon (Gronda 2009).

As described in Chapter 1, the introduction of SAAP case management occurred at the same time that funding increases for SAAP services ceased. SAAP Case Management was consistent with the ‘active society’ approach of the Keating government’s Working Nation reforms of 1994, which had also introduced case management for the long-term unemployed and ‘reciprocal obligations’ of participation for unemployed young people.

The requirements for SAAP case management itself were not formally changed with the introduction of the Howard government’s Mutual Obligation Policy in 1997. Mutual Obligation emphasised individualised service delivery and an obligation on welfare recipients, including the introduction of more punitive features into income support provision. The SAAP IV (2000-05) and SAAP V (2005-10) agreements between the Commonwealth and states did, however, reflect the changed context for welfare services by adopting Mutual Obligation concerns such as preventing dependency (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005a).

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

In this chapter I argue that case management in SAAP was on the one hand a strategy to change the approach of some agencies, particularly the large, traditional charitable institutions, from providing only a ‘bed for the night’ to providing support for people using their services. The women’s and youth services had generally already been providing some form of planned support or assistance rather than accommodation only. Case Management was presented to services as synonymous with providing support, and as the only alternative to providing merely accommodation.

SAAP Case Management was, however, not only a strategy to ensure all services offered support. The form of support to be provided through case management was to be specific, and consistent with the aims of welfare reform. It was also to provide a technology for enlisting all SAAP services in the welfare reform goals of activating

homeless people with the aim of maximising their self-reliance, initially under Working Nation and, subsequently, under Mutual Obligation. In this sense, case management sought to govern homeless people, while doing so *through their own freedoms*.

The introduction of case management acted to homogenise the previously diverse forms of assistance offered by SAAP services. In the case of the traditional organisations it initiated a process of change from offering a 'bed for the night' to offering support through case management. In the case of the women's and youth services that had already been offering support, it operated to individualise and to make specific the form of support that was offered. In so doing the focus of services' activity was required to be shifted away from their engagement in the 1980s and early 1990s with both 'structural' and 'individual' factors and explanations of homelessness, to focus more on 'individual' factors and on techniques of service delivery. Therefore case management places responsibility on individual homeless people to recognise and deal with '*... the issues that have resulted in their homelessness...*' [Interviewee 3], a form of words used by both a Departmental interviewee and a NSW Government response to a report by the Ombudsman (NSW Ombudsman 2004, p. 53).

Among fieldwork interviewees for my thesis there was widespread acknowledgement that case management improved some aspects of service delivery, and widespread acknowledgement of the value of providing support to homeless people, but many interviewees also expressed concern that it could not, alone, address the contextual structural factors that contributed to the problem of homelessness. On the contrary, some interviewees thought that the specific form of case management that placed responsibility on individuals to address their homelessness in a context where there was a lack of housing risked being counterproductive and damaging of homeless people who could experience this a-contextual form of service provision as judgemental and less 'human'. There is evidence that some homeless people are missing out on getting assistance as a result of the introduction of case management combined with the other changes in services. Some services have also exceeded government requirements of case management by introducing a more punitive feature by excluding people from services if they refuse to enter into a case management plan. Paradoxically, interviews indicate that it is those with chronic or 'high risk' problems that may be more likely to

miss out – those who were the subject of the greatest concern about ‘bed for the night’ services.

The introduction of case management acted to limit the conceptualisation of how assistance could be offered to homeless people, and by extension, of homelessness itself. Case Management has supported the shift, detailed in Chapter 1, in the dominant policy representation of homelessness to focus more on individual self-management and ‘welfare’ issues, at the expense of ‘structural’ issues of provision by governments, markets and other entities and forces. Interviewees viewed the introduction of case management as one of the most significant changes of recent decades, but expressed widespread ambivalence about its operation and effects.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the Rudd Government’s White Paper *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness* (Australian Government 2008c) signals an increased emphasis on ‘structural issues’ as causes of homelessness, as well as the use of a greater diversity of strategies to address homelessness, rather than the previous reliance on the provision of case management and temporary accommodation. Implementation of the new approach is in its early stages, so it is not yet possible to assess how the new arrangements will operate.

SAAP SERVICES BEFORE CASE MANAGEMENT

Prior to the introduction of case management in SAAP in 1995, agencies used a diversity of approaches, within the SAAP framework, to the provision of assistance to people who became homeless. While there were some exceptions, there was a broad distinction between the assistance offered by the traditional charities and the newer, more political women’s and youth services. The traditional charities generally focussed on offering accommodation and food, or a ‘bed for the night’ approach, which in some cases was associated with homeless people using charity shelter over very long periods. The women’s and youth services generally offered not only accommodation, but also some form of planned support, as explained by a departmental interviewee:

Women's services actually saw that unless there was some fundamental change for those women, and support and counselling and all those things, that they in fact would go back into that cycle of violence, some of the youth services started to take a longer term interest in the kids that were coming in, and what would happen to them next, the last set of services to change are the very traditional male oriented homelessness services, who saw they had quite a narrow role.
[Interviewee 4]

The traditional charitable approach to service provision was described in 1977 by Alan Jordan, then an officer at the Department of Social Security. In, reflecting on the services funded under the HPAP, he characterised the dominant form of service in the traditional organisations at this time as:

...relatively backward in terms of its sophistication or the actual range of services that it is able to offer to homeless people. Very often the most that you stand to get is a bed and a couple of meals and that's it, whereas you may require other kinds of assistance (Jordan 1977, p. 8).

This situation was confirmed by interviewees for this research who were from the traditional charitable organisations:

... for a long time for homeless people it was bed, a prayer and breakfast, that kind of thing. It was very minimal, very basic service provision. [Interviewee 17]

Another interviewee from a charitable organisation noted the low expectations of people using services that often accompanied this approach:

I think the understanding of the past was most of the guys that come here they were a pain, they were a nuisance, and therefore the best you could ever do basically was okay provide food and clothing.... the reality was that you fed a person, you gave a person a bed.... Some would stay a long, long time.
[Interviewee 15]

While some people might use such services over many years, they did not become homes. One interviewee described how this use was recurrent rather than ongoing, both as a result of the policies of the services and of the survival strategies of those who used them. This comment from another charitable service describes these service policies and the client responses:

... this is a crisis service, its not your home, you're only passing through, don't settle down here, don't get comfortable, we've got to move you on, as a result the physical environment was really poor ... clients would come in for three days and then leave before they had to pay ... [Interviewee 18]

This interviewee saw one of the factors in this situation was a punitive attitude whereby the service was:

... very prohibition-oriented. There were all these rules that fenced people out and increasingly the relationship between staff and clients and clients' capacity to stay within the service became very arbitrary because there were so many rules ... [Interviewee 18]

An interviewee who had worked with a different church-based charity for over 20 years confirmed that the approach at that time involved:

...a much more punitive approach toward the client group ... and there was a very charitable attitude, it was very hand out, what more can they expect than a bed and a feed, and if they misbehave they're out the door, because they know someone will want to take their place... [Interviewee 14]

One interviewee whose role involved contact with a number of the traditional services noted the overtly religious component of some traditional agencies, even in the early 1990s. Interestingly, the interviewee is not prepared to say that this aspect of charitable services has been removed as a result of the introduction of case management:

It was quite interesting to look and to see the religious flavour of a lot of the charitable institutions.... I can remember going to meetings and having to scoot through a meeting room where they were leading morning prayer.... I couldn't

make any judgement whether I'm seeing it less or whether it's less of a problem or whether people are more discreet or have more choice. [Interviewee 5]

While the backgrounds of the fieldwork interviewees were mostly in New South Wales, the approach of the traditional services was similar elsewhere. The following comments describe services in Melbourne:

... welfare services offering crisis housing to homeless men still provided (and would continue to do so until the mid 1990's) harsh and rudimentary accommodation that could at best be described as 'night shelters'. Here residents were crowded into dormitory rooms where there was little if no personal privacy. Residents had to obey evening check in times and were sent away in the early mornings (Middenthorp 2006, p.8).

As discussed in Chapter 1 there were some women's and youth services that were run by charities and some that were community-based but operated from an ethos more similar to the charitable agencies or influenced by other approaches. The following description is of a service for women with drug and alcohol problems in the 1980s:

... there was an argument: we were open in the mornings and in the evenings and not during the day, and we were trying to change that, because of the fact of women having to leave during the day and come back.... and on the night shift – you had to talk them into going to AA... I know Elsie's refuge had a very different ethic going on... [Interviewee 2]

The charitable ethos of the traditional services and their concentration on providing crisis accommodation was challenged by the more innovative approaches from refuge models, which were oriented to self-help and mutual support (McFerran 1990). The philosophical and practical approach of the women's refuge movement was very different from that of the traditional organisations. An exposition of the conceptualisation of purpose and the approach to those using the early women's refuges is contained in two items drawn from a document: 'The Women's Refuge Programme – A Response to Domestic Violence: The Policy of the New South Wales Department of

Youth and Community Services’, which are quoted in full in a 1982 Evaluation of Women’s Refuges in NSW (Perry, Waterford & Carr 1982, pp. 1-3). These two items are the ‘Characteristics of Women’s Refuges’, which were drawn up and accepted by Women’s Refuges and the Department, and the ‘Policy Guidelines for the funding of Women’s Refuges’.

These documents make clear the differences between women’s refuges and the charitable services. Firstly, the Guidelines made it very clear that the problem to be addressed was not individual deficit, but: ‘...crisis situations generated by economic, social and physical circumstances, which make the present living conditions intolerable...’ (Perry, Waterford & Carr 1982, p. 2). The activities to be undertaken by refuges in order to meet the guidelines were consistent with this and included the requirement to:

... meet the demands of women ... by providing non-institutionalised short term emergency accommodation for the women and their dependant children as well as continuing support for their own welfare...aim to raise public awareness ... about the status and needs of women and children... actively encourage the involvement of residents and ex-residents, and their children in the running of the refuge ... (Perry, Waterford & Carr 1982, pp. 2-3).

The role of the services included not only providing emergency assistance but also engaging in public education about social and political issues, and involving those who used the service in its running. This approach challenged the assumptions of the charitable approach: rather than viewing those using the service as in need of moral improvement it advocated social change, with involvement by both those running the refuges and those using the services. Consistent with this was the rejection of a professional dichotomy between staff and clients in favour of self-help. ‘The Characteristics of Women’s Refuges’ lists this feature at the beginning of the document, indicating its primary importance:

Self help and mutual support rather than professionalism. A Women's Refuge operates on the premise of women supporting other women rather than professionals helping clients to find solutions to problems.

There is a non-institutional approach whereby a woman is encouraged to take active responsibility for her own welfare. No-one is in charge. The woman's active involvement in making decisions about the policy and operation of the refuge is seen as one way of providing her with this opportunity (Perry, Waterford & Carr 1982, p. 2).

Secondly, the women's refuges broke with the selective and improving approach that had been part of the philosophy of some traditional charities. Services would not be aiming to identify those who were undeserving, or fearing that they might discourage moral behaviour by providing too much help. On the contrary, the focus on entitlement and social change was consistent with services actively making themselves available as widely as possible. 'The Characteristics of Women's Refuges' indicate that refuges would continue to offer help to those previously assisted, as well as to assist women more widely:

The experience of mutual support is not confined to the refuge but continues after the woman has left.... A Women's Refuge must be concerned not only with providing a direct service, but must assist all women either individually or collectively, in the refuge and in the community... (Perry, Waterford & Carr 1982, p. 2).

Fieldwork interviewees painted a similar picture, although several noted that there were differences of emphasis between the various feminist refuges. The following four descriptions give an indication of how variants of the 'self help and mutual support rather than professionalism' referred to above operated in the early days of Elsie and in three other women's refuges during the 1970s:

[I started working at Elsie in] 1976 and that was a huge turning point, for me, because I became part of a group of women who became the first ex-residents of

a refuge to start working in a refuge, that was a real push... that the women who were using the services had to take control of their welfare needs... I was a country girl who had been married for years... Didn't have a clue about social justice, politics, let alone feminism. So when I hit the refuge I was introduced to all those things and it was a real eye opener, and it probably saved my life to come across a group of women like that.... I didn't see myself in the role as a worker, and I guess what occurred at that time was a really good circle of friends. For a lot of us it was the first time we had ever been able to have female friendships due to the isolation that domestic violence creates.... We did all the usual stuff. We did give information to women. We did attend Court hearings with them and get them onto Social Security.... get Legal Aid.... We had lots of liaison with a local doctor and the kids' hospital ... We'd... make sure women got benefits that they were entitled to.... I think the learning and the excitement of working in that refuge at that time is something that I, and a small group of us, will never, ever forget because it was life changing. I think it's probably the most valuable period of my life in understanding the needs of women. [Interviewee 9]

Our intention was to do anything we needed to do to keep a woman safe and with a roof over their head.... going and literally rescuing women from violent situations, bundling them in the car with the kids and taking them to our own homes so they got a bed and a hot meal.... I think the big impact was primarily, we had demystified and deformedalised a lot of procedures. We all worked under first names, which was unheard of in those days. We saw the women as women who almost became friends as opposed to a client or a number. We all looked informal, we all wore jeans or casual clothes. Women felt comfortable; women could come and use the services, have a cup of tea ... it was a totally different type of service to what women had until then I suppose which had been far more formal; which had been far more them and us orientated. I think it gave them a lot of empowerment and strength. They liked it. They felt as though there were people out there that did care about them. They were more than just a number. And we were, as workers, we were also women. We would share our own personal experiences with the women who used those services. This isn't just

happening to you; hey this happened to me and you can move on. [Interviewee 19]

I came in 1976 as a person who started working with children because ... the women who worked here saw that the children were being left behind.... when I had the children out in the yard the mothers would all come out too and we would have a lovely time talking and laughing and then they would be asking me questions which I had no idea how to answer so I would come in and ask the ... social workers ... So what they actually said to me was would you be interested in coming and working on this side of it and you can go and do the welfare course at TAFE and that probably was about in '78 I think.... So then I worked in that side of it... I was on the committee with housing.... And we were also doing a lot of family law... We had a really good group of solicitors who would work with our women.... In the early days we were more friends with the women who used the service. I don't mean we were friends and buddies but we were more informal and I've always liked that. I've always liked the children being able to come in and if I'm sitting, it was the typewriter then before computers, you'd have the kids on your knees, always you stopped what you were doing to pick them up... [Interviewee 16]

On reflection, this service has always done case management. Of course, it'd be on the most basic level. But we always had a file on a woman ... and we'd discuss the progress and what the woman wants, and what's available, and that would be noted – we always did that... [Interviewee 6]

Many of the youth services had also, to varying degrees, been offering support rather than just a bed for the night, as described by the following three interviewees:

Back in 85... what was really important was providing them a bed, providing food, providing showers, some really basic essentials and making sure ... that you were linked to the welfare department... And making sure they went to school and making sure that you had spoken to their parents and worked out how you might be able to assist them, but the big thing was about the relationship between the

youth workers and the clients. It was about how does this youth worker engage with this young person, assist this young person to do whatever is necessary to ensure the young person is safe and healthy and the emotional issues they were dealing with were supported. And so there was a lot more emphasis on ... those relationships.... if I think about what we did in 85 ... and what we do now, I don't necessarily believe people are getting a better service now, I think it might be a similar sort of service but delivered differently, so they're still getting accommodation and support... [Interviewee 23]

There wasn't nearly so much emphasis on case work, it was more... just giving them a place to come... and to work out what they want to do next, youth work done in the sense of – they should do the washing up at night ... It was basically an emphasis on providing a safe place, empowerment, I think some [youth refuges] would have called it case management, and some would have been fairly advanced in doing case management but not called it that. [Interviewee 7]

... a lot of sitting around the kitchen table, ... a lot of work at the local shopping mall, and the local cafe, with a lot of the girls and their boyfriends and their families, you know, real wild families ... we'd learnt that the only way that we could have those young women on side with us was to understand where they came from and what their experiences were.... I would say 95% of it was sexual abuse and family abuse, without a doubt. That's why those young girls left home... We tried to do a fair bit of talking about that, but because of a lot of that damage it takes a long, long time for those young women to start talking about it, but it was always there.... We tried to implement a little bit of structure in their lives and it was the hardest thing in the world.... Many a morning we would be dragging young women out of bed, making sure they had clothes that were reasonable and driving them to school, making sure that at least they did that.... We tried to do a fair bit with housing... We would even meet with families and try and sort out if there was any resolution to issues. I would like to think that we had a huge impact on some people's lives. [Interviewee 9]

It is very clear from the above comments that, despite the differences in emphasis between each of the women's and youth services referred to above, all were providing much more than a bed and a meal. There are some other similarities as well, in that 'structural' issues such as economic issues, housing and domestic violence and abuse were viewed as central to homelessness, and the support that was offered is described using terms like empowerment, entitlement, mutuality, relationship, sharing, informality, understanding, talking, engagement, information and even, although with some qualifications, friendship. A similar philosophy existed in many other community-based services that assisted homeless people such as housing services, tenants' services and community information and health services. An interviewee who had worked at several such services explained that:

... people weren't as 'othered' and described as homeless – it was much more about everyone's got the right to decent housing or there's rights under the Tenancy Act or women need information to leave a bad relationship ... it wasn't quite as us and them... [Interviewee 24]

This broad philosophy generally continued to be the case for many services when, after the first enthusiasm of the 1970's, both the number of women's and youth services expanded greatly and services developed their work with people using services in various ways. The impetus for changes came 'both from within and without'. In other words, while some changes arose from government requirements as described in Chapter 2, others arose both from a process of reflecting on the way services assisted people and from a political awareness of the impact of economic and social factors. An interviewee with a broad overview of the SAAP sector described this process of development:

I think it's fair to say that services initially took a very broad approach to what they were doing, they evolved as community based services tend to do anyway, they picked up skills, they picked up issues (good ones) in response to the needs they identified in working with people. The bad ones didn't, the bad ones would just end up delivering a minimal kind of service and going through the hoops. [Interviewee 13]

The following two comments from interviewees provide some examples of this process in women's refuges in the 1980s. The first is from the interviewee quoted above who had spoken of the value of the female friendships she had made while working at Elsie. The comments below are about her change to working in a different refuge in the early 1980s, and about her experience of more formalised relationships, or 'better boundaries' with women using the refuge. The second is about improving the diversity and accessibility of service provision. The developments that arose from within services generally remained consistent with the broad approach of the refuges as described above. Empowerment and entitlement remained important, as did a modified form of mutuality:

... looking back on it I can see that all of us suffered burnout... I was wanting boundaries between my home life and my work life. I had the chance of a new job.... the refuge was a lot more structured because we had specialised roles and we had better boundaries between the women who were using the service I also clearly saw what happened when you didn't have those boundaries ... you'd give your all to that person, and you could see their potential ... but what you wanted them to be is very different to the timetable that they have. I guess after learning a few hard lessons like that I realised that women change but they change at their own pace.... I could see that having a more structured workplace would enable that to happen as well. [Interviewee 9]

In the 80s too we started to look at specific groups of women, rather than just women as a whole. So we were starting to identify the needs of Aboriginal women, of women from non-English speaking backgrounds ... of lesbians ... Older women, younger women.... And again I think it was a sense of empowerment to them that there was recognition... [Interviewee 2]

Changes in other areas such as legal changes relating to domestic violence also affected the way services were able to work with people. For example, domestic violence activists' success in having some legal protections introduced for women in domestic

violence situations offered alternatives to the task of ‘literally rescuing women from violent situations’ [Interviewee 19] described above:

... the system stuff started to change... When did AVOs [Apprehended Violence Orders] come in, mid 80s, late 80s... the system’s recognition of domestic violence for example.... I remember talking to a woman who was the first person to take out ... a restraining order against her husband. And the implications of that at the time were huge. Probably what he’d done to her was absolutely huge too, for her to be able to get so far as she did. [Interviewee 20]

During the 1980s the feminist and youth refuge movements both initiated campaigns to improve housing provision as problems getting long term housing were a barrier to people moving through refuges (Coffey 2006, p. 24-5; McFerran 1990, p 202). One of the products of these campaigns was the somewhat controversial funding of medium term women’s and youth services. Some people argued that the real need was for permanent housing, and that medium term supported housing, such as the Women’s Housing Program established in the mid-1980s in NSW, was an expensive interim measure which did not address the most pressing problem (McFerran 1990, p. 202). Others argued that some homeless women and young people needed an extended period of support and assistance before they would be able to maintain long-term housing. This process shows the concern and debate in the refuge movements about both the need for improvement in areas of social provision such as housing, and about the issue of support. It is also an example of how, from an initial focus on crisis services, a range of medium term services offering greater support to a more broadly conceptualised homeless population were developed in the women’s and youth sectors:

It happened because the women’s refuge movement saw a problem... if they were lucky they were getting these women into Housing Commission, and then the same women were bouncing back, because they weren’t getting the level of support they needed, to become independent, because of the crisis focus in the refuges... The idea was that it would become a stepping stone from a crisis service to long term housing ... so they initially wanted some for women and children escaping domestic violence... they wanted one for incest survivors, they

wanted one for single psych... there was a need for Aboriginal women... non-English speaking women had to be catered for. [Interviewee 2]

One interviewee with an overview of the sector was of the opinion that the practice in many of the newer women's and youth services had actually influenced the development of SAAP as a program with a focus on providing support rather than only accommodation:

... case management ... started to appear as newer organisations ... were seeing in a more whole of person way, and SAAP, I think, was a response to some of the better practise that was starting to occur in the non-government sector, and it's part of the realisation that yes, you did need accommodation, emergency crisis and medium term, but you also needed effective support services...
[Interviewee 11]

These changes in women's and youth services during the 1980s and early 1990s reflected debates about, and changes in the agendas of many of these services, and therefore in the relationship between services and those who used them. Services were engaged in debate about and a shift from the social change agenda of the 1970s which focussed only on 'structural explanations' of homelessness, to an approach which viewed their task in terms of a combination of both 'structural' and 'individual' factors, and viewed support as not only the 'mutual' support of political action, but as incorporating other influences and forms as well. There was, however, a continuing view among such services that 'structural' factors remained integral to the creation of homelessness and to its resolution.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management was introduced to SAAP as part of the SAAP reform agenda expressed in the revised SAAP legislation enacted in 1994 (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*). As described in Chapter 1, the introduction of SAAP case management coincided with the Keating government's Working Nation reforms, which included the introduction of case management for the unemployed. These changes also

coincided with a lack of additional resources to assist homeless people. Over the period of SAAP III (1994-99), funding increased by 7.9%, but this did not result in an expansion of service capacity or additional assistance for homeless people; rather it comprised Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments, Super Guarantee Component (SCG) and award increases (National Evaluation Team 1999, p. 218).

The Hon Brian Howe, MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Housing and Regional Development, in speaking to a conference of NSW SAAP services soon after the new legislation, described the aim of the changes as:

... to progress SAAP from a “safety net” role to being a program which actively empowers people to achieve their goals and to increase their overall level of wellbeing (Howe 1995).

The National Evaluation of SAAP II had supported moves to a ‘client focussed approach’, including the ‘independence’ of people using SAAP services and their involvement in the process of using services and moving to independent living (Lindsay 1993, p. 68) as well as ‘... flexibility in responding to the varied and changing needs of clients’ (Lindsay 1993, p. 70). Such changes would also include user rights, the shift from larger institutional services to smaller ones and from congregate to independent accommodation. Consistent with this, the 1994 revision of the SAAP legislation strengthened the aim of maximising individual independence, thus aligning the Program with a case management approach. SAAP’s aim was restated as:

... to provide transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services, in order to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Within this aim the goals are:

- d) to resolve crisis; and
- e) to re-establish family links where appropriate; and
- f) to re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, p. 5)

The aim is to be achieved by: ‘Providing or arranging for the provision of support services and supported accommodation; and helping people who are homeless to obtain long term, secure and affordable housing or accommodation and support services’ (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*). The focus under case management has thus shifted from the ‘independence’ and ‘self help’ of 1985, to a need to ‘re-establish the capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP’ and aims of ‘self reliance’ as well as ‘independence’.

The 1994 Act set out the responsibilities of SAAP agencies as follows:

- (a) to help people who are homeless to resolve crisis, and to achieve greater independence, through the following:
 - (i) case management;
 - (ii) assessment and referral;
 - (iii) if appropriate – early intervention and re-establishment of family links;
- (b) to further the integration into the community of people who are homeless by increasing access to the following:
 - (i) employment;
 - (ii) education and training;
 - (iii) disability and rehabilitation services;
 - (iv) children’s support services;
 - (v) income support;
 - (vi) other appropriate opportunities and resources;
- (c) to help people who are homeless to obtain long-term, secure and affordable housing and accommodation by providing access to a range of options suitable to their needs;
- (d) to complement other services available to people who are homeless (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*).

Consistent with this legislation, a reform agenda for SAAP was set out in *Strategic Directions for SAAP*, which describes client outcomes for which SAAP services should aim. They were: crisis resolution (which included restoring or maintaining family networks and other informal networks, capacity to avoid or deal with future social or

economic crisis and living independently within the community; reliable and sufficient income; secure affordable housing; adequate health; life skills (including interpersonal skills); and labour market participation (Senior Officers' Group, 1993, quoted in Bisset, Campbell & Goodall 1999, p. 25). Similarly, the national strategic plan for SAAP III (1994-99) listed the Program's focus as being on 'client outcomes', 'standards aimed at improving the quality of service delivery' and 'case management' (Department of Health and Family Services 1996).

The direction of the Program thus shifted away from the previous emphasis on expanding the numbers of people assisted, to the 'client focussed approach', and this was a period of intensive reform to re-make organisations and refocus their relationship with those using them, including through case management. The focus on the individual client can be seen to occur in a number of ways. First, the aim of the Program was on achieving client self-reliance and independence. Services were to pursue this aim principally through case management, making it central to the reform agenda of SAAP III.

Second, the revised Act and the Strategic Directions quoted above made it clear that crisis resolution and therefore case management involved connecting or re-integrating people with community, in the sense of accessing housing, employment, training and services, and restoring or maintaining family or other networks. Many of the factors that determined re-integration with community were, therefore, 'structural' factors. While services could assist people in these areas, their success depended not only on this assistance given at an 'individual' level, but also to a great extent on the availability of employment, housing or services, at a 'structural' level. Nevertheless the policy response was on working on re-integration into the community through assistance to the individual without reference to the impact of structural factors.

Third, the revision of SAAP's ambit to include people at imminent risk was aimed at providing early intervention and prevention activities as well as simply responding to crisis. It, too, increased the individual perspective of SAAP by focusing at individual level on factors that may be viewed as increasing a person's chance of becoming homeless, but not on broader issues or on expanding service provision.

Fourth, the shift away from expanding the numbers assisted to focussing on individual clients was reflected in a gradual shift in the configuration of SAAP accommodation, away from congregate models to separate units. One government interviewee referred to individual living units as the government's '*preferred model*' [Interviewee 4] and explained that the relevant state department was '*breaking down the shared models and setting up small units*' [Interviewee 4], either at the request of services or when buildings needed replacement. This interviewee was of the opinion that people in individual units '*... should have leases, and that they should enter into tenancy agreements as well as getting support*' [Interviewee 4]. This perspective reflects SAAP's shift from 'crisis' accommodation and the recognition that homeless people may be living in SAAP services for a longer time. This government interviewee also described congregate models as '*difficult to manage*' because of the '*personal dynamics in the living spaces*' [Interviewee 4]. Several interviewees from services noted that while they saw benefits for clients in this process, the change had reduced their service's capacity.

In 1997 a Case Management Resource Kit for SAAP Services was produced for the SAAP National Case Management Working Group and distributed to all SAAP services to explain what was involved. The kit consisted of a folder and some floppy discs with general information about the Case Management approach to be followed, examples relevant to different types of services, an example policy and procedures file and other information. Included with the Kit was a booklet of National Practice Principles for SAAP Case Management. The Kit advised that: 'The new State/Commonwealth Agreement on SAAP identifies case management as a key focus of the program' (National Case Management Working Group 1997, p. i) and that: '...SAAP services are required to implement a case management approach to working with clients' (National Case Management Working Group 1997, p. 1.2). The Kit defined Case Management as follows:

Case management within SAAP Services is a collaborative, client-focused approach. It is aimed at empowering and working with clients to effectively meet individual needs.

It is a two pronged approach incorporating **direct client service**, based on sound assessment and support planning, and **co-ordination** of access to and delivery of, a range of other appropriate support services.

The SAAP worker operates within an agreed framework of principles, standards and ethics which enhance client choice and responsibility.

Case management in SAAP may involve one worker as a key worker for a particular client, or a team approach. The focus is on a strengthened service and support role for each service user, to ensure that a high quality service is received.

Case management in SAAP is appropriate in many, if not all, situations. It is flexible in application and timing in recognition of the many needs of individuals, and the limited control any one agency or worker has over client outcomes. However, case management in SAAP occurs in the context of a transitional, time-limited framework for intervention. (National Case Management Working Group 1997, p. 1.1)

The contents of the Kit presented a helping model, involving a number of stages in a collaborative approach: Entry/Screening, Assessment, Planning, Direct Service, Co-ordination with other Services, Monitoring and Review, Case Closure/Exit Planning, Follow-Up and Evaluation.

Case management was viewed as the major tool for services to assist people to attain the qualities of self-reliance and independence encapsulated in the aim of SAAP. Case management thereby operationalises the individual client focus for SAAP, supporting homeless people to address 'their own' situation by becoming more like the active and entrepreneurial citizen. This was in contrast to the HPAP, which had aimed to offer 'care' regardless of expectation of 'rehabilitation'. Case management can thus be viewed as one of the normalising practices of contemporary government which, as Dean notes '... have come to rely on the agency of the governed themselves' (1999, p. 66). While the 1985 and 1989 versions of SAAP had taken steps towards the neo-liberal

‘active’ conceptualisation of the citizen, the introduction of case management greatly strengthened this approach.

Case Management continued to be promoted to services by Commonwealth and State departments under SAAP IV (2000-05) and V (2005-10). As described in Chapter 1, the SAAP context for case management changed over time to reflect the changed context for welfare services by adopting Mutual Obligation concerns. For example, the principles set out in the SAAP IV (2000-05) Memorandum of Understanding included ‘preventing dependency by supporting individuals and families to secure their own economic and social participation to the greatest degree possible’ (Department of Family and Community Services 2000-2005a), while the SAAP V (2005-10) agreement seeks outcomes such as ‘people have increased capacity for social inclusion’, and draws on the concept of ‘community partnerships’ (Australian Government 2005).

The SAAP documentation about case management discussed above sheds a certain amount of light on how the system was to work. In addition, my research includes a number of interviews with staff of relevant government departments who described the thinking behind the introduction of case management as a policy for all SAAP services. One of the departmental interviewees for this research rates the introduction of case management as the biggest change overall since the 1970s in relation to homelessness. The interviewee explains case management by juxtaposing the concept of doing ‘*work with people*’ to ‘*sort their problems out and move them on to an independent living arrangement*’, with the ‘*bed for the night approach*’ [Interviewee 3], which was common among traditional charitable organisations. The issue was whether support was offered or not. This understanding of case management is a very practical one, which is also reflected in the Case Management Kit described above. The comment makes it clear that many of the women’s and youth services had been offering support rather than just a bed for the night and the interviewee saw the main purpose of the policy as bringing the charities into providing support as well:

The big shift in terms of servicing homeless people has been from providing the bed for the night, to looking at long term resolution of their crisis and providing outcomes for them. While that’s been a big shift... as a service system there’s

been people doing this case management approach to their work for 20-30 years, but I think what happened is in the SAAP III Agreement, in the mid 90s, there was a really strong national policy approach to changing the nature of the way SAAP services were to be provided, and that big shift was about the introduction of case management. It's been a process of bringing the group of services through that weren't using a case management approach, bringing them through.... [Interviewee 3]

The departmental interviewee goes on to present the issue not only as a straightforward one of either offering support or just a bed, but also as a matter of 'choice' and of services being more receptive to the needs and wishes of the homeless person. The scenario described is one where the homeless person is central rather than responding to a system:

... if you're going to provide a case management approach, its fundamental that you've got to provide choice... it's about saying we've got to actually start to respond to what the client's needs are, what the client's wishes are. So it's a matter of... making the shift from the client fitting into the system, to making the system fit in with the client. [Interviewee 3]

There is, however, a tension between this conceptualisation of case management as flexible and receptive support for the person experiencing homelessness, and as something more coercive. The same departmental interviewee's subsequent comments make clearer the specific aims of case management under the new welfare regime, SAAP's revised goals for people, and the role of services in enacting these goals. The interviewee does so by illustrating the argument for case management by contrasting a hobo who lives on the road with the aspirational ideal of welfare reform. The account of the hobo invokes the old and romantic notion of the swagman, including the traveller by choice, and also the associated stereotype of the person who does not want to work, whose situation is described by Lloyd (2000, p. 298) as 'deviant homelessness'. This description presents an equivalent of the 'dole bludger' chimera which had been used since 1973 and was, as discussed in Chapter 1, a factor in directing debate about income support (Mendes 2003). The expansion in the definition of homelessness and the

homeless population described in Chapter 1 is at odds with this narrow and stereotyped depiction of homelessness:

In an ideal society everyone would have their own space, and everyone would have a job, and everyone could afford to live relatively comfortably. I think all we can aspire to is to actually give people the options to claw their way up Mark Latham's ladder of opportunity as high as they can get.... I think the worker's role is about encouraging, inspiring people to improve their lives. And that can sound a bit patronising I suppose because at the end of the day some people will adopt a lifestyle approach. I feel a bit conflicted about this, I suppose. There was an Australian Story show on this week about a guy that had lived off the road for 25 years, and what made him really proud was that he had not asked anyone for a damn thing over that 25 years. He actually had made a lifestyle choice, and has continued to live off the road, even though he's been reunited with his family, and obviously has got other options. Now the challenge I think is, if people make these lifestyle choices, what level of community resources are they entitled to, to support that lifestyle choice? ... we've got to balance the need to provide a safety net program against ... the need to kind of support the aspirations of the majority of homeless people which seem to be to actually sort out their problems. [Interviewee 3]

It is interesting to contrast here the interviewee's description of the man as having '...not asked anyone for a damn thing over that 25 years...' suggesting an extraordinary level of self-reliance, if of an unconventional sort, with the concern that he may be a drain on community resources. The interviewee's frank exposition of some perhaps widely-held concerns is interesting in the way it constitutes this man as a deviant stereotype who, due to his 'lifestyle' may not be catered for by social provision. The man has, through a form of self-reliance viewed as deviant, forfeited his right to social support. He has not engaged in the 'participation' that is central to recent conceptualisations of welfare and of society; he is not climbing the ladder of opportunity. Had he taken 'other options' and perhaps lived with his family (we do not know the reason for his decisions), his social rights may be viewed differently. The interviewee who described this scenario expressed some inner conflict about this

judgment, but the expression of this particular aspect of the conflicted view is useful and illuminating for this research, in that it suggests that the goal of self-reliance for homeless people may be limited to specific versions that are viewed as non-deviant.

In this context then, the problem for homelessness services is cast as one of re-integrating the hobo into the ladder of opportunity. The role of case management, as the key technique of services in meeting this aim, is to place additional responsibility upon both homeless people themselves and the services that are assisting them. Thus, departmental interviewees describe the case management task in terms such as:

...what it's meant for clients is that a lot of responsibility has been placed on them to recognise and deal with the issues that were causing their homelessness...[Interviewee 3]

Similarly, a departmental interviewee describes the task for services as follows:

The issue is whether the clients engage with it, but I think that if you're going to get the outcome that you want from the service these days, i.e. to move people into independent living through a resolution of their issues, then ultimately that's got to be done through a case planning/case management framework.
[Interviewee 3]

The approach to homelessness set out here does not, then, offer any increase in the availability of housing. The task of addressing homelessness is described without referring to any structural causes of homelessness. Rather, it focuses on responsibilities of individual homeless people and services. Services are to help people ‘... *deal with the issues that were causing their homelessness...*’ [Interviewee 3]. These issues are conceptualised as ‘individual’ rather than ‘structural’ or a combination of both.

In addition, while it is couched in terms of supporting people to participate equally, it contains a coercive aspect, as explained by the same departmental interviewee:

The type of society that we want to live in from my point of view is about supporting people to participate equally in it... certainly to the maximum degree possible. And by simply just providing a safety net service what we're saying is we're actually relegating you to the margins of society, because that's where they are in reality. So whilst you may have to create some kicking and screaming, and whilst you may have to challenge some workers to actually think about their belief system about people's capacities, I think you've always got to try. [Interviewee 3]

In contrast to the portrayal by this interviewee of case management as ‘*making the system fit in with the client*’, referred to above, the interviewee states that this approach constitutes an ‘*intrusion*’ upon the client, which is ‘*confronting*’. This is justified not only by the impetus to get people to participate, but also by other legal factors such as workplace safety (further discussed in Chapter 2). Again, the need for case management is couched in terms which could be viewed as drawing upon the homeless equivalent of notions of the dole bludger or welfare dependant person described in Chapter 1:

It does require an intrusion and it's interesting that case management is the driver of that... clients are going to have to be interrogated to some extent if only for the service to be able to undertake a proper risk management assessment. The reality of providing that safe working environment... it goes back to my previous thing about some of the fears and risks and concerns about people engaging with a case management process because I think at one level it could be quite easy to drift around the inner city homeless system for eighteen years and lob up to one of the inner city hostels occasionally for a bed ... And once you actually get involved with a case management approach it may link into drug and alcohol counselling it may be really challenging Unless they want to go and live like that guy did on the road for 20 years. [Interviewee 3]

Case management in SAAP was, therefore, not only a matter of offering support, but of offering it in a manner which fitted with the specific welfare reform goals of activating citizens to become self-reliant rather than dependant, or, more specifically to ‘*claw their way up [the] ladder of opportunity*’ [Interviewee 3].

IMPLEMENTING CASE MANAGEMENT

The introduction of case management constituted a major challenge to the operation of many of the church and charitable services, which had continued to focus on the 'bed for the night' model. The following comments by an interviewee from a traditional organisation describe the background to the organisation's shift from a bed for the night model to '*... a more intensive case management model and living skills program*' [Interviewee 14]. It is clear from the comments, made in 2004, that the change to case management, originally introduced in 1994, took some time to implement:

About 3 years ago ...[organisation] decided to really have a good look at our homeless services in the inner city, the men's homeless services ... we were actually providing very much a bed, and a night centred service. These men were really not having very much intervention during the day.... what most of the large agencies in the city are providing for men at the moment are large hostels, meals provided, washing done, so very much a crisis service... usually a man would come to [service], spend a couple of months, go to [another service], do the circle, and there are still people in the sector that I worked with 20 years ago.
[Interviewee 14]

In this instance the change was undertaken co-operatively between a number of inner city traditional agencies. The new model emphasised domestic skills and the provision of some other services and programs. It also involved a reduction in the numbers assisted:

... we are actually refurbishing the entire building ... we are going very much more into a more intensive case management model and living skills program.... What we're going to do now is provide five units on site, they'll be 8 bedroom units, like an 8 bedroom apartment, a caseworker will be attached to each of those, so a caseworker will have 8 people to work with intensively over a 3 month period. They will learn to cook and wash and do all those sorts of skills because they were actually coming out of those services with none of those basic skills anyway. So

therefore their tenancies were breaking down, their sustainability to live independently was pretty bad. So ... although we're reducing beds slightly, we believe very strongly that we will be able to exit people out of the sector more quickly.... we will provide on our ground floor a whole range of programs and activities. We have a dental clinic already for homeless people, which is a partnership with South East Area Health, we've gotten many more partnerships with government and corporate.... We're... looking at a partnership for a medical clinic.... We'll have a pro bono legal service, some one to one computer training, there'll be an internet café to bring the community in as well, some meeting rooms where we'll have yoga, Centrelink will come – so there'll be a whole range of programs – some cultural programs and some visiting art galleries, which sounds very trite, but actually many of these people have no idea that they can go into the museum... [Interviewee 14]

Another traditional agency described the changes they have been implementing in response to the introduction of case management:

... we have decided in the last five years or so to go away from that total caring fulltime aspect of provision of food, clothing, accommodation, to a more rehabilitation operation where we look at educational programs, and we run programs here on philosophy, on anger management.... Basically because what we believe is that in many ways organisations like ourselves were in actual fact keeping homelessness in vogue, basically because if you just keep on supplying food and hospitality, then therefore you are in many ways just fomenting the process of homelessness, and people get locked in a lot easier, and the longer they're locked in the more difficult it is to have them to go off into independent living... [Interviewee 15]

The explanation given by these interviewees for the introduction of case management reflects the explanation, discussed in Chapter 1, which underpinned the introduction of Mutual Obligation. This was the argument that receipt of welfare entitlements caused dependency, and that welfare recipients should be required to meet certain obligations as a requirement of receiving assistance. The change reverses the HPAP's prohibition on

assisting those at risk of homelessness and on 'rehabilitation' of those who are homeless (Department of Social Security 1976). This has implications not only for the orientation of the service offered, but also for the cost of the service and what agencies are able to provide with the available funding. While the charitable organisations generally voiced support for the broad direction of the changes, some raised the issue of the greatly increased cost of providing case management compared with their previous approach of offering a bed and a meal. There was a view that government expected a much more intensive service without the corresponding increased level of financial investment:

... it's much more expensive to run a service where you're offering case management, that's an expensive service ... in many ways the easiest program of all to operate is operation of provisions.... What there isn't enough of, is that ongoing support.... You can't in actual fact, get a person off the street in three months.... we have found that it's probably 18 months to two years before a person really can begin to get on his feet or her feet, and move forward... it's going to cost a lot of money, and it's going to take a longer time... [Interviewee 15]

For many of the women's and youth services the changes required by the implementation of case management were not, on the face of it, as great as for the charitable organisations. The focus on 'self-help' and assisting people to 'manage their own lives ... [and] ... learn the skills they need to cope with living in the community' (Perry, Waterford & Carr 1982, p. 2) in some ways had more in common with the neo-liberal notions of active choice and participation (McFerran 1990) than did the charitable approach which did not have such expectations. Many youth and women's services already offered support rather than merely a bed, and viewed the SAAP Case Management Resource Kit as simply one of many available presentations of the welfare casework model. However, they rejected the view that SAAP case management was simply coextensive with support. While many of the interviewees from women's and youth services acknowledged improvements in certain areas as a result of case management, there was significant scepticism about the extent of the supposed benefits. Importantly, these services felt that SAAP case management as the key response to homelessness had failed to take into account the broader social and economic issues,

and propagated a potentially damaging individualistic attitude to homelessness rather than encouraging mutual support and action on the broader issues. Interviewees from both the women's and youth services expressed a depth of ambivalence about the effects of case management, and some argued for the introduction of a less limiting model of support.

Some interviewees from the women's and youth sector did strongly point out benefits from case management. Some, but not all, of these interviewees had previously worked at either refuges or charitable services that had offered little support, and they had seen improvements with the introduction of case management. Interviewees linked case management to a greater focus on the individual needs of people using services. Some interviewees viewed case management as bringing a better focus on rights, while others saw it as extending a previous focus on rights to deliver a greater consistency between services. Another emphasised that case management assisted with clarifying the roles of workers:

I felt that at times in the old days the clients were the bottom of the priority sometimes ... I think SAAP IV really made people start to think about the client, and putting the client first, and about not imposing on the client, letting the client identify their own issues and needs rather than forcing our model onto the client ... [Interviewee 2]

I don't know that there was any much focus on case management as such. Certainly stuff got done but it wasn't client-focussed... It was this is what you'll do if you want to stay here as opposed to actually having time to sit down and work out where someone's at and what'll we do.... I think personally my perspective is that this particular SAAP service has changed a huge amount in the last eight years and I personally think those changes have been for the better. [Interviewee 7]

... before it was more about the rights of young people, and providing space ... there's a very clear image that as soon as young people come into a service, they can be told exactly what they can expect and there's a plan put into play, its

about what all the players will do and where the department fits ... And I think probably that's very empowering for young people because they know what to expect... [Interviewee 7]

... some of the staff used to be quite buddy and used to think of themselves as friends with the residents, but they were not, and realised that they weren't. So there was that whole shift from being palsy and matey to being professional but very chummy because this somebody's home. [Interviewee 5]

However many other interviewees confirmed the comments of the departmental interviewee quoted above who had said that many services were already using a case management approach. By this was meant a broad welfare casework approach rather than the specific case management approach being promoted through SAAP. These interviewees stressed the importance of good practice in their work with people and did not acknowledge anything special about the approach set out in the Case Management Kit. There was some questioning of the point of conceptually elevating a specific form of case management in the way that had been done through SAAP:

... there is a language in human services and social policy around case management and care management practice, that, I remember when I did my social work training in the 1970s, it was kind of there, but it wasn't, now it's there with a vengeance, it's been dusted off, rediscovered.... I mean I do think for some people some of this stuff is euphemism for a kind of efficiency gain ... but for people in the street, clients, a spade is a spade is a spade, you know? I think what makes the difference is the quality of the practice. And that's about if you can go to a one stop shop through an agency, or if you can get a decent referral network ... the emphasis on doing the stuff, results. [Interviewee 11]

Traditionally welfare workers used a helping and a casework model. It mightn't have been as sophisticated and as documented as perhaps the SAAP IV required it to be, but when I read the SAAP resource kit – case management – it's not anything special, it's just the basic model of helping, referral, assessment, monitoring, case planning, support, evaluation...Any of us that have done the

theory and the practice, or those that have just done the practice, would look at that and go – yeah yeah yeah we do that. [Interviewee 7]

One interviewee commented that the combination of government complexity and rationing of entitlements had resulted in services needing to act as advocates ‘*fighting at a case by case level*’ [Interviewee 20] to obtain benefits to which clients are entitled. These conditions are consistent with case management in that they require workers to advocate at individual level, and make collective action more difficult. The interviewee speaks of there being ‘not enough places’ for those who need the resources:

... women would get a little bed and a cup of hot chocolate and a roof over their head. Now we do a lot more for them in the refuge... Immigration stuff’s huge ... advocating for her to get things that she’s actually entitled to that the system doesn’t give her access to unless somebody else is there to advocate on her behalf. Centrelink, she’ll be entitled to all these things you know. Women will go down there on their own; workers go down there and get different answers every time and having to know what the Department of Housing’s domestic violence policy is or what the police’s policy is on something so you can say: ‘well I know on such and such a document, you do have to do this, don’t tell me you don’t. Don’t tell me you don’t have to get an interpreter’. It’s trying all the time and I guess it’s supply and demand stuff. There’s not enough places for the numbers of women out there who need the resources. So you’re fighting all the time at that level, a case-by-case sort of level, whereas once I think it was done much more on a collective basis. You’d shove a carload of women in all together and take them down to the courthouse or wherever... In a way it sometimes serves to isolate the women more I think. [Interviewee 20]

THE EFFECTS OF CASE MANAGEMENT

All of the interviewees from the women’s and youth services were very comfortable with services for people who are homeless offering support rather than just a bed for the night. Interviewees from the charitable agencies were also generally accepting of the provision of support, although many were still in the process of transition to changing

their services. As described above, many interviewees from both charities and community-based services also saw benefits the form of case management introduced into SAAP funded services. Research (Gronda 2009, p. 7) also finds that there are benefits from case management in homelessness services, although these are conditional on access to housing resources and specialist supports, as well as good case management practice and skill development among staff. At the same time there were also many cautious comments from the women's and youth sector and a smaller number from the charitable services concerning the effects of case management as it has been promoted in homelessness services.

Firstly, many interviewees from women's and youth services and one from a traditional agency said that case management as promoted in SAAP had failed to take into account the broader context for people's homelessness and the situation beyond what SAAP could offer. The concern is thus that Gronda's condition above that access to housing and other supports be available in order for case management to be beneficial, has not been met. The concern about case management's focus on the individual at the expense of the broader 'structural' factors involved in producing homelessness echoes the observation discussed in Chapter 1, that homelessness services were focusing ... *more on the welfare side than the housing side...* [Interviewee 21]. This point was very widely made among interviewees, and was linked to a concern that merely dealing with issues at an individual level would not address the problem of homelessness:

There is personal responsibility as well but there is no recognition of the systemic responsibility for situations people find themselves in. And I think that that's an enormously important thing. [Interviewee 1]

... good case management is not, shouldn't simply be a focus on the individual's problem. [Interviewee 11]

I think the individual case management stuff is often better now, done better, but women are very much individuals rather than being part of a political group. I think that's something that's sort of a plus and it's a loss as well. So individual needs will be catered to, so again using the refuge as an example, a very detailed

case plan's worked out in conjunction with her, that's great, but I don't see a lot of women have a political context for what's happening to them around domestic violence. [Interviewee 20]

It concerns me that we have an increasingly conservative environment that we work in and that can have an impact in which you have less activists, you have less people who are keen to challenge the structural problems that exist, and they are more likely to do the residual individual support work, and if you look back over 20 years, there's no question that you have to do the both, I think we're losing some of that, if you look at the old analogy about the babies in the river and someone trying to rescue them, you have to have people at the other end working out what is going on and trying to prevent it. So in that environment we need to encourage activists, we need to encourage people to be responsible community participants, we need to go back to saying how can in our local community, we address those things... [Interviewee 23]

... we're wasting our time because why would you empower somebody if you empower them to a point where there's nothing for them? [Interviewee 5]

In terms of case management and policy, well, to my way of thinking there's so much substantive research that indicates that homelessness relates to the issues of unemployment, of health and education ... And a person's potential can only be explored to the extent that they have access to resources, so there are systemic issues there. [Interviewee 17]

Not only did interviewees think that case management failed to take into account the broader context for people's homelessness, they also expressed concern about the context of case management within SAAP itself. The introduction of case management did not coincide with an increase in SAAP's capacity. In fact, in the process of implementing the policy of preferring individual units rather than congregate living, some services reduced the numbers they were able to assist. In this context there was scepticism that the changes in SAAP, as in other areas of welfare, would lead to a better service even within SAAP:

The problem becomes that if you're not going to add to the level of supply of beds...you can do all the brokering and case managing you want, reality is that only a certain number of people are going to get a decent service and a number are going to miss out... [Interviewee 11]

Secondly, some interviewees also expressed concern that the paperwork and process orientation could engulf the ability to provide a human service and to provide real support:

It's much more paperwork-based. Case management did that. On reflection, this service has always done case management.... But I think that refuges are absolutely obsessed with case management. I don't know how I'd feel about it if I came into a refuge.... You don't spend endless hours ... do you see that, it's very subtle – endless hours discussing things with women, and never mind the bit of bookwork that needed doing... And now, bookwork is coming before spending a great deal of time. [Interviewee 6]

I think there's another side we just have to be aware of, that the soul doesn't go out of it.... I would hate to see the staff so ... wrapped up in that process stuff that they forget about the soul of what they're doing. [Interviewee 14]

I think refuges all over will talk about that, how once we were very informal and people dropped in, now you make appointments... [Interviewee 16]

I think there's some positives about the way we do things, and I think there's some very serious negative aspects of what we do now... there's much more emphasis on case management, its much more formalised, its been professionalised... And while I'm not saying that's bad - there's been some very wonderful and important improvements in that – one of the downsides I think is the relationships with the people that were needing the services have changed, and I believe that that's detrimental.... So particularly the kids who were completely disengaged from their family and didn't manage to re-engage, those

adult relationships have been a really strong stabilising influence on them, and I think that happens to a lesser degree now, and I think that's problematic.... I think what has happened in case management is that ... the focus is less on the relationship and more on the documentation and putting people in and out. There's a real pressure to assess someone, address their need and move them on and I remain unconvinced that that's the way you help people, its not as simple as that and its about working out how you balance the good bits of case management and not lose the essential ingredients which are important in human services, its not like manufacturing, its not like retail, there is real lives and real people... we forget some of the essential ingredients around how you work with people. [Interviewee 23]

Thirdly, many interviewees expressed concern that this lack of broader context and human focus meant that the effects of case management could be judgemental, blaming of the individual and generally unhelpful. The first comment is from a therapist in private practice who offers low cost counselling to people who are or have been homeless, the second from an interviewee from a charitable organisation and the third from an interviewee from a youth service:

I think we have moved from this is a social issue to this is a personal issue ... everything becomes more and more private, including the blaming ... But the whole movement, the non-government sector was based on let's take blame away from the people who are being disadvantaged and create things so that they're not disadvantaged and now its about: ok, there's not enough money, and what are these people doing and I think we're going back to a place where those people are disadvantaged again. And I've seen that in therapy: I'm a failure, I'm a loser... the people I used to get in here had all that stuff but they did also have a social context to place it in. Now it's become the job of the therapist to actually go: ok, you don't exist in a vacuum, let's look at the social context. And I'm seeing more of it... [Interviewee 1]

... prior to case management, there was very much a pathology attached to homelessness... individuals were responsible for their homelessness... And I

think even the introduction of case management affirms that view to some extent, it doesn't look at the systemic issues around homelessness. [Interviewee 17]

I think it's a bit controlling. I think it's a bit limiting. I think it can be a bit judgmental, if you are saying you are homeless and we need to case manage you so that we can get you from a homeless person to a person who has housing instead of viewing it as there is a problem in this community around there being adequate affordable and secure housing and we're going to assist you, with you, to participate, and work out how we can do that. I think it's just a more individualistic way of approaching the problem and I think its quite disengaging for a lot of people. It may suit some people, and that's fine, and I think it is about the way its presented - you could probably do case management without presenting it in such an formal way, and that's the best of it, and there's some great services who do that. I've heard service workers saying: 'Come in, you're about to have your case management interview', and 'we're case managing you', and I think it's a really inappropriate way to be – if its just used as a process for delivering services that's ok, but it's about the message it gives to the person, and for sure there's a lot of people who need to do some individual work, themselves, to help themselves have a better quality of life... but at the end of the day there's still inadequate affordable and secure housing in this country... But I would not want to be treated like that, as a person. [Interviewee 23]

Fourthly, some interviewees expressed concerns that some services were insisting on entering into a case management process immediately and, crucially, that some homeless people were missing out on services as a result of the way case management combined with the other changes in services have been implemented. Paradoxically, some of the comments indicate that it is the those with chronic or 'high risk' problems that may be more likely to miss out – those who were the subject of the concern about 'bed for the night' services:

... working with young people who were homeless, before you could get to any real case management you had to have a relationship but that needed to be what

is their immediate need – it's often food, shelter, accommodation, and some form of safety, and then once they had that they could start to form some relationships with the workers, and the people there, then you could start to move into what was called case management, their goals.... But ... its like there's this expectation of soon as you're in, quick! – case management. In SAAP some people were saying, quick, yes, case management, and I was saying, hang on, we're just going to work with them, and build relationship. I don't think policy, and SAAP policy says you must immediately form a case management plan. [Interviewee 22]

For people who are traditional clients of homeless persons services ... you wonder to what extent they actually are adjusting to the new form of service provision in terms of supportive accommodation. The relevance or not of case management and supported services to certain groups of people who remain much more classic and on the street ... I get a sense that there are ... people who are getting some reasonable results out of it, I think there are certain groups of young people and sole parents that are doing okay, but you also get a sense, of people being passed around the system and never exiting. [Interviewee 11]

This particular SAAP service has changed a huge amount in the last eight years and I personally think those changes have been for the better. There is a large number of women who are now excluded from this service who used to be able to access it and that is certainly a concern. They were real high risk women. They were the women that this organisation was set up to support... I don't know where those clients go any more, because I think every SAAP service will tell you they take them but I think they don't. Actually trying to get them a bed anywhere is impossible – you go to meetings and everyone says – oh we take high and complex needs and the reality is – I don't know anyone that does, really. [Interviewee 8]

The notion that case management in SAAP could operate to exclude homeless people from getting assistance is, at first glance, not consistent with the client-focussed orientation of SAAP case management. SAAP case management differs, for example, from the more punitive approach with harsher disciplinary measures that was

implemented in the income support (or participation support) case management system established following the Howard government's introduction of Mutual Obligation in 1997 and the subsequent McClure report on Australia's welfare system, described in Chapter 1. The income support case management system can be seen as broadly consistent with Lawrence Mead's approach as set out in *The New Paternalism: Supervisory Approaches to Poverty*, which was published in 1997, during SAAP III, where case management is viewed as 'help and hassle' (Mead 1997, p. 61), not usually 'personal in a more supportive way' (Mead 1997, p. 62). Frequent contact in itself is seen as a means to 'energize clients' (Mead 1997, p. 62). In summary, Mead states: 'Mainly, case management is rule enforcement. Staff members do have to relate to their clients as individuals, not as numbers, but mainly they check up on them. Just doing this appears to be strongly motivating' (Mead 1997, p. 63).

While SAAP case management sought to involve SAAP clients in their own assistance it did not adopt the type of punitive national policy approach with penalties for 'breaches' that became part of the income system. The emphasis in the SAAP Case Management Kit is on 'a collaborative, client-focused approach' and on 'empowering and working with clients' (National Case Management Working Group 1997, p. 1.1). The Case Management Resource Kit suggests a flexible approach, noting that: 'Case management in SAAP is appropriate in many, but not all, situations' (National Case Management Working Group 1997, p. 1.1). Nevertheless, the Kit also adopts a tone of compulsion, in that: '...SAAP services are required to implement a case management approach to working with clients' (National Case Management Working Group 1997, p. 1.2), but it does not set out what should happen where people do not wish to or are unable to participate in case management. A departmental interviewee expressed the view that '*I think people have a right to engage or not engage with a case plan*' [Interviewee 3]. Nevertheless, he argued that '*I can't see that there's any case to say that developing a case plan is not appropriate*', even though he acknowledged that some people may not be able to '*resolve their problems*':

To say that a case plan is not appropriate is really saying that a client has no capacity to resolve their problems. Now I know the reality is that there are a group of people where they do test the limits of that, and their levels of need are

so complex that getting them to resolve all of their problems is going to be quite problematic. But I don't think we should say that we're going to give up on them. [Interviewee 3]

In contrast with Mead's assertion that 'paternalism' is required in welfare services, the departmental interviewee described case management as respectful of the person's needs and wishes, and as returning control to the client in a way that may be quite challenging to the service:

... it's about saying we've got to actually start to respond to what the client's needs are, what the client's wishes are. So it's a matter of looking at the service system and making the shift from the client fitting into the system, to making the system fit in with the client.... I think for services, the big change has been in letting go of ownership.... And that's about the subtle transition of transferring ownership back to the client... [Interviewee 3]

This picture of control shifting to the client was, however, challenged by a report by the NSW Ombudsman into access to accommodation and support services, which found that many services exercised considerable service level discretion to exclude people for not engaging in case management. This demonstrates that although government did not enforce punitive measures, the result of the welfare reform process in SAAP was that many services implemented punitive conditions beyond what was required by government. The Ombudsman's key findings in relation to case management were that:

- 47 of 68 agency policies reviewed stated involvement in case management was a condition of entry
- 26% of agencies surveyed (60) had policies that allowed for people to be denied access on the basis that they are not willing to enter into a case plan. A higher proportion of medium/long term agencies (41.8%) may exclude people not willing to enter in to a case management plan than crisis/short term agencies (17.7%)
- In a six month period, there were 65 instances where people were denied access because they were not willing to enter into a case management plan

- 25% of agencies surveyed (55) had policies that stated that accommodation could be terminated because the client did not wish to continue in case management
- In a six month period, there were 50 instances where people had their accommodation terminated because the service required them to commit to a case plan (NSW Ombudsman 2004, p. 51).

The Ombudsman's report records the NSW Department of Community Services' response to the proposal that assisting people to move towards independence should not be solely reliant on formal case management. The Department was of the view that while implementing case management did not mean the client had to be actively engaged in case planning or initially commit to a case plan, they did need to be willing 'to address the issues that have resulted in their homelessness' (NSW Ombudsman 2004, p. 53). This form of words, which echoes those used by a departmental interviewee quoted earlier, again indicates the focus of case management only on 'individual' factors. Indeed, the idea of homeless people being excluded because they could not or would not participate in case management is reminiscent of the earlier punitive approaches of some services, described at the beginning of this chapter, that were *...prohibition-oriented... with ... all these rules that fenced people out so that ... clients' capacity to stay within the service became very arbitrary ...*[Interviewee 18]

Finally, there was a concern that the dominance of case management as the single approach to assisting homeless people had served to limit the constructive approaches that services could use to assist and support people. There was a concern that service delivery needed to move beyond simplistic dichotomies such as that between more participatory forms of support and 'case management', or between 'bed for the night' and 'case management', to a more flexible stance that could include the possibility of a variety of forms of support:

When you're brokering in services as part of a case management approach, you're continually removing yourself one step from the working with that

person.... Maybe you can do both, you can use the technology of case management which is focusing your attention on needs and be really clear about the fact and be a mentor as well but if you stop being a mentor and a partner I think you lose something important from the approach... managers are interested in accountability and driving things further in that direction...The sector is trying to retain the other, but just be better at it.... The more I think about it it's not a dichotomy in the practices in the sector, its a dichotomy probably in the accountability and administration of the program... it's not about the debate, its about the sense that there is a right way to do it and the sector is woolly and we will drive them and we'll do it through their accountability requirements, by funding technologies and all of that will drive this change whereas I think the thing for the sector is the relationship – as long as we retain that then maybe it's even a healthy mix. [Interviewee 13]

I think case management can turn some people off... and there needs to be room for different models of delivering services and case management is only one of them, there's equally as good results that could come from a community development peer supported youth drop in type arrangement... we tend to in this current environment see case management as being the most professional way and its not, its only one way, and I think we need to... take the best from all these different models ... It bothers me still, where a government department gets an idea and that becomes the way you must do things.... The emphasis on the data collection and numbers and all those things force you into a particular way of doing things and I think it devalues a bit around more collective ways of looking at things. I think it probably wouldn't look a great deal different, but services would be able to feel like they could try other ways or go back to things that worked in the past, and I think it would go back to valuing the relationship... [Interviewee 23]

Overall, services' assessment of the introduction of case management was mixed, or as one interviewee said, '*...there's positives and negatives about it...*' [Interviewee 23]. Despite the temptation to view the introduction of case management as a '*big shift*' as suggested by one of the departmental interviewees [Interviewee 3], there is not a simple

picture of major improvement. Rather, feedback from workers is that there have been some improvements and some areas where the assistance provided has worsened. There are, however some warning signs in that people from diverse services are concerned about the limitations of the current system, in particular its avoidance of the broader context of homelessness and its blindness to the possibility of multiple ways of assisting people:

The case management, the professionalisation, the importance of behaving ethically and professionally ... there's no doubt there's some improvements in that.... but I don't believe all the additional administration, all the additional responsibilities, all the additional protocols, has that really meant that an individual young person gets a better service. For some it probably means they get a safer service, I think for some young people the improvements in how we treat people, how we respect client rights, how we make sure we screen people that they are safe and appropriate, I think that's an improvement, but in terms of delivering housing to them, in terms of delivering mental health services, in terms of getting them off drugs and alcohol, in terms of improving their educational attendance and their achievement I don't think were doing any better than we did 20 years ago, and I think that's a worry. I think in terms of things like the indirect work that is attached to case management, things like keeping better records, making sure that everybody is co-ordinated, everybody is trying to achieve the same thing, putting some responsibility on other agencies, making sure the young person is included in those, I think they're all improvements, I think those things are better, but, if I go back to 1985 young people were included then, too, and probably in a more active way, in a less paternalistic way, in 1985 we used to have meetings with mental health every week.... I guess I find it really hard to believe we are doing better – young people still have trouble getting into public housing, young people still have trouble accessing community housing, in fact its probably harsher than it was... [Interviewee 24]

CASE MANAGEMENT AND 'THE ROAD HOME'

As indicated in Chapter 1, the Rudd Government's White Paper *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness* (Australian Government 2008c) signals an increased emphasis on structural issues such as housing shortage, long-term disadvantage, job loss and domestic violence as key causes of homelessness. The White Paper makes it clear that case management will remain a component of services for homeless people within an approach which emphasises outcomes but allows for a broader range of service designs (Australian Government 2008c, pp. 16, 41). Within 'specialist homelessness services' (formerly SAAP), it is proposed to:

...provide greater flexibility in the way services are delivered ... to transition some clients more quickly out of crisis services into permanent housing and be able to work for longer periods with those clients who need more intensive, longer-term support (Australian Government 2008c, p. 41).

The White Paper envisages a diversification of strategies to address homelessness, including increased social housing, changed policies by government institutions and agencies to avoid people becoming homeless and assist those who are homeless, additional assistance for women and children experiencing domestic violence to stay in their homes and 'assertive outreach' programs where support workers actively approach rough sleepers to connect them to assistance. 'Assertive outreach' involves 'taking the support to the person' (Australian Government 2008c, p. 47). The approach is, in many senses, an intensified form of case management, aimed at 'activating' rough sleepers, and I would therefore argue that the White Paper approach involves both a move away from case management as the sole response to homelessness and a move to increase and intensify a form of case management as the response to some homelessness. As this chapter shows, individual case management has become entrenched as the key approach to homelessness service delivery since the mid-1990s. The shift to more diverse approaches will mean a significant adjustment in how services operate.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 has examined the impact of the introduction of case management into SAAP services from 1994. Prior to that time, there was a broad distinction between the assistance provided by the charities, which generally offered a 'bed for the night', and the newer women's and youth services, which offered more mutual or participatory forms of support in the context of an analysis that viewed homelessness within the context of economic and social circumstances. Case management was presented to services as a means of ensuring all services, in particular the charities, offered adequate and responsive support to homeless people. While there is evidence that it did improve some aspects of the service provision that existed in previous decades, there is also evidence that there is not a clear picture of overall improvement.

Case management as promoted in government policy was not simply coextensive with support. It aimed to assist homeless people to achieve 'the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence' (*Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*), consistent with the goals of the Keating government's 'active society' approach and, subsequently, the Howard government's Mutual Obligation Policy which viewed poverty and homelessness in terms of 'dependency'. It extended the reach of government policy and directed the focus of assistance at the individual level without reference to the impact of structural factors. Such structural factors included changes in the labour market and in the availability of housing, as well as the cessation of the previous expansion of SAAP itself. In this way it aimed to address homelessness, not by increased provision, but through people addressing their own homelessness by working on themselves to attain qualities that were consistent with the goals of welfare reform in order, in the words of one departmental interviewee, that they could '*claw their way up [the] ladder of opportunity*' [Interviewee 3]. While aspects of the approach were responsive to people's needs and wishes, case management was also coercive and, as a departmental interviewee acknowledged, '*confronting*' and '*an intrusion*' [Interviewee 3]. To the extent that 'assertive outreach' is an intensified form of case management, aimed at 'activating' rough sleepers, it involves an intensification of these contradictory characteristics.

There is evidence that the introduction of case management limited the forms of assistance that were to be supported under SAAP, that a variety of potentially helpful orientations and practices were now discouraged and that in some services the emphasis shifted from support to process. In addition, there is evidence that as a result of the changes to case management, some homeless people who would previously have received assistance, in particular those considered to be 'high need' or 'high risk', and who did not or could not participate in case management, were now missing out.

The technology of case management acted to *govern* homeless people by means of their freedom. This freedom was to be understood, however, neither as the autonomy or freedom from interference of classical liberalism, nor as the freedom from want of the social welfare state. Instead, homeless people were, like other citizens of advanced liberal governments, to be governed *through* freedom conceptualised as: 'the capacity for self-realization which can be obtained only through individual activity' (Rose 1999, p. 145). By focussing policy at this level of individual freedom and self-realisation through self reliance, case management supported the redefinition of homelessness as being the result of 'individual' factors, and shifted the focus of attention and activity away from broader 'structural' factors. Some interviewees reported that this change not only limited responses to homelessness, but had a negative effect on homeless people themselves. Some argued for the introduction of a less limiting model of support.

The Rudd government's White Paper (Australian Government 2008c) and other initiatives on homelessness signal an increased emphasis on structural factors causing homelessness, and a broader range of strategies for addressing homelessness. Case management remains a key component of the new response. The approach is in its early stages and it is not yet possible to assess how it will be implemented.

CONCLUSION

... people have a much narrower view of things they're thinking about in terms of the department or the program, and ... they don't choose to talk about the much broader interface that goes on – the much broader interface of all the bits of government and all the bits of the community... Nowadays everyone talks in terms of a business plan, what outcomes are going to be achieved, what outputs, and I think that subtle difference has really changed the way we think.
[Interviewee 7]

This thesis came about as a result of my work since the early 1980s in social policy and services for people who were homeless, and my need to understand the ways in which understandings of 'the causes of homelessness' changed over a decade and a half. In the early 1980s the accepted emphasis in understanding homelessness was on broad social and economic forces, while by the late 1990s, this emphasis had shifted to the characteristics, needs and behaviours of individual people. My interest was partly driven by intellectual curiosity – but also by the realisation that this change sometimes had real and damaging effects on people I met who were homeless, producing additional struggles with feelings of personal failure, self-blame and shame as well as the overwhelming difficulties, uncertainty and grief already associated with the loss of stable housing.

When I turned to the research and other literature to better understand these changes, I learned several things of interest. Firstly, I am not the only one to be curious about how problems such as homelessness are conceived as problems for policy and, indeed, how 'public policies create homelessness' (Hutson 1999). There has been an increasing interest in the 'constructed' nature of policy problems, in understanding policy problems not as 'given' or 'natural' but as contingent.

Secondly, there has been a long policy and research 'struggle' about the definition of homelessness as a policy problem (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 1999). The literature reflects that the shifts in conceptualisation that I observed in Australia also occurred in other Western liberal democracies: there was a shift in the 1970s away from the earlier

focus on individual characteristics and decisions of homeless people, and a greater attention to social and economic structural forces, followed by another shift towards the end of the century to focus again on individual characteristics and explanations. The shifts in conceptualisation were accompanied by changes in the focus of research into homelessness, so that much research in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was concerned with seeking to identify individual factors that might be associated with homelessness, with challenging the focus on individual characteristics and with challenging or seeking to replace simplistic and dichotomous conceptualisations of homelessness.

Thirdly, while I found that this research identifies and debates the changes in the policy conceptualisation of homelessness, little of it aims to understand *how* these changes in the ‘causes’ of homelessness were made possible. To ask ‘how’ it was possible for homelessness to be reconceptualised in these ways is to understand that the specific constructions of ‘homelessness’ that exist at any particular time and place, and thus the formation of ‘homeless’ identities themselves, are *the result* of a ‘changing assemblage of governmental techniques, practices and rationalities’ (Dean 1999, p. 29). There has not, then, been a focus on understanding how political reasoning and the practices into which it is translated has shaped the ways that homelessness has been governed and understood.

In particular, the research tends to focus on the actions of governments, and not on the involvement of non-government organisations that deliver services. In fact, the role of non-government organisations in Australia has historically been much more than as mere agencies of government (despite some governments wishing otherwise). They have participated in the development of homelessness policies and services, as well as responding to specific approaches promoted by government, whether by implementing, critiquing or actively resisting them. Under recent policy regimes they are called upon to increase their engagement in securing social and economic objectives (Australian Government 2008c; Department of Community Services 2000). In seeking an answer to my research question – how was homelessness reconceptualised from a ‘structural issue’ requiring action by governments and markets, to an ‘individual issue’ requiring resolution of personal problems by homeless people and homelessness services – I

wanted to understand how ‘homelessness’ was governed by all of the participants in contributing to policy and delivering services.

I have drawn upon the analytic approach to government and the ‘genealogical’ method described by Foucault and others (Dean 1999; Foucault 1984, 1985, 1991, 1994; Rose 1999; Rose & Miller 1992) in conducting this research. The genealogical method offers a means of analysing this question of *how* homelessness has been ‘problematised’ or conceptualised as a problem for policy. The genealogical method depends on analysing two sources: historical items and ‘local’ or ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Foucault 1994, pp. 20-2). The historical material I used was the significant literature produced by governments and others that set out the official response to homelessness and, in some cases, to welfare issues more generally. This includes statements by politicians and public servants, legislation, statements of policy, guidelines, funding agreements and other departmental documents, reports and evaluations. The local material was derived from the in depth interviews with people who have worked during part or all of the research period in either or both government and non-government organisations that are relevant to the research. I have also drawn on commentary produced by people working in the area to supplement this interview material. As I have described in the Introduction, it would be possible to extend this research by including fieldwork with people who are homeless, and with interviewees from a greater diversity of localities and states. I believe, however, that the scale of my fieldwork does not compromise my argument.

The historical statements and the local material chart a shift over the research period, at both political and service levels, away from structuralist explanations of homelessness and towards methodologically individualist explanations of homelessness. Commentators also chart this shift, with some linking it to a ‘retreat of the state’ (Graycar 1983) or a reduction of the state’s activity in policies and programs to address homelessness. I argue firstly that this shift is more accurately described by those authors who characterise these changes not as a retreat of the state but instead as a changed form of liberal governmentality involving not only a reduction in direct state activities but a reconfiguration and, indeed, an extension of ‘political power beyond the state’ (Rose & Miller 1992). This shift from what I have called a welfare liberal

governmentality to an advanced liberal governmentality requires not only the reduction or reconfiguration of welfare state institutions, but also that individuals and groups are to govern themselves *through their own freedoms* (Rose 1999, p. 84). Secondly, I argue that this ‘freedom’ differs from both classical liberal conceptualisations of freedom from interference, and welfare state conceptualisations of freedom from want. Instead, the freedom of advanced liberal rationalities is a freedom that is regulated by means of an array of state and non-state entities. Thirdly, I argue that it is by means of this extension of political power through individual agency, rather than the retreat of the welfare state alone, that the conceptualisation of homelessness has come to focus on individualist explanations of homelessness. I will expand on these arguments in the following paragraphs.

The shift away from the welfare state that occurred in Australia was in line with thinking that became influential in western liberal democracies from the 1970s and 1980s. This changed thinking drew on the work of Freidrich Hayek (1944) to reject the ‘interventionist’ state in favour of the primacy of market competition, and advocated the dismantling of the institutions and entitlements of the welfare state, or in practice, at least their reduction. Instead of the welfare state’s social perspective, this ‘advanced liberal’ approach aimed to work *through* the freedom and agency of individuals and groups who were to pursue their interests within the market economy, in an extension of ‘political power beyond the state’ (Rose & Miller 1992).

It was in this context, then, that from the 1970s and 1980s, Australian governments faced an increasing problem of homelessness (generated by several factors, including the dismantling of welfare state institutions) as well as public concern about this ‘new’ homelessness. In keeping with the critique of the welfare state, Australian governments did not seek to address this problem of homelessness by means of direct welfare state provision, but ‘beyond the state’, through the agency of individuals and non-government organisations. Nevertheless, while governments wished to have homelessness assistance operated at arms length, they also wished to exercise greater control than they had under the previous arrangements with charities and community groups to provide varying levels and types of assistance to homeless people.

This challenge was to be resolved by means of a series of changes, documented in the preceding chapters, to the operation of services and the assistance given to homeless people. The changes employed the discourses of freedom and agency of these groups and individuals. On the other hand, in governing *through* freedom in this way, governments increasingly regulated, by indirect means, the agency of both the charities and community services who assisted homeless people, and that of homeless people themselves.

Under this new approach, the ethos and techniques of ‘management’, derived from the market, were employed in governing both the increased number of homelessness services and the expanded homeless population they were to accommodate. The new approach was intended to replace the traditional charitable and more recent community based forms of assistance that existed at the beginning of the research period in the 1970s and early 1980s. This new ‘management’ approach was intended to enable the government of homelessness to occur in a form that was consistent with the critique of the welfare state and ‘big government’. It was therefore intended firstly to control homelessness programs while delivering them at arms length, rather than directly, and secondly to enlist homelessness services into recruiting homeless people to participate in the welfare reform goals of ‘activity’ and ‘mutual obligation’ in order to prevent ‘welfare dependency’. I argue that these changes were delivered primarily by means of two specific technologies of government. To achieve the first of these goals, governments made use of the technology of ‘performance management’ as a means to both regulate the activities of each organisation providing homelessness services and to shape the expanded numbers of services to form a non-government homelessness service system, in order to provide a vehicle through which government objectives could be met. To achieve the second goal, governments used the technology of ‘case management’ by similarly shaping the lives of homeless people to become ‘active’, ‘independent’ and ‘self-reliant’.

There was a shared logic in these two processes of ‘management’ directed at organisations and individuals, as each process sought to animate its object in a responsible and active role consistent with the goals of welfare reform and the requirements of the economy. Thus, consistent with the withdrawal of the welfare state,

non-state actors (both organisations and individuals) were to have both greater 'individual choice' and increased 'obligations' in bringing about advanced liberalism's aspiration to achieve increased social and economic engagement by the population (Department of Community Services 2000, p. 4). This logic was to be enacted by a shared set of techniques of accountability and management that were derived from business and the market, including a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation involving the measurement of outcomes and outputs, unit costing, the use of contract and other techniques designed to imitate market processes. These techniques were to displace other methods of assessing and improving the work of services, and of assisting people who were homeless.

The 'freedom' or 'choice' to be gained by individual homeless people and non-government organisations under advanced liberalism, however, differs from both the freedom from interference of classical liberal discourse, and the freedom from want of the social citizen. The new freedom of advanced liberalism is, for both individuals and groups, a regulated freedom or, as Rose describes it, a 'double-edged' freedom (1999, p. 67). The 'double-edged', ambiguous nature of the changes to homelessness programs and services is reflected in the interview material and other commentary from people associated with homelessness services, which indicate that many services simultaneously embraced and distrusted the new ethos of management, both in its use to manage organisations and its use to manage homeless people. The analysis of these conflicted responses is of particular interest because the comments illuminate the tensions at the heart of the goals and methods of the market-inspired 'management' approach. These tensions relate both to the goals and to the techniques of the project of welfare reform.

First, there is a set of tensions involved in the government's aspiration to achieve welfare goals at arms length by animating other entities. With respect to the government of homeless people, the liberal goal of producing results by means of 'the conduct of conduct' (Foucault 1982, pp. 220-1) is, as Cruikshank has shown in the case of programs of the 'empowerment' of individuals, simultaneously 'voluntary and coercive' (Cruikshank 1999, p. 38). SAAP 'case management' and other programs to activate individuals involve the same contradictory characteristics, aiming to shape homeless

people to become self-reliant agents. These programs offer choice and self-actualisation to homeless people, but only in accordance with certain aspirations, as illustrated by one of the departmental interviewees. They also assess homeless people in terms of risk, and exclude those who cannot or will not participate in the shaping of their selves to attain the form of self-reliance associated with the welfare reform agenda. SAAP case management, and other programs to activate individuals, aspire to avoid the authoritarianism and minimal provision that had been associated with some of the old, punitive charitable services, the impersonal entitlements of the welfare state's bureaucracy and the political activism associated with community organisations. Instead, the ethic of the new welfare approach rests upon the idea that citizens are 'obliged to be free' (Rose 1999, p. 87), to enact their lives in terms of choice and the imperatives of self-realisation and self-reliance. Case management, then, although presented to services as being coextensive with 'support', was a specific but ambiguous technology aimed at meeting specific government objectives to activate individuals.

My research shows how these tensions are evident in the ambivalence of interviewees from both charitable and community organisations about the introduction of case management as a policy strategy to deal with homelessness by animating homeless people. On the one hand, most thought that there had been certain benefits from the introduction of case management, and that offering more help or support to homeless people over a period of time, rather than just providing a bed for the night, was a positive strategy. On the other hand, there were widespread reservations about case management as *the* policy response to a homelessness that was now conceptualised as 'dependency', and for which the solution was 'self-reliance'. Those who expressed these reservations thought that the causes of homelessness did include structural issues such as housing availability, poverty and domestic violence, and they thought that case management and the strategy of animating homeless individuals, alone, could not resolve these issues at this structural level. Further, they were concerned that in this context, case management was, indeed, too much a process of 'management' and not enough a process of helping people: they were concerned that the focus was now less on relationships and more on processes, and threatened the humanity of service provision. These interviewees noted that the dominance of case management as *the* approach had acted to limit the use by services of other approaches to help homeless people. They

thought that the lack of broader context and human focus meant that case management could be judgemental and unhelpful to people seeking help. Indeed, there is evidence that the introduction of case management combined with other changes in service delivery, has acted to exclude some homeless people, in particular those seen as ‘high risk’, from assistance.

I argue not only that there is a set of tensions involved in case management, but also that there are similar tensions in government aspirations to achieve its goals at arms length by animating non-government organisations. While the implementation of ‘performance management’ did enable the formation of a more standardised homeless service system, this process was neither complete nor unproblematic. The process of ‘performance management’ of non-government organisations can be said, like the process of case management of individuals, to be both voluntary and coercive. In Chapters 1 and 2 I have shown how the changes in welfare arrangements have produced multiple and competing conceptualisations of non-government organisations. These are inconsistent conceptualisations associated with organisations’ historical origins as either independent charities or community-based activists; as social partners in community capacity building; as ‘natural’ and ‘extra-political’ actors; as accountable, performance-oriented managers of services; and as ‘providers’ or entrepreneurial vehicles for the delivery of services on behalf of government. While on the one hand, these services operated at arms length from government and were to be viewed as independent organisations they were, on the other hand, increasingly merely ‘providers’ for government. This independence, then, was not the same as that which had existed under the previous system, but was a form of self-government within the regulated status of ‘provider’.

My research shows that governments have wanted to purchase services for homeless people from reliable, responsible providers ‘beyond the state’, and to control how these services are delivered through the technology of performance management. At the same time, governments have also wanted these providers to deliver the ‘human’ touch of the community, rather than the bureaucracy of the welfare state. Some community organisations expressed concern that their role as mere agents of government delivering technical outcomes was not only in tension with their identity as independent

community groups, but threatened the very ‘human’ touch that governments value and that services view as intrinsic to helping people. The competing conceptualisations of non-government organisations introduce an instability into the endeavour to manage homelessness services at arms length and produce competing conceptions of ‘success’ and of what is involved in doing ‘a good job’ for homelessness services and the homelessness service system.

These different ideas of ‘success’ are evident in the second set of tensions, which arises from the use in welfare of the market techniques that have become ubiquitous in the implementation and evaluation of both the work undertaken by governments directly and that done on their behalf by non-government agencies. These tensions arise from the use in human services of these techniques that were derived from the market and production. Information from some services is that these techniques were not a sufficient basis for good service provision and did not unequivocally reflect or improve their work either at organisational level or in relation to homeless people. On the contrary, there is evidence from both this and other research discussed in Chapter 2, that too great a reliance on techniques such as competitive quasi-markets and quantitative outputs has produced unintended and distorted results in homelessness and other welfare services. The emphasis on particular techniques of conducting and measuring the work of services at the expense of others has prioritised certain aspects of services’ work but failed to acknowledge others. In so doing, these techniques have shaped the conceptualisation of what doing ‘a good job’ is. As with the technology of case management, there were tensions between performance management’s emphasis on paperwork and process, and the concern to provide ‘*a human service*’ [Interviewee 6]. There is evidence that at times, there were tensions between providing good data and providing a good service.

I argue that as a result of the changes in political rationality and technology that I have analysed in this thesis, the ‘truths’ about homelessness and homeless people were remade. As I discussed in the Introduction, ‘homelessness’ is not a pre-given concept, but is historically constituted. Similarly ‘the homeless’, like other objects of government action, has no fixed meaning, but rather a meaning which varies over time because it refers only to ‘multiple objectifications of those over whom government is to

be exercised' (Rose 1999, p. 40). As Rose points out, while it may appear that practices of governing are determined by the nature of those who they govern, the reverse is the case.

I argue that it is the shift from what I have referred to as a welfare liberal rationality of government to an 'advanced liberal' form that produced the changes in the causes of homelessness that I observed in my work in homelessness services, and that provided the impetus for my research. Further, I argue that these changes were produced in great part by the extension of political power into the aspirations and activities of individuals and groups by means of their agency, and that these changes did not simply occur as a result of the reduction in state institutions. The 'homelessness' of the welfare state had been characterised in social terms – it was conceptualised as being the temporary result of crisis often brought about by economic or social factors, to be resolved by providing minimal short term help until the person could re-establish themselves independently in permanent housing, either through the market or the social state. On the other hand, the 'homelessness' of advanced liberalism was not necessarily related to crisis and would not be solved by the provision of housing. Instead, it was viewed as the result of dependency, or a lack of individual self-reliance, and was to be resolved through 'case management' that would aim to transform homeless people into free and self-reliant citizens. This case management would be undertaken by autonomous organisations in the community that, in turn, would be regulated through 'performance management'.

The introduction of individualised 'case management' acted to concentrate the policy response to homelessness on services' work with the situation of each individual homeless person. At the same time this concentration on the individual could not address the contextual factors affecting homelessness or responses at government level. As a result, the introduction of case management served to reduce the previous emphasis on these contextual social and economic factors such as the availability of housing. Homelessness itself became conceptualised more in terms of individual characteristics and individual self-management and less in terms of broader economic, social and political forces.

The technologies of performance management and case management, then, provided a means for advanced liberal rationalities, in particular those concerning welfare, to be translated into a response to homelessness. The assistance offered to homeless people became 'individualised': it was to respond to individual need, to address homelessness through individual change and to be costed and measured at individual level, through unit costing and individual data. Further, the homeless person was now to be viewed, not as a social citizen but as an individual consumer contracting with a service in the marketplace. The 'causes' that these policies and programs were addressing were, therefore, 'causes' that were located at the level of the individual. This, then, made sense of my perplexing realisation that, in the late 1990s, the causes of homelessness seemed to have changed.

Although I argue that it was the extension of political power 'beyond the state' that resulted in the shift towards methodologically individualist explanations of homelessness, it is also clear that as the state's withdrawal from welfare provision progressed, the more difficult the task for both non-government organisations and individuals became, and the more keenly the tensions of these regulated freedoms were felt. Because the strategy of 'activating' poor or homeless people was attempted at a time of withdrawal by government from structural responses to welfare problems such as homelessness, the means for the poor to enact such 'activation' or 'empowerment', for example by obtaining housing, was reduced. In these circumstances it became less likely for such techniques to lead to any actual benefits for those who engaged in them, or as Cruikshank puts it, be 'used well' (1999, p. 86) as a form of government. Nevertheless, advanced liberalism's strategies of extending political power 'beyond the state' by activating homeless people does not rely on the continuing reduction of state provision. While over recent decades the strategy of case managing homeless people to become more self-reliant has indeed coincided with a progressive reduction in the activities of the state in, for example, funding and providing public housing, the relaxation of such a policy would not, in itself, mean that the strategy of seeking to activate or work through the freedom of the homeless would automatically be abandoned.

As I have noted in earlier chapters, government discourses about homelessness have undergone certain changes with the election of the Rudd government in December 2007. The new government has promoted a conceptualisation of homelessness that appears to clearly incorporate structural factors in creating homelessness and is committed to substantially increased expenditure on more diverse homelessness responses and the provision of additional social housing funded but not provided by the government. It also appears that some features of the previous system will remain or be intensified. The emphasis on social inclusion remains framed within the concerns of advanced liberalism with 'building the capacity of people and communities to maximise everyone's potential to participate economically and socially' (Australian Government 2008c, p. 19). While the Rudd government's White Paper demands an increased direct response from the state, it also emphasises the position that homelessness is 'everyone's responsibility' (Australian Government 2008c, p. viii), thus conceptualising this responsibility as resting 'beyond the state', and involving an even greater diversity of entities, in particular business. The injection of substantial funding into service provision will certainly translate into more assistance for more people. This growth also has the potential to dramatically affect the size, nature and orientation of the system of non-state organisations involved in providing services. While the White Paper foreshadows improved data and research about homelessness and responses to homelessness, it is not clear how these may differ from those analysed in this thesis, and whether there will be changes which introduce more diverse and relevant ways of depicting homelessness and assessing the work of services and programs.

Further, while the previous reliance on case management alone is to be replaced by more diverse responses to homelessness, an expansion of the understandings of homelessness may not be simple and straightforward. While for some homeless people, the provision of housing itself is now seen as the solution to homelessness, for others, in particular those identified as 'rough sleepers', an intensified form of case management, 'assertive outreach' is to be used. Specific programs for 'rough sleepers' may potentially provide people with extra help, but they also risk both being geared towards helping a non-existent 'typical' person who is sleeping rough, and maintaining the emphasis on individual characteristics. There is evidence, for example, that policy responses such as the Rough Sleepers Initiative in the UK, which attempted to move

beyond the 'dominant paradigm' that people become homeless because of individual characteristics, continued to be undermined by popular and entrenched views that had been reinforced by conservative governments as well as in the institutional practices and habits of some services whose 'roots' remained firmly in rationales of homelessness as deviance (Pleace 2000).

What is clear is that many aspects of Australia's response to homelessness are currently being re-examined and re-formed. These new approaches are still in the early stages of being implemented by the various state and non-state participants in homelessness policies and services, and it is not yet possible to analyse their implications for the government of homelessness.

This research shows how 'homelessness' as a policy concept is a 'constructed' notion, at the same time that it is a cold, hard, devastating reality in people's lives. In addition, my research builds upon existing literature that draws upon Foucault's work to demonstrate the discursive construction of homelessness, by showing how the technologies and practices of homelessness policy and programs themselves have a constructive role in shaping conceptualisations not only of the phenomenon of homelessness, but of the needs and situations of homeless people themselves. Homelessness policies and programs shape these 'truths' about homelessness not only for policy makers and service providers but they similarly shape the *self-understandings* of homeless people themselves.

The implication of viewing 'homelessness' as a constructed and changeable policy concept is that this perspective opens the door to an understanding that any particular 'problematization' of homelessness is associated with specific methods, interventions and effects. This examination of the ways that homelessness has been constructed in Australia shows 'how' specific constructions and interventions have come into being and 'how' they have operated. The significance of this is that examining and understanding these changes offers an opportunity to reflect upon the rationales underlying our policies and programs, the ways that these have been translated into services and activities and the effects that these activities have in the lives of people

who face homelessness. It may encourage us to question assumptions and reassess accepted approaches. This research contributes to such reflection and reassessment.

FIELDWORK METHOD

I conducted taped semi-structured interviews using a general interview guide approach (Patton 2002). The interview guide approach allows for a balance between the focus on the overall line of inquiry that is provided by the interview guide and the flexibility to pursue areas of particular knowledge and experience. I chose to use the semi-structured interview approach over other methods of inquiry such as surveys or structured interviews because semi-structured interviews are able to provide detailed information about the informant's views, thus enabling 'a more valid explication of the informant's perception of reality' (Minichiello et al. 1990, p. 92). As described in the Introduction, the aim of the fieldwork is to incorporate these perceptions of reality and perspectives, or 'local knowledges' (Foucault 1994, p. 22) of those who had worked in homelessness services, about changes they had seen over the research period. While the semi-structured interview approach has the limitation of reducing to some extent the comparability of interviews with one another (Minichiello et al. 1990), this is not a major drawback for this research as the emphasis of the fieldwork is more on exploring rather than comparing interviewees' interpretations of events. Where I do use the fieldwork interviews to confirm or challenge particular interpretations, I accept that there is a need to be mindful that I do not claim that the interviews are somehow 'representative' of people working in homelessness services, although I do believe that they are illuminating.

I interviewed 24 people involved in homelessness services, peak bodies for homelessness services and/or social policy and program areas of the State and Federal bureaucracies. Of these, thirteen worked in homelessness services, two had worked in services and a peak body, two had worked in services and government, three had worked in services, government departments and a peak body, one in services and as a consultant to services, one in a peak body and two in government departments. One interview was not completed due to time constraints. Twenty-three interviewees were located in NSW at the time of the interview, and one was located in Victoria. The NSW interviews were conducted in mid-2004 and the Victorian interview was conducted in early 2009.

I have used a purposeful (intensity) sampling strategy, which seeks information rich cases for study in depth. In selecting the interviewees I chose a range of persons currently or previously working in Government departments and/or community organisations. I did this by working through existing networks and using a 'snowball' approach. I initially selected several interviewees who were already known to me for their potential contribution, and also approached some organisations or individuals actively involved in homelessness policies, programs and services, to seek nominations. In addition, I asked each interviewee if they had suggestions of possible other interviewees. I attempted to include interviewees from diverse organisations. Because of my experience working in homelessness services, I knew approximately 6 of the interviewees professionally – through situations such as attending meetings or referring clients to other services. In addition I was on more friendly terms with two of the interviewees. While it might be considered that my status as an 'insider' of the homelessness field who knew some of the interviewees could cause researcher bias or reduce validity, I argue that this risk is balanced by the advantages of this status in assisting me to gain access to interviewees and understanding interviewee experience (Minichiello et al. 1990). In addition, the validity of the fieldwork is augmented by the use of other data (Minichiello et al. 1990) containing the views of people involved in homelessness services, in particular material from Parity, which has been published by the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) since 1988. While the CHP is a Victorian peak body it has published material from people involved in homelessness services across Australia.

The intention of the interviews was to explore the issues with a range of persons from government and non-government organisations who have experiential knowledge of homelessness policies, programs and services. In selecting interviewees I therefore sought experience across time so that they could comment on change, as well as some depth of experience. For the purpose of selecting interviewees, I defined 'depth' of experiential knowledge as being influenced by both the total length of time worked and the degree to which their role was likely to expose them to changes in ideology, policy, debate, funding and service provision.

I provided prospective participants with an information statement/ consent form (Appendix 2) about the research project, following telephone contact from myself so that the research subject could make an informed decision about whether to participate. I made it clear to prospective participants that the research was being undertaken as a student and was separate from my role at work. Interviews were of 1- 1½ hours duration and were held at a location suitable to the participant.

The interview approach used was taped interviews using a general interview guide, given to respondents (Appendix 3). This allowed flexibility to pursue various areas of interest in each interview. The guide covers what changes in philosophy, ideology, policy, debate, funding and service provision the person noticed, and any comments the person had/has about these changes. Consistent with the constructivist orientation of the research I was particularly interested in comments about intentions, practices and effects in relation to changes, and prompted in a way which aimed to encourage the respondent to comment while allowing them the maximum opportunity to define their own responses and pursue various areas of interest in each interview.

I chose to use in depth interviews rather than focus groups in order to assist participants to focus their attention on what they have noticed over the past thirty or so years, and also to avoid possible reticence in expressing views in a group situation. I was concerned that reticence could occur particularly but not only in the case of those who work or have worked in the bureaucracy. While focus groups may have the benefit of stimulating ideas they may also fragment or restrict people's accounts.

Appendix 2

Information and Consent Form

I _____ (*participant's name*) agree to participate in the research project **Homelessness: changes in Australian social policy (UTS Approval Reference No: 2004- 018)** being conducted by Jane Bullen (Jane.E.Bullen@uts.edu.au) of the University of Technology, Sydney for her degree in Doctor of Philosophy, Humanities and Social Sciences. I understand that Jane works in the community sector, but that the research is being undertaken in her role as student and is separate from her role at work.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine changes in social policy in Australia over the past two to three decades, in particular in the area of homelessness.

I understand that my participation in this research will involve an audio recorded interview using an interview guide to address a general set of issues. It will be of approximately one hour duration at a convenient location. It will address my recollections and assessments of policies and services related to homelessness over time.

I am aware that I can contact Jane or her supervisor(s) Eva Cox (eva.cox@uts.edu.au, 9514 2787) if I have any concerns about the research. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from this research project at any time I wish and without giving a reason.

I agree that Jane has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be published in a form that does not identify me in any way. I also understand that where information provided by me is to be included in a publication, I will be consulted to confirm that I have been quoted in the correct context.

_____/_____/_____
Signed by

_____/_____/_____
Witnessed by

NOTE:

This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer, Ms Louise Abrams (ph: 02 9514 9615, Louise.Abrams@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Interview Guide – Homelessness: changes in Australian social policy

(I will ask you to reflect on different positions/organisations you have worked with over time)

1. What year did you start working in the community or social welfare sector?
2. Where were you working? What was your job then? What did the service/organisation do? Did it work with homeless people? (What were your areas of work eg – did it involve working with people who used the service, advocacy, funding submissions, lobbying, etc)
3. Thinking back to then:
 - a. How would you describe the way services were run?
 - b. What were the issues or problems that affected the people who used services?
 - c. How did services relate to these people? What was their view of them? (What was the impact of this on people who used the service?)
 - d. What role did services see themselves as having? What were they trying to achieve?
 - e. Can you describe the ways that services worked with people who used the services – how services were delivered and what kind of help was offered in practice?
 - f. How were services funded then?
 - g. How did the service get started?

- h. How did it see itself relating to broader policy and service provision?
 - i. How did the government policies and funding at the time fit with people's needs as services saw them or as you saw them?
- 4. Since then, where else have you worked in the community or social welfare or homelessness sector?
- 5. When?
- 6. Repeat qu3 again in relation to each service/organisation worked in?
- 7. Over time, have you seen any changes that have occurred with these types of service? If yes:
 - a. What was it that changed, eg the funding, the client group, the problems, the kind of help given, the policies, the role of the service, other areas (refer question 3 above)?
 - b. Describe the changes that happened and when they occurred.
 - c. Has the language used in or about services and people who use them changed?
 - d. Why and how did the changes occur?
 - e. Do you have any comments about any effects of these changes?
 - f. Were there responses to these changes?
 - g. Have there been more changes or developments over time? If yes, return to questions 4 (a)-(f).

8. When you think about developments in this area, are there any points that stand out for you?
9. What sort of changes do you think may happen in the future?
10. What changes do you think you would like to see happen in terms of funding and service guidelines?
11. Do you have any suggestions about other interviewees?

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND

No	Charitable service	Community services	Peak body	Govt dept	Private practice	Area of work experience
1		Yes			Yes*	Women
2		Yes*	Yes	Yes		Women
3				Yes*		Children, general
4				Yes*		General
5		Yes	Yes*	Yes		Women, mental health, general
6		Yes*				Children, women
7			Yes*			Youth
8		Yes*				Women
9		Yes*				Women
10		Yes*				Youth
11		Yes	Yes*			Youth, general
12		Yes*				Women
13		Yes	Yes*			General
14	Yes*					Women
	Yes*					Men
16		Yes*				Women
17	Yes*					General
18 ⁴	Yes*					Men
19		Yes*				Women
20	Yes	Yes*		Yes		Women
21		Yes	Yes*	yes		General
22	Yes*	Yes				Youth, General
23		Yes*	Yes*			Youth
24		Yes		Yes*		General

* Area of work at time of interview

⁴ Interview incomplete due to time constraints

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