



# THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORKER

## SOCIAL WORK AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT AWARDS

This year's recipients of a Social Work Award for Excellence and the Social Work Student Awards demonstrated again the very high standards and significant achievements which have marked these awards since their inception.

The awards were presented at a presentation evening held on Social Work Day, Wednesday, 17 May. This provided the opportunity to celebrate that special day and highlight through the awards what it means to be a social worker.

Approximately 40 social workers, family, friends and colleagues gathered at the Broadwater Pagoda Hotel in Como to acknowledge the achievements of the award winners and to share this special occasion with them. Once again, the venue provided a welcoming and comfortable setting for the presentations and the refreshments and assistance of the staff enhanced the enjoyment of the evening.

In welcoming everyone to the presentations, the Branch President, Dr Barbara Meddin, emphasised the importance of the profession recognising excellence in its practitioners, especially with this day being Social Work Day. She then went on to introduce the guest speaker for the evening, Her Honour, Judge French

Her Honour spoke of her own experiences as a legal practitioner and her work as the Presiding Judge with the Perth Children's Court. She highlighted some of the changes which have occurred in the historical development of the Court and of the context within which judgements must be made. Her understanding of the social work role and some perspectives on this gave food for thought. Her talk was very well received and appreciated and will be published in a later newsletter.

### Student Awards

The awards for students were introduced by Anne Pickard, Vice President (Education). The occasion also offered the opportunity for social workers to reflect on the excellence of the social

workers whose names are associated with the student awards, Barbara Kinna and Margaret Stockbridge.

### Barbara Kinna Award (Curtin University)

The Barbara Kinna Award is presented to a social work student at Curtin University for outstanding performance throughout the social work course. Barbara Kinna's social work career spanned a range of professional roles. She was a graduate of the University of Sydney and began her career in the inner Sydney suburb of Redfern. Barbara later went to London where she worked in the Almoner's Department of Lambeth Hospital. From there she moved to Singapore where she served as Chief Social Worker with the Singapore Children's Society for ten years. Barbara also supervised social work placements from the University of Singapore.

On returning to Australia in 1964, Barbara joined the (then) Child Welfare Department as the first professionally trained social worker and she contributed to the professionalisation of that Department. In 1972 Barbara joined the Catholic Welfare Bureau (which became Centrecare) as Senior Social Worker in the first migrant grant-in-aid social worker. Barbara was reported to have brought "vitality and deep compassion for those in need and

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## THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORKER

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commitment to social work education which characterised her life and work". With the inspiration of such an admired and respected social worker, it was the pleasure of the WA Branch to present the Barbara Kinna Award to Gabrielle (Gabby) Payne.

Gabby was nominated for her academic achievements and leadership during the social work course at Curtin University. She led the Social Work Student Association and was popular among her student colleagues. Gabby demonstrated combined strengths in the practical application of social work learning and in scholarship. Gabby is currently working as a member of the Anglicare Teen-Share team.



### **Gabrielle Payne**

Gabby was present at the awards evening to accept her prize and certificate. Her response follows.

*It has been six months now since I finished university. Enough time has passed for me to remember it fondly – sitting in the sun with other students at the 210 coffee shop, discussing ideas for assignments, doing our best to put off the moment of actually getting started, and those funny moments in lectures and tutes. I value the friendships I made with other students, the support we were able to provide each other, the sharing of information and resources – something that is not so common these days where competition rather than co operation is seen as the key to success. The pain of assignment writing, exams, mental overload, and the endless photocopying of articles seems to have diminished.*

*In some ways my experience of university was very different to that of many friends and fellow students. My secure financial situation meant that my paid work commitments were minimal and mainly confined to the semester breaks. I had the benefit of a supportive partner, family and friends and was able to focus my energy on study and voluntary activities. Without wanting to detract from my achievements, I believe that my privileged circumstances have played a major role in my receiving this award.*

*In contrast, many other social work students were juggling family responsibilities and childcare; many younger students were not eligible for Youth Allowance but did not want to remain dependent on their parents until they turned 25 – many of these students worked 30 or so hours a week on top of full time study. For the students that did manage to qualify for Centrelink benefits, financial pressures were an ongoing reality. For many, the role of student was simply one of a multitude of roles and often a very minor one. Many of these students found keeping up with their academic workload a struggle. Juggling paid work with field placements seriously challenged some students' ability to cope.*

*I think that the most worrying implication of all this for students studying social work in the current political climate is that many students are so preoccupied with their own survival that there is little time or energy to become involved in other activities such as the social work students association, and broader student politics.*

**D**uring my second year of university I was one of a group of students that joined the protest against the One Nation Party – this was a rare event for us. Our collective ability to become involved in social justice and human rights issues was greatly compromised. We were absent from debates and protests about reconciliation, mandatory sentencing, the GST, immigration, homelessness, cuts to childcare funding and services, changes to eligibility for Centrelink payments, changes to higher education policy that disadvantage the poor, and environmental campaigns to name just a few.

*Our participation was largely limited to the pages of our assignments. The voice of students, including social work students, has been muted. As social work students, we were armed with theory and knowledge about community development, social activism, social policy and how this effects the lived experience of the people we work with, but most students had little time or energy to put any of it into practice outside assignments.*

*I wonder where this leaves social work graduates entering the workforce? Does the curbing of extra curricular activities mean that we are less prepared as social workers to carry out the commitment and aims of social work as they are enshrined in the AASW Code of Ethics? We were taught at university that social work is a political activity, however the pressures facing students in the late 1990s meant that as a group, we had little time or energy left to cut our political teeth.*

*Many graduates go on to work at agencies that are more about social control than social justice. While this gives us a bird's eye view of disadvantage and oppression, these positions do not always provide avenues for social workers to taken action.*

*I believe that my sense of purpose and satisfaction as a social worker may well come through activities outside my immediate work role, through community groups, Peak bodies and organisations such as the AASW, particularly to provide leadership on issues of social justice.*

*In many countries social protest and change occurs from the bottom up, instigated by students. Social work students would*

probably be so busy writing assignments, juggling family commitments, working in paid employment in order to survive and pay off their HECS debt, that they would be in danger of missing any revolution let alone starting one. The powers that be must be well satisfied with their passive, obedient, broke and overloaded tertiary student population.

I have painted a rather gloomy picture of studying social work in today's political and economic climate. I need to add that my own experience of university was a very positive one and unlike many other students I did have the time to have some involvement in student politics and community groups. I would like to see all students having this opportunity.

Finally, I would like to thank my partner Bjorn, my family, friends, fellow students, and the staff at the Curtin University of Social Work. I owe this award largely to them. Thank you once again.

### **Margaret Stockbridge Memorial Award (University of Western Australia)**

The Margaret Stockbridge Memorial Award is presented for outstanding academic performance whilst undertaking a degree in social work at the University of Western Australia.

Dr Margaret Stockbridge began her social work career in England and came to Perth in 1958 to be the first psychiatric social worker in this state. She was said to be "a driving force in establishing the WA Branch of the AASW", and she was Branch President from 1963 to 1965.

Teddy Stockbridge as she was more usually known, was instrumental in setting up the social work course at the University of WA and she accepted the position as lecturer for the new course in 1965. From various accounts from her former students, Teddy Stockbridge clearly set a standard of excellence for her former students. She expected a great deal from them and in return she gave a strong grounding in social work practice. She is said to have believed that social work is a 'public' not a 'private' activity, and she was willing to debate issues publicly herself.

With this professional heritage, therefore, it was a pleasure for the Branch to present the award named in Margaret Stockbridge's memory to Sara Terry who obtained the highest academic aggregate for her course. Sara was also awarded the University of Western Australia's Graduate Association Prize in Arts – Social Work. She was valued for her inquiring mind, her creative thinking and her gentle capacity to encourage reflection of social work practice among her student colleagues. Sara is currently employed by Family and Children's Services in Karratha. Unfortunately Sara was not able to attend the presentation evening because of distance and work commitments. She has provided the following response:

*A big thank you to the UWA School of Social Work and the AASW, for awarding me the Margaret Stockbridge Memorial Prize. I want to accept this award on behalf of all the UWA social work graduates of 1999, because without the support of my fellow students and friends I never would have made it! Together, we all worked extremely hard over the past two years and I'm so proud of us all.*

*I now hope we can do the social work profession proud, by taking steps to achieve social justice with those with whom we work. A word of "wisdom" to my fellow students after five months in the big and scary world of social work practice. Just remember, what we may see as small steps for our clients, can really be great leaps. Stay strong and focussed, and yes, we **will** survive!*

### **Regional and Rural Social Work Student Award (Edith Cowan University Bunbury)**

The Regional and Rural Social Work Student Award from Edith Cowan University Bunbury recognises the collaborative and collective contributions of social work students to collegial learning in social work education. So the award is made to all the social work course participants as an acknowledgement of their shared group efforts and achievements as a graduating cohort.

Dr Pauline Meemeduma accepted the award on behalf of the graduating cohort.



**Her Honour Judge Valerie French, Joe Calleja,  
Dr Barbara Meddin, Virginia Scott**

### **Awards for 20 Years of Membership**

Presentations were then made to two members, Sabina Leitman and Sorrel Mayer, by Dr Barbara Meddin in recognition of their 20 year membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

### **Award for Excellence**

The Vice President (Ethics and Professional Practice), Vir-

ginia Scott, then outlined the background to the Social Work Awards and the eight award categories - professional practice; ethics; innovation/pioneering; management; policy development; contribution to learning; research and leadership.

She indicated that the award winner this year had been nominated for the Management category, the criteria for which are:

- Social worker is either in a social work management position or a general management position.
- Social worker incorporates social work knowledge and skills in his/her management approach.
- Social worker is able to articulate goals consistent with client needs and function(s) of the organisation and is able to effectively implement strategies to meet these.
- Social worker demonstrates tenacity and perseverance in working to achieve goals.
- Social Worker provides leadership in organisational change and development, consistent with social work values.

In introducing the citation for the award, Dr Meddin detailed some of the employment positions which he had held, along with other positions, including AASW and other committee positions. She then highlighted some of his significant achievements which had contributed to the winning of the award. Dr Meddin then went on to present the remainder of the citation for the award which included information provided by the nominator and referees and the assessment of the panel.

The full citation is given below. While the identity of the winner was not announced until the end, there were many who guessed well before the citation concluded. A wonderful effort Joe Calleja! Congratulations! Special thanks to Vanda Francke, the nominator. Thanks too, to the panel, also to Jennifer Hannan for her help with the planning for the evening and to Liz Retamal for the venue and other arrangements.

## **VIRGINIA SCOTT**

### **VICE PRESIDENT (ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE)**

## **Address by Branch President**

It is my pleasure as the Branch President of the WA Branch of the Australian Association of Social Workers to give the citation and award to the winner of a Social Work Award for Excellence this year.

As introduced by Virginia Scott, the Vice President (Ethics and Professional Practice), the award for excellence being given this evening is for the award category "Management" which incorporates the criteria already shown.

## **Background**

This award is particularly noteworthy as the nominator of the award is a relatively new social worker who, as a previous student of the nominee and then social worker working in the same agency, held the winner in such high regard that they initiated the nomination for the award.

Let me begin by briefly giving you some information about our nominee:

## **Positions held**

- Executive Manager, Kinway Division, Anglicare WA
- Principal Social Worker, Department of Family & Children's Services
- Coordinator, Freedom of Information, Authority for the Intellectually Handicapped
- Manager, Advisory and Coordinating Committee on Child Abuse Secretariat
- Coordinator, Child Abuse Unit
- Social Worker DCS

## **AASW contribution**

- National Vice President Nov 1992 – Nov 1996
- WA Branch President Nov 1986 – April 1988
- WA Branch Vice President 1985 – 1987 and subcommittees 1984 - 1986

## **Other involvements**

- National Marriage and Family Council, established as result of Prime Minister's Family policy statement in June 1999
- Family Services Australia Board
- WACOSS

## **Significant achievements**

- Development of Kinway as an organisation, broadening the range and quality of services provided and recognised nationally.
- As manager of ACCA, implementation of Child Abuse Task Force recommendations and introduction of Child Evidence legislation.
- Vision for and production of "Self Regulation – The Way Forward" for the profession.
- Contribution to CPE and other AASW initiatives.
- As member of the National AASW Executive, introduction of financial management and member service initiatives, including a balanced budget and direct debit.
- Contribution to the Association's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.
- Production of *Incomes and Outcomes* as a student in conjunction with a fellow student.

## **Achievements in relation to the award criteria**

In considering the nomination for the award, the award panel for this year, (Roma Lewi, Brian Dodds, Vere Berger and Anne Pickard, convened by Virginia Scott), highlighted a number of achievements, provided both in the nomination and in additional contact with referees. In terms of the award criteria, some of these were:

***Social worker is either in a social work management position or in a general management position***

The nominee has been working as Executive Manager in a family service organization for the past three years, using social work values, knowledge and skills to broaden the scope of the services offered to meet identified needs and, at the same time, establish a professional service and a firm economic basis for this.

In addition to this, the nominee has utilised a management approach in his work in the AASW and in the other positions and involvements he has had and currently holds.

***Social worker incorporates social work knowledge and skills in his/her management approach***

In his work in Kinway, the nominee has been able to move the organization from a medium standard welfare agency offering a small range of more traditional services and with a budget of \$900,000 to an innovative family service agency with a variety of services to meet a broader range of identified needs and with a budget of \$2.5m. The quality of the service is recognised nationally within the family services sector.

Kinway is a division of Anglicare and its core business is the provision of counselling and relationship education.

The nominee has been instrumental in the development of new programs and services, including an early intervention in family violence program in Albany (one of only two projects in Australia to be awarded a contract); Advocare, an advocacy service in the area of aged care; and the "Talking Women's Business" program at Kununurra, all very new initiatives for Kinway.

Key social work knowledge and skills which have contributed to this have included:

- the ability to identify client needs;
- the ability to involve or empower others in contributing ideas towards a solution, giving people scope to be creative while at the same time assisting them to learn and also get the task done; and
- the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to different situations, to see the problem and to look and move forward to solutions and outcomes.

Managing priorities and maintaining appropriate balances is another aspect of this, our nominee balancing a very busy work life with family life by maintaining the practice of spending Monday afternoon and Wednesday morning each week at home with family. This experience enhances his understanding as a manager, of the other life commitments of his staff.

***Social worker is able to articulate clear goals consistent with client needs and functions of the organization and is able to effectively implement strategies to meet these.***

In beginning his work in Kinway, the nominee was able to recognise that there was a much wider need for relationship counselling than was being offered and also saw the significance

of offering a more professional and more highly skilled service. He appointed a clinical coordinator to bring this about. Counselors were provided with training, which the nominee arranged with Curtin University in the form of a traineeship.

Staff are now qualified, competent people who are able to meet the needs of an expanding population with complex family difficulties. It is recognised that there are different forms of family, not just couples, that it is important to work with adults and children, and that work relationships are also an important part of these complex and difficult relationships affecting people.

The nominee was also able to recognise the need for assisting people who are not able to pay for a service and, at the same time, the need for the organization to have an economic base for carrying out its work and to provide for this appropriately. This has been achieved with a careful balance of social justice principles. He has therefore been able to set the priorities for the organization, position himself free from the service delivery issues, giving this to another person to manage, and to himself deal with corporate issues, money and the promotion of services.

This has been done within a clear framework of standards and customer service principles, with a strong basis of social work values and standards.

While a strategic approach has been taken to planning, it has also been recognised that there is a certain level of uncertainty and unexpected change that needs to be accommodated and this has been done effectively.



**Joe Calleja and Dianne Bianchini**

The nominee's achievements with Kinway led to his appointment in December 1999 to the National Marriage and Family Council which provides advice to the Federal Minister for Family and Community Services.

***Social worker demonstrates tenacity and perseverance in working to achieve goals.***

The nominee has been affectionately likened to a terrier with a bone! He is known as being uncompromising and unwavering with regard to professional and personal principles. This has made him unpopular at times and it has also created difficulties for him on occasions.

A significant achievement which demonstrates his ability to persevere and see things through to a significant outcome is his work as the manager of the Advisory and Coordinating Committee on Child Abuse Secretariat. This resulted in 64 recommendations of the Child Abuse Task Force being implemented in 3 years and the introduction of Child Evidence legislation.

A major factor in the achievement of this outcome was the nominee's ability to link together relevant people towards a common goal, while training provided by ACCA was accessible and well regarded by both government and non government. The nominee's contribution in this area was acknowledged by the Chief Justice, David Malcolm.

Another example is the Men's Crisis Service which was designed to be used by the Police when a perpetrator was arrested. Initially, the Police struggled to use the system and few perpetrators were arrested. Subsequent meetings followed and, at the initiative of our nominee, senior management personnel were involved in looking at strategies to make the service more viable. Further review took place as a result of this and a revised model developed.

A further example is the publication "Incomes and Outcomes". Initially developed as a practicum project while our nominee was a student, (in conjunction with another student), this publication has seen further iterations with our nominee at the helm! At its inception, it was regarded as ground-breaking.

***Social worker provides leadership in organisational change and development, consistent with social work values.***

Transparency and accountability are important elements of the nominee's approach to management, along with the empowering of staff to develop ideas and undertake tasks and provision of a learning environment for growth and development. Acknowledging and respecting people personally and professionally, acting as a coach and being accessible are also key ways in which the nominee provides leadership. The latter is clearly illustrated by this nomination by a young staff member from the Albany office of Kinway.

Willingness to take risks but with clear vision and a way to proceed, leading by example and willingness to do the hard work and provide the "container" to enable others to work effectively

## CANCER RESEARCH INTO THE NEED FOR SERVICES WITHIN CITY OF JOONDALUP AND SURROUNDING AREAS

The Cancer Foundation of Western Australia is undertaking research into the need for Cancer Services in Joondalup and the surrounding areas from Alexander Heights through to Yanchep and Two Rocks.

Stephen Hale, a qualified counsellor, and social worker will be undertaking this research project. This important research will focus on several areas:

- The level of need for cancer services in the area.
- Identification of already existing services, i.e. support groups and counselling services for people and their families affected by cancer.
- Understanding individual and organization needs for cancer services.
- Identify the specific needs for cancer patients and their families.

Interested social workers are urged to make written submissions and comment on these areas, and are being asked to complete a simple anonymous research questionnaire.

All individuals and interested parties are invited to contact Stephen and a questionnaire will be forwarded to you for completion with a return prepaid envelope.

Stephen can be contacted on  
Tel: (08) 92491609 or Mobile: 0110411159  
Fax: (08) 92494878 or  
Email: SKCMHALE@bigpond.com.au.

have all contributed to the nominee's ability to achieve significant organisational and service outcomes as a manager.

### Panel assessment

The panel has had no hesitation in proposing an award for the nominee in the category of management and does so with great pleasure. I would also fully endorse that.

By now, you may well have guessed the identity of the winner. It is, of course, Joe Calleja!

**DR BARBARA MEDDIN**  
**BRANCH PRESIDENT**

# NATURAL CAPITALISM: A BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW ECONOMY?

*What is natural capitalism? It is built on a set of principles and provides a blueprint for a new approach to how we value, use and conserve our scarce natural and social resources. The concept involves four interlinked principles: to radically increase resource productivity, redesigning industry on biological models with closed loops and zero waste, shifting from the sale of goods (for example, light bulbs) to the provision of services (illumination), and reinvesting in the natural capital that is the basis of future prosperity.*

*The following edited text has been constructed from a series of papers written by one of the proponents of natural capitalism, Paul Hawken. Social workers will find much to consider from this challenging body of literature and may appreciate that it could provide a means to redefine the goals and principles that underpin our society and the way we use resources.*

*Those wishing to examine the area in more depth may more benefit by initially reading the monograph **Natural Capitalism** by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and L Hunter Lovins, published by the Rocky Mountain Institute in 1999. Details of this can be obtained from the natural capitalism web site - <http://www.naturalcapitalism.org/>. Another useful outline can be found in the article "A road map for natural capitalism" by the same three writers, published in *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1999.*

## Natural Capitalism by Paul Hawken

Somewhere along the way to free-market capitalism, the United States became the most wasteful society on the planet. Most of us know it. There is the waste we can see: traffic jams, irreparable VCRs, Styrofoam coffee cups, landfills; the waste we can't see: Superfund sites, greenhouse gases, radioactive waste, vagrant chemicals; and the social waste we don't want to think about: homelessness, crime, drug addiction, our forgotten infirm and elderly.

Nationally and globally, we perceive social and environmental decay as distinct and unconnected. In fact, a humbling design flaw deeply embedded in industrial logic links the two problems. Toto, pull back the curtain: The efficient dynamo of industrialism isn't there. Even by its own standards, industrialism is extraordinarily inefficient.

Modern industrialism came into being in a world very different from the one we live in today: fewer people, less material well-being, plentiful natural resources. As a result of the successes of industry and capitalism, these conditions have now reversed. Today, more people are chasing fewer natural resources.

But industry still operates by the same rules, using more resources to make fewer people more productive. The consequence: massive waste — of both resources and people.

Decades from now, we may look back at the end of the 20th century and ponder why business and society ignored these trends for so long — how one species thought it could flourish while nature ebbed. Historians will show, perhaps, how politics, the media, economics, and commerce created an industrial regime that wasted our social and natural environment and called it growth. As author Bill McKibben put it, "*The laws of Congress and the laws of physics have grown increasingly divergent, and the laws of physics are not likely to yield.*"

The laws we're ignoring determine how life sustains itself. Commerce requires living systems for its welfare — it is emblematic of the times that this even needs to be said. Because of our industrial prowess, we emphasise what people can do but tend to ignore what nature does. Commercial institutions, proud of their achievements, do not see that healthy living systems — clean air and water, healthy soil, stable climates — are integral to a functioning economy. As our living systems deteriorate, traditional forecasting and business economics become the equivalent of house rules on a sinking cruise ship.

One is tempted to say that there is nothing wrong with capitalism except that it has never been tried. Our current industrial system is based on accounting principles that would bankrupt any company. Conventional economic theories will not guide our future for a simple reason: They have never placed 'natural capital' on the balance sheet. When it is included, not as a free amenity or as a putative infinite supply, but as an integral and valuable part of the production process, everything changes. Prices, costs, and what is and isn't economically sound change dramatically.

Industries destroy natural capital because they have historically benefited from doing so. As businesses success-

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fully created more goods and jobs, consumer demand soared, compounding the destruction of natural capital. All that is about to change.

Everyone is familiar with the traditional definition of capital as accumulated wealth in the form of investments, factories, and equipment. ‘Natural capital,’ on the other hand, comprises the resources we use, both nonrenewable (oil, coal, metal ore) and renewable (forests, fisheries, grasslands). Although we usually think of renewable resources in terms of desired materials, such as wood, their most important value lies in the services they provide.

These services are related to, but distinct from, the resources themselves. They are not pulpwood but forest cover, not food but topsoil. Living systems feed us, protect us, heal us, clean the nest, let us breathe. They are the “income” derived from a healthy environment: clean air and water, climate stabilisation, rainfall, ocean productivity, fertile soil, watersheds, and the less-appreciated functions of the environment, such as processing waste — both natural and industrial. *Nature’s Services*, a book due out early 2000 edited by Stanford University biologist Gretchen C. Daily, identifies trillions of dollars of critical ecosystem services received annually by commerce.

### Natural capital as a limiting factor

Until the 1970s, the concept of natural capital was largely irrelevant to business planning, and it still is in most companies. Throughout the industrial era, economists considered manufactured capital — money, factories, etc. — the principal factor in industrial production, and perceived natural capital as a marginal contributor. The exclusion of natural capital from balance sheets was an understandable omission. There was so much of it, it didn’t seem worth counting. Not any longer.

Historically, economic development has faced a number of limiting factors, including the availability of labour, energy resources, machinery, and financial capital. The absence or depletion of a limiting factor can prevent a system from growing. If marooned in a snowstorm, you need water, food, and warmth to survive. Having more of one factor cannot compensate for the absence of the other. Drinking more water will not make up for lack of clothing if you are freezing.

In the past, by increasing the limiting factor, industrial societies continued to develop economically. It wasn’t always pretty: Slavery “satisfied” labour shortages, as did immigration and high birthrates. Mining companies exploited coal, oil, and gas to meet increased energy demands. The need for labour-saving devices provoked the invention of steam engines, spinning jennies, cotton gins, and tel-

egraphs. Financial capital became universally accessible through central banks, credit, stock exchanges, and currency exchange mechanisms.

Because economies grow and change, new limiting factors occasionally emerge. When they do, massive restructuring occurs. Nothing works as before. Behaviour that used to be economically sound becomes unsound, even destructive.

Economist Herman E. Daly cautions that we are facing a historic juncture in which, for the first time, the limits to increased prosperity are not the lack of man-made capital but the lack of natural capital. The limits to increased fish harvests are not boats, but productive fisheries; the limits to irrigation are not pumps or electricity, but viable aquifers; the limits to pulp and lumber production are not sawmills, but plentiful forests.

Like all previous limiting factors, the emergence of natural capital as an economic force will pose a problem for reactionary institutions. For those willing to embrace the challenges of a new era, however, it presents an enormous opportunity.

### Wasting resources means wasting people

Industry has always sought to increase the productivity of workers, not resources. And for good reason. Most resource prices have fallen for 200 years — due in no small part to the extraordinary increases in our ability to extract, harvest, ship, mine, and exploit resources. If the competitive advantage goes to the low-cost provider, and resources are cheap, then business will naturally use more and more resources in order to maximise worker productivity.

Such a strategy was eminently sensible when the population was smaller and resources were plentiful. But with respect to meeting the needs of the future, contemporary business economics is pre-Copernican. We cannot heal the country’s social wounds or “save” the environment as long as we cling to the outdated industrial assumptions that the *summum bonum* of commercial enterprise is to use more stuff and fewer people.

Our thinking is backward: We shouldn’t use more of what we have less of (natural capital) to use less of what we have more of (people). While the need to maintain high labour productivity is critical to income and economic well-being, labour productivity that corrodes society is like burning the furniture to heat the house.

Our pursuit of increased labour productivity at all costs not only depletes the environment, it also depletes labour.

Just as overproduction can exhaust topsoil, over productivity can exhaust a workforce. The underlying assumption that greater productivity would lead to greater leisure and well-being, while true for many decades, has become a bad joke.

In the United States, those who are employed, and presumably becoming more productive, find they are working 100 to 200 hours more per year than 20 years ago. Yet real wages haven't increased for more than 20 years.

In parts of the industrialised world, unemployment and underemployment have risen faster than employment for more than 25 years. Nearly one-third of the world's workers sense that they have no value in the present economic scheme.

Clearly, when 1 billion willing workers can't find a decent job or any employment at all, we need to make fundamental changes. We can't — whether through monetary means, government programs, or charity — create a sense of value and dignity in people's lives when we're simultaneously developing a society that doesn't need them. If people don't feel valued, they will act out society's verdict in sometimes shocking ways.

William Strickland, a pioneer in working with inner-city children, once said that "you can't teach algebra to someone who doesn't want to be here." He meant that urban kids don't want to be here at all, alive, anywhere on earth. They try to tell us, but we don't listen. So they engage in increasingly risky behaviour — unprotected sex, drugs, violence — until we notice. By that time, their conduct has usually reached criminal proportions — and then we blame the victims, build more jails, and lump the costs into the GDP.

In fact, reducing resource use creates jobs and lessens the impact we have on the environment. We can grow, use fewer resources, lower taxes, increase per capita spending on the needy, end federal deficits, reduce the size of government, and begin to restore damaged environments, both natural and social.

At this point, you may well be sceptical. The last summary is too hopeful and promises too much. If economic alternatives are this attractive, why aren't we doing them now? A good question. I will try to answer it. But, lest you think these proposals are Pollyannaish, know that my optimism arises from the magnitude of the problem, not from the

ease of the solutions. Waste is too expensive; it's cheaper to do the right thing.

## Resource productivity

Economists argue that rational markets make this the most efficient of all possible economies. But that theory works only as long as you use financial efficiency as the sole metric and ignore physics, biology, and common sense. The physics of energy and mass conservation, along with the laws of entropy, are the arbiters of efficiency, not Forbes or the Dow Jones or the Federal Reserve. The economic issue is: How much work (value) does society get from its materials and energy? This is a very different question than asking how much return it can get out of its money.

If we already deployed materials or energy efficiently, it would support the contention that a radical increase in resource productivity is unrealistic. But the molecular trail leads to the opposite conclusion. For example, cars are barely 1 percent efficient in the sense that, for every 100 gallons of gasoline, only one gallon actually moves the passengers. Likewise, only 8 to 10 percent of the energy used in heating the filament of an incandescent light bulb actually becomes visible light. (Some describe it as a space heater disguised as a light bulb.) Modern carpeting remains on the floor for up to 12 years, after which it remains in landfills for as long as 20,000 years or more — less than .06 percent efficiency.

According to Robert Ayres, a leader in studying industrial metabolism, about 94 percent of the materials extracted for use in manufacturing durable products become waste before the product is even manufactured. More waste is generated in production, and most of that is lost unless the product is reused or recycled. Overall, America's material and energy efficiency is no more than 1 or 2 percent. In other words, American industry uses as much as 100 times more material and energy than theoretically required to deliver consumer services.

The resource revolution is starting to show up in all areas of business. In the forest products industry, clearinghouses now identify hundreds of techniques that can reduce the use of timber and pulpwood by nearly 75 percent without diminishing the quality of housing, the "services" provided by books and paper, or the convenience of a tissue.

*"William Strickland, a pioneer in working with inner-city children, once said that "you can't teach algebra to someone who doesn't want to be here." He meant that urban kids don't want to be here at all, alive, anywhere on earth. They try to tell us, but we don't listen".*

In the housing industry, builders can use dozens of local or composite materials, including those made from rice and wheat straw, wastepaper, and earth, instead of studs, plywood, and concrete. The Herman Miller company currently designs furniture that can be reused and remanufactured a number of times; DesignTex, a subsidiary of Steelcase, a leading manufacturer of office furniture, sells fabrics that can be easily composted.

Although a new hypercar is now in development, new urbanist architects, such as Peter Calthorpe, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and others, are designing communities that could eliminate 40 to 60 percent of driving needs. (A recent San Francisco study showed that communities can decrease car use by 30 percent when they double population density.) Internet-based transactions may render many shopping malls obsolete.

Down the road we'll have quantum semiconductors that store vast amounts of information on chips no bigger than a dot; diodes that emit light for 20 years without bulbs; ultrasound washing machines that use no water, heat, or soap; hyperlight materials stronger than steel; deprintable and reprintable paper; biological technologies that reduce or eliminate the need for insecticides and fertilisers; plastics that are both reusable and compostable; piezoelectric polymers that can generate electricity from the heel of your shoe or the force of a wave; and roofs and roads that do double duty as solar energy collectors.

Some of these technologies, of course, may turn out to be impractical or have unwanted side effects. Nevertheless, these and thousands more are lining up like salmon to swim upstream toward greater resource productivity.

## Resource politics

How can government help speed these entrepreneurial "salmon" along? The most fundamental policy implication is simple to envision, but difficult to execute: We have to revise the tax system to stop subsidising behaviours we don't want (resource depletion and pollution) and to stop taxing behaviours we do want (income and work). We need to transform, incrementally but firmly, the sticks and carrots that guide business.

Taxes and subsidies are information. Everybody, whether rich or poor, acts on that information every day. Taxes make something more expensive to buy; subsidies artificially lower prices. In the United States, we generally like to subsidise environmental exploitation, cars, big corporations, and technological boondoggles. (We don't like to subsidise clean technologies that will lead to more jobs and innovation because that is supposed to be left to the market.)

## New Members

The WA Branch welcomes the following new members:

- Helen Morey (Family and Children's Services)
- Belinda Lenzo
- Renee Gallagher (Student Associate)
- Elizabeth Haynes (Student Associate)
- Julie Waylen (Student Associate)

Specifically, we subsidise carbon-based energy production, particularly oil and coal; we massively subsidise a transportation system that has led to suburban sprawl and urban decay; we subsidise risky technologies like nuclear fission and pie-in-the-sky weapons systems like Star Wars.

We subsidise the disposal of waste in all its myriad forms — from landfills, to Superfund cleanups, to deep-well injection, to storage of nuclear waste. In the process, we encourage an economy where 80 percent of what we consume gets thrown away after one use.

As for farming, the U.S. government covers all the bases: We subsidise agricultural production, agricultural nonproduction, agricultural destruction, and agricultural restoration. We provide price supports to sugarcane growers, and we subsidise the restoration of the Everglades (which sugarcane growers are destroying). We subsidise cattle grazing on public lands, and we pay for soil conservation. We subsidise energy costs so that farmers can deplete aquifers to grow alfalfa to feed cows that make milk that we store in warehouses as surplus cheese that does not get to the hungry.

To create a policy that supports resource productivity will require a shift away from taxing the social "good" of labour, toward taxing the social "bads" of resource exploitation, pollution, fossil fuels, and waste. This tax shift should be "revenue neutral" — meaning that for every dollar of taxation added to resources or waste, one dollar would be removed from labour taxes.

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As the cost of waste and resources increases, business would save money by hiring less-expensive labour to save more-expensive resources. The eventual goal would be to achieve zero taxation on labour and income.

The purpose of this tax shift would be to change what is taxed, not who is taxed. But no tax shift is uniform, and without adjustments for lower incomes, a shift toward taxing resources would likely be regressive. Therefore, efforts should be made to keep the tax burden on various income groups more or less where it is now. (There are numerous means to accomplish this.) The important element to change is the purpose of the tax system because, other than generating revenue, the current tax system has no clear goal.

A shift toward taxing resources would require steady implementation, in order to give business a clear horizon in which to make strategic investments. A time span of 15 to 20 years, for example, should be long enough to permit businesses to continue depreciating current capital investments over their useful lives.

Of course, a tax shift alone will not change the way business operates; a broad array of policy changes on issues of global trade, education, economic development, econometrics (including measures of growth and well-being), and scientific research must accompany it. For the tax shift to succeed, we must also reverse the wrenching breakdown of our democracy, which means addressing campaign finance reform and media concentration.

Some economists will naturally counter that we should let the markets dictate costs and that using taxation to promote particular outcomes is interventionist. But all tax systems are interventionist; the question is not whether to intervene but how to intervene.

A tax system should integrate cost with price. Currently, we dissociate the two. We know the price of everything but the cost of nothing. Price is what the buyer pays. Cost is what society pays. For example, Americans pay about \$1.50 per gallon at the gas pump, but gasoline actually costs up to \$7 a gallon when you factor in all the costs. Middle Eastern oil, for instance, costs nearly \$100 a barrel: \$25 to buy and \$75 a barrel for the Pentagon to keep shipping lanes open to tanker traffic. Similarly, a pesticide may be priced at \$35 per gallon, but what does it cost society as the pesticide makes its way into wells, rivers, and bloodstreams?

## The Future

In 1750, few could imagine the outcome of industrialisation. Today, the prospect of a resource productivity revolution in the next century is equally hard to fathom. But this

is what it promises: an economy that uses progressively less material and energy each year and where the quality of consumer services continues to improve; an economy where environmental deterioration stops and gets reversed as we invest in increasing our natural capital; and, finally, a society where we have more useful and worthy work available than people to do it.

A utopian vision? No. The human condition will remain. We will still be improvident and wise, foolish and just. No economic system is a panacea, nor can any create a better person. But as the 20th century has painfully taught us, a bad system can certainly destroy good people.

Natural capitalism is not about making sudden changes, uprooting institutions, or fomenting upheaval for a new social order. (In fact, these consequences are more likely if we don't address fundamental problems.) Natural capitalism is about making small, critical choices that can tip economic and social factors in positive ways.

Natural capitalism may not guarantee particular outcomes, but it will ensure that economic systems more closely mimic biological systems, which have successfully adapted to dynamic changes over millennia. After all, this analogy is at the heart of capitalism, the idea that markets have a power that mimics life and evolution. We should expand this logic, not retract it.

Ironically, organizations like Earth First!, Rainforest Action Network, and Greenpeace have now become the real capitalists. By addressing such issues as greenhouse gases, chemical contamination, and the loss of fisheries, wildlife corridors, and primary forests, they are doing more to preserve a viable business future than are all the chambers of commerce put together.

While business leaders hotly contest the idea of resource shortages, there are few credible scientists or corporations who argue that we are not losing the living systems that provide us with trillions of dollars of natural capital: our soil, forest cover, aquifers, oceans, grasslands, and rivers. Moreover, these systems are diminishing at a time when the world's population and the demand for services are growing exponentially.

It is difficult for economists, whose important theories originated during a time of resource abundance, to understand how the decline in ecosystem services is laying the groundwork for the next stage in economic evolution. This next stage, whatever it may be called, is being brought about by powerful and much-delayed feedback from living systems.

As we surrender our living systems, social stability, fiscal soundness, and personal health to outmoded economic assumptions, we are hoping that conventional economic growth will save us. But if economic “growth” does save us, it will be anything but conventional.

So why be hopeful? Because the solution is profitable, creative, and eminently possible. Societies may act stupidly for a period of time, but eventually they move to the path of least economic resistance. The loss of natural capital services, lamentable as it is in environmental terms, also affects costs. So far, we have created convoluted economic theories and accounting systems to work around the problem.

While there may be no “right” way to value a forest or a river, there is a wrong way, which is to give it no value at all. How do we decide the value of a 700-year-old tree? We need only ask how much it would cost to make a new one. Or a new river, or even a new atmosphere.

### **Resource waste**

Americans, who have the largest material requirements in the world, each directly or indirectly use an average of 125 pounds of material every day, or about 23 tons per year. This consumption consists of fuels in the form of gas, coal, and oil; quarried materials such as stone, gravel, and sand; industrial minerals such as phosphate, cement, and gypsum; industrial metals such as copper and aluminium; forestry products such as sawed timber, pulpwood for paper, and firewood; and agricultural products such as milk, meat, eggs, grain, hay, and produce.

Americans waste more than 1 million pounds per person per year. This includes: 3.5 billion pounds (920 million square yards) of carpet sent to landfills, 25 billion pounds of carbon dioxide, and 6 billion pounds of polystyrene. Domestically, we waste 28 billion pounds of food, 300 billion pounds of organic and inorganic chemicals used for manufacturing and processing, and 700 billion pounds of hazardous waste generated by chemical production. If you count the waste developed in extracting gas, coal, oil, and minerals, that would add another 34 trillion pounds per year.

We are far better at making waste than at making products. For every 100 pounds of product we manufacture in the United States, we create at least 3,200 pounds of waste. In a decade, we transform 500 trillion pounds of molecules into nonproductive solids, liquids, and gases.

### **Social waste**

When the ships of the conquistadors first appeared on coastal horizons in the late 15th century, the native populations of the Americas could not comprehend their import because the size of the ships was outside their frame

## **Post Traumatic Stress Association**

The Traumatic Stress Recovery Association (TSRA) was established in 1998 by a group of professionals who recognised the severe lack of resources in the community for treatment of trauma.

The TSRA aims to promote community awareness and understanding of the effects of traumatic stress; to coordinate support for people who are affected; and to empower and educate friends, family, professionals and others supporting trauma affected people.

The TSRA can be contacted via Francesca Day (President) 9322 9777 and/or Ken Jones 0417 178 078 (Treasurer). Membership of TSRA costs \$10 (unwaged or student) and \$20 (waged).

of reference. Likewise, we do not perceive the nature or enormity of the threat presented by current employment patterns.

According to the International Labor Organization in Geneva, 1 billion people (about 30 percent of the world’s labour force) either cannot work or have such marginal and menial jobs that they can’t support themselves or their families. The United States is proud of its 5.4 percent unemployment rate — and should be. European unemployment hovers at twice this rate. But official U.S. figures mask a more complex picture.

According to Donella Meadows, who writes the syndicated column “The Global Citizen,” of the 127 million people working, 38 million work part time, and 35 million have full-time work that doesn’t pay enough to support a family. Then there are the actual unemployed, who number 7.4 million, as well as another 7 million who are discouraged, forcibly retired, or work as temps. Nineteen million people work in retail and earn less than \$10,000 per year, usually without any health or retirement benefits. For the majority of workers, wages are no higher today than they were in 1973.

Meanwhile, the United States has quietly surpassed the erstwhile Soviet Union and its gulag as the world’s largest penal colony. Over 5 million men are in prison, waiting for trial, on probation, or on parole. We have become so inured to criminality that rural counties seek prison construction under the rubric “economic development.”

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Indeed, between 1990 and 1994, the prison industry grew at an annual rate of 34 percent; crime and crime-related expenses now constitute about 7 percent of the U.S. economy, according to Jonathan Rowe of Redefining Progress, a public policy think tank.

Isn't there something terribly wrong with a society that, at astounding cost, stores so many people in concrete bunkers where they learn the finer arts of crime? (There is no cost difference between incarceration and an Ivy League education; the main difference is curriculum.)

While we can reasonably place individual blame on each drug user, felon, and mugger, or anyone who violates civil and criminal laws, assigning individual responsibility should not mean being blind to a wider view of cause and effect.

### **How to make a profit by reusing waste.**

The key to resource efficiency is to understand products as a means to deliver a service to the customer, rather than thinking of them as things. This idea of "products as service" was first put forth in 1993 by German chemist Michael Braungart and William McDonough, dean of the University of Virginia's architecture school. Braungart and McDonough advanced a new way to conceive of products, breaking them down into three categories: consumables, products of service, and unmarketables.

Consumables are products like bananas, jute, or aspirin that can harmlessly go back to the soil as compost. Products of service are usually durables such as cars, TVs, and refrigerators. Braungart and McDonough argue that these products should be "licensed" in the same way that software is today.

The product would always belong to the manufacturer, but unlike software, it would eventually get returned to the manufacturer, who would be responsible for recycling or reusing the product. Manufacturers would have to design and create their products so that all the components have value when they return (just as in nature), and not just when they leave the factory.

Unmarketables are compounds like radioactive isotopes, persistent toxins, and bioaccumulative chemicals. Ideally, no one would make or use these products. But because eliminating their use will take time, Braungart and McDonough suggest in the meantime that these unmarketables should belong to the manufacturer and be molecularly tagged with the maker's mark. Together, these three categories would create a product system that would begin to place responsibility where it belongs.

One CEO, Ray Anderson, has taken the "products as service" concept to heart. The founder of Interface, a \$1 billion multinational carpet and flooring company, Anderson has developed the "Evergreen Lease" to transform his commercial product, carpet tiles, into a service. Normally, flooring companies just sell carpet tiles, but Interface wants to lease the services of the carpets to building owners. As carpet tiles wear out and are replaced, the old ones are recycled and made into new tiles as part of the lease fee. The customer does not pay an installation cost, only a monthly fee for constantly fresh-looking and functional carpeting. Over time, the amount of material used will drop but employment will go up, all the while saving the customer money and providing a superior product (the carpet never looks old, worn, or frayed).

With a "products as service" system, customers could keep a product indefinitely, or sell it to others, just as they do now. The final user, when finished, would take it to a de-shopping centre that would return it to the manufacturer for reuse and remanufacturing.

*The above text is based on a number of articles by Paul Hawken published by Mother Jones in its March/April 1997 issue of MOJOWire which outlined the principles of natural capitalism and presented a number of interesting scenarios illustrating applications. Hawken's material may be accessed from the Mother Jones web site [http://www.bsd.mojones.com/mother\\_jones/MA97/hawken.html](http://www.bsd.mojones.com/mother_jones/MA97/hawken.html).*

# Net Watch

In this issue we visit the Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST) web site [<http://www.unesco.org/most>]. This site brings together a diverse range of UNESCO activities undertaken by MOST, a research program designed by UNESCO to promote international comparative social science research.

The primary emphasis of MOST is to support large scale, long term autonomous research and to transfer the relevant findings and data to decision makers. MOST also publishes state of the art reports that assess existing information on specific topics. The overall long term objective of MOST is to establish sustainable links between the scientific and policy communities and to emphasize the relevance of social science research for policy formulation.

More information is available from the web site on a number of areas, such as MOST research themes, MOST partners, information transfer to policy, capacity-building, strategy for building projects and how to receive the MOST Newsletter.

You will find a visit to the site rewarding and containing a rich variety of information. A feature of the site is that a large number of publications are available as multi lingual versions.

Two central bodies steer the MOST program, the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) and the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC). The IGC is composed of 35 Member States of UNESCO, elected by the General Conference. The Council convenes every two years and provides the general priorities and policy guidelines of the programme. It contributes to the promotion of the programme and participates actively in fund-raising.

The SSC is an independent group of nine social scientists of international standing. Meeting twice a year, it has the authority for maintaining the scientific quality of the programme as well as for acceptance, monitoring and evaluation of research projects.

MOST operates in three high-priority research areas:

- multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies;
- cities as arenas of accelerated social transformations; and
- globalisation and governance.

## Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies

Ethnic and cultural diversity is a fact which can and should enrich social life in all parts of the world. One focus of research under MOST is on the nature of change in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies in which issues of education, culture and religion, identity and human needs, democratic governance, conflict and cohesion interact in complex patterns.



These issues require interdisciplinary, comparative, and culturally sensitive research which may furnish information useful for the peaceful and democratic management of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies.

This research should help design policies that contribute to the goals of achieving equality of citizenship rights between ethnic groups and the avoidance and solution of ethnic conflict.

## Cities as arenas of accelerated social transformations

Coping with the sustainable management of cities has been declared by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED-92) in Rio de Janeiro to be a top-priority for the twenty-first century, since urbanization creates new and demanding problems of governance.

Such problems relate to demographic growth, urban planning, education, unemployment and marginalization, social as well as communal conflicts, health and environment. Research under this theme is expected to have practical relevance for urban decision-makers.

## Globalisation and governance

Transnational business ventures, dynamic technological innovations, international communication networks and environmental concerns tend more and more to cross national borders. As a result, today almost every society is forming a part of an increasingly interdependent world. The impacts of globalisation deserve more scientific attention, to enable policy-makers to cope with complex and interactive internal and external dynamics.

MOST research aims at surveying the effects of global changes on local and regional levels to sustain local populations' and authorities' efforts to cope with them.

## **Fremantle Education District Social Worker**

**(until 15/12/2000 with possible extension)**

### **Qualification and experience**

A degree in social work or equivalent, eligibility for full membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers, verbal and written communication skills, report writing skills, analytical ability, knowledge of the State education system, experience in working with children and families, experience in working in a multi-disciplinary team setting.

### **Duties**

Individual and group work in primary and secondary schools.

### **Location**

Fremantle Education District

### **General**

Please direct any further inquiries to Elaine Newton on 9336 9577. Application and job description forms are available from Dianne Massey on 9336 9547.

### **Closing date**

Wednesday 21 June 2000 at 4.30 pm

## **LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX**

**Y2k is behind us –  
Now it is time to front 2KY**

A half-day interactive workshop presented by Dr Tom Barrett and Paddy Glasgow on Tuesday 20 June 2000: 1 pm – 4 pm.

Social workers are often required to deal with sexual problems, are not equipped to do so and are often uncomfortable with at least some aspects of the subject. This discomfort transmits itself to the client(s) who will clam up and little or nothing will come of it. So... let's talk about it!

Places are still available for this workshop. For information and registration details contact Liz Retamal on 9443 2934, fax 9444 5410 or by email [aaswwa@asw.asn.au](mailto:aaswwa@asw.asn.au).

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